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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

The Collapse of Transcendence in Nietzsche's Middle Period

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Philosophy

by

Carl Beck Sachs

Committee in charge:

      Professor Donald Rutherford, Chair
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2005

The dissertation of Carl Beck Sachs is approved, and it is acceptable in

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                                                          Chair

University of California, San Diego

2005

DEDICATION

To the memory of

Charles F. Beck, my Dionysian grandfather

and

Benjamin Sachs, my Apollonian grandfather

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

For Nietzsche in German I have used *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden* (Ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980) and *Sämtliche briefe : kritische Studienausgabe in 8 Bänden* (Ed. Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari**.** München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag; Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1986).

For Nietzsche in English, I have relied on the following translations and used the following abbreviations.   I have modified the translations where noted.

BGE   *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* Trans. Judith Norman; ed. Rolf-Peter Horstman and Judith Norman. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

D   *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality.* Trans. R. J. Hollingdale; ed. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997

EH   *Ecce Homo*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 665-791. New York: The Modern Library.

HAH   *Human, All-too-Human: A Book for Free Spirits*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale; introduction by Richard Schacht. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996

GM   *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Trans. and introduction by Maudemarie Clark and Alan Swensen. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998

PTG   *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. Trans. and introduction by Marianne Cowan. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1962.

BT   *The Birth of Tragedy*. Trans. Ronald Speirs; edited Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

GS   *The Gay Science. With a Preface in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. Trans. Josefine Nauckhoff; ed. Bernard Williams. Poems translated by Adrian del Caro. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

WP   *The Will to Power*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale; ed. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.

TSZ   *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. Trans. Walter
         Kaufmann. New York: Viking Penguin, 1966.

TL   "Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" in *Philosophy and Truth:*
         Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's. Ed. and
         trans. Daniel Breazeale. Amhearst: Humanity Books, 1999.

TI   *Twilight of the Idols*. Trans. Richard Polt; introduction by Tracy Strong.
         Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997

For Kant I have cited according to the volume and page number of *Kants gesammelte Schiften* (Preussiche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin), as given in the margins of the English editions I used.   The *Critique of Pure Reason* is cited according to convention by providing the page numbers from the "A" and "B" editions.

CPrR   *Critique of Practical Reason*. trans. Mary Gregor. New Yorlk: Cambridge
         University Press, 1997.

CPR   *Critique of Pure Reason.* trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood. New York:
         Cambridge University Press, 1997.

CJ   *Critique of the Power of Judgment.* Trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews.
         New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

GMM   *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. trans. Mary Gregor. New York:
         Cambridge University Press, 1997

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In sculpture, it has been said, all one need do is remove everything from the marble that does not resemble the intended object. In writing, the process is complicated by the fact that one is responsible for producing, in addition to the finished product, the raw material from which the finished product is hewn. In both phases of the process—which were not nearly as separate as the above metaphor implies—I owe significant debts.

Firstly, thanks are due to my committee chair, Donald Rutherford, for his extensive advice and guidance in both phases, ranging from our discussions of Nietzsche's intellectual development to his patient correction of my split infinitives. Also, thanks to other members of my doctoral committee—Michael Hardimon, Wayne Martin, Wm. Arctander O'Brien, and Tracy Strong—for their frequent advice and assistance along the way. I chose UCSD over other departments because I believed that at UCSD I would acquire a solid background in traditional "analytic" philosophy, yet that I would also be encouraged to cultivate my interests in "Continental" philosophy. My experiences of the past eight years have justified that belief. I am especially grateful to Professor Strong for his extensive comments on an earlier draft of the dissertation, and to Professor O'Brien for our many conversations as to whether or not one can be a Nietzschean liberal democrat.

Thanks of a different sort are owed to graduate students of the Department of Philosophy at UCSD, past and present. Of them, I would particularly like to thank

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Collapse of Transcendence in Nietzsche's Middle Period

by

Carl Beck Sachs

Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

University of California, San Diego 2005

Professor Donald Rutherford, Chair

In this dissertation, I analyze the works of Nietzsche's Middle Period (as he
called it, "The Free Spirit Series") as an attempt to overcome the opposition between
naturalism and Kantianism by criticizing each from the perspective of the other.   By
drawing on recent scholarship on Nietzsche's engagements with post-Kantian
philosophy and on late nineteenth-century science and philosophy of science, I show
how, as Nietzsche works through these shifts in theoretical perspective, he presents
progressively more sophisticated attempts to work out the consequences of his
conviction that autonomy must be naturalized and historicized.

I conceptualize Nietzsche's project in terms of "the collapse of transcendence":

the rejection of all non-naturalistic sources of normativity. The collapse of

transcendence is first broached in the criticisms of morality in *Human, All-too-Human*,

and culminates in the announcement of "the death of God" in *The Gay Science*.

Nietzsche analyzes the collapse of transcendence in both psychological and historical

terms. Psychologically, the collapse of transcendence is a withdrawal of affective

investment in other-worldly sources of normativity. Historically, the collapse of

transcendence is caused by a conflict between the results and method of modern

natural science and traditional (i.e. foundationalist) self -understandings.

On my account, Nietzsche shows how the collapse of transcendence is a

condition of possibility for the emergence of "free spirits" who are able to

acknowledge and affirm the collapse of transcendence; they no longer desire

unconditional, absolute normativity. In contrast to the Kantian question, "What are

the formal conditions of any possible autonomy?" Nietzsche asks, "What are the

material conditions of autonomy for us now?" Nietzsche must therefore develop an

account of autonomy as self-fashioning consistent with the rejection of the desire for

the absolute.

In contrast to other interpretations, I argue that Nietzsche, at least in the Free

Spirit series, should be interpreted as an Enlightenment modernist whose apparently

radical claims are undergirded by a naturalistic critique of Kant's critical philosophy.

More than any other thinker in the Western philosophical tradition—with the possible exception of Plato—Nietzsche is a Rorschach test.   How one reads Nietzsche and makes sense of his positions (or lack thereof) is determined by one's own philosophical commitments and psychological inclinations or aversions.   (Part of the allure of Nietzsche is that it is through repeated encounters with the indeterminacy of his texts that one becomes more aware of one's own prejudices and biases.)   In a similar spirit, Erich Heller writes:

> There are philosophies which, however difficult they may be, are in principle easy to teach and to learn … This is true of Aristotle, or St. Thomas Aquinas, or Descartes, or Locke, or Kant. … But this is not so with the thought of Plato, or St. Augustine, or Pascal, or Kierkegaard, or Nietzsche.   Their philosophies are like human faces on the features of which are inscribed, disquietingly, the destinies of souls; or like cities rich in history. 'Do you understand Kant?' is like asking, 'Have you been to the summit of Mt. Blanc?' The answer is *yes* or *no*. 'Do you understand Nietzsche?' is like asking 'Do you know Rome?' The answer is simple only if you have never been there. (Heller 1988, 142)[1]

Even so, Nietzsche is not merely a ventriloquist's dummy for whatever theoretical or practical axe one has to grind.   My concern here is with a specific line of thought that runs throughout at least a certain phase of Nietzsche's philosophical development, though I contend that it has resonances elsewhere: a line of thought that I will call *the articulation of the consequences of the collapse of transcendence*.   The goal of this chapter is to show what the collapse of transcendence amounts to, and the place it

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[1] I am indebted to Strong (2000) for leading me to Heller.

occupies in Nietzsche's thought.   In order to do so, I will first briefly situate the

approach to Nietzsche that will orient the present project (1.1).   I will then turn to the

collapse of transcendence as a central motif in Nietzsche's problematization of the

history of Western culture (1.2).   Finally, I will show how the concern with the

collapse of transcendence illuminates the concept of *the free spirit* as it takes shape in

Nietzsche's so-called "Middle Period," and with which the rest of the project shall be

concerned (1.3).

1.1 Situating Nietzsche

Within contemporary academic philosophy, very few scholars still think of

Nietzsche as a Nazi or as an apologist for fascism (although some scholars continue to

feel obliged to begin their books with why that is not the case). If Nietzsche is not a

fascist, however, then what *is* he? Two different schools of thought have emerged that

try to answer this question.   On one extreme, one finds the analytic approach as

represented by Danto (1965), Schacht (1983), and Clark (1990); on the other extreme,

one finds the Continental approach as represented by Derrida (1979), Foucault (1988),

and Deleuze (1983). [2]   In between one finds a range of commentators, each of whom

regards himself or herself as taking the best of each, which no doubt explains their on-

going disagreements. It is worth noting that the tensions between the analytic

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[2] I have no desire to commit myself to any position on whether the distinction between analytic and Continental philosophy is substantial or whether it is a creation of university deans and department chairs who want to keep separate departments of philosophy and literature.

Nietzscheans and Continental Nietzscheans originates in different strategies of "de-Nazification."

The analytic approach owes a great deal to Walter Kaufmann's *Nietzsche* (1974; first edition 1950), which presented a Nietzsche who proudly stood in the tradition of Western thought as a kind of liberal humanist (much as Socrates, Shakespeare, and Goethe all became, in Kaufmann's hands, liberal humanists). It is not for nothing that Green (2002, 2) remarks that Kaufmann's version of the *Übermensch* would have been right at home in the post-war Princeton philosophy department. The distinction between Nietzsche and (for example) Bertrand Russell then becomes a question of style rather than of substance, on account of Nietzsche being a superior poet. Although Schacht's *Nietzsche* (1983) is philosophically more rigorous that Kaufmann's, the basic project remains the same: to present Nietzsche as a humanistic thinker who attempted to develop a philosophical anthropology shorn of all metaphysical adornments, and to follow through on the consequences of this anthropology for moral theory. Clark (1990) maintains much the same assumptions regarding how Nietzsche should be read, but with more emphasis on epistemology rather than moral theory, and concludes that Nietzsche shed his metaphysical baggage very slowly and didn't come into his own as a full-fledged pragmatist until the writings of 1888.

The Continental readings of Nietzsche followed a different course of de-nazification, owing largely to the impact of Heidegger's monumental *Nietzsche*, which showed that Nietzsche was not so much a Nazi as "the last metaphysician."

Subsequent interpretations therefore had to contend with Heidegger's use and misuse of Nietzsche as well as with the Nazi legacy.   Coming from a different but still "Continental" context were the most influential French readings of Nietzsche, of which Derrida (1979), Deleuze (1983), and Klossowski (1997) are representative. Despite the significant areas of disagreement that have emerged from these very different readings of Nietzsche, all three point towards a Nietzsche who is "anti-humanistic."   By this I mean that "humanism" is recognized as the last vestige of metaphysics and rejected as such, in favor of an alternative philosophical method (e.g. Derrida's deconstruction, Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatics, Foucault's genealogy). There is much to be said in favor of "the French Nietzscheans," although there is also much to be said in favor of translating their work into an idiom appropriate for native English-speakers, as in the work of Alan Schrift (1995) or David Allison (2001). However, we ignore the analytic tradition of Nietzsche interpretation at our peril if we fail to recognize the aspects of Nietzsche that are anthropological or psychological, and indeed much of Nietzsche's attention focuses on specifically human phenomena, e.g. culture, religion, politics, and morality.

A considerably more substantial distinction in hermeneutic methods is that between *epistemological* and *ontological* orientations to Nietzsche's theoretical and practical philosophy. This distinction helpfully cuts across the analytic-Continental divide by emphasizing the differences between those who interpret Nietzsche as a post-Kantian epistemologist who follows Kant's "Copernican Revolution" to its logical culmination (even if at the price of relativism, subjectivism, or voluntarism)

versus those who interpret Nietzsche as trying to work out the metaphysical and ethical implications of nineteenth century science. Thus, for example, the epistemological orientation is pursued by Foucault, Derrida, Nehemas, Rorty, and Clark, whereas the ontological orientation has been developed by Heidegger, Deleuze, Schacht, Poellner, Richardson, and Leiter. Richardson (1996, 4-5; 9-12) notes that this distinction, which he presents in terms of "perspectivist" and "metaphysical" interpretations of Nietzsche, takes its point of departure from tensions internal to Nietzsche. Commentators who emphasize how Nietzsche transforms idealism into perspectivism tend to read Nietzsche with an eye to the array of figures, metaphors, allusions, and promises that pervade his texts. By contrast, those who emphasize the metaphysical aspect of Nietzsche's work focus on what he says about the will to power and the eternal recurrence.[3]

Much like Richardson (1996) and Cox (1999), the present study is guided by the principle that a coherent interpretation of Nietzsche's project should attempt to do justice both to Nietzsche's perspectivism and to his ontology (as well as to both analytic and Continental scholarship).[4] What has largely been neglected, however, is

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[3] And, it should be noted, there are both "conservative" and "radical" interpreters of both sorts. For example, Clark (1990) wants to show that Nietzsche is much more of a mainstream (though emphatically "post-analytic") epistemologist than he has been taken to be by performers of deconstruction (e.g. Derrida, de Man). Likewise, Heidegger interprets Nietzsche as the last major figure in the slow unraveling of Western "onto-theology" and "the forgetting of Being," whereas Deleuze (1994) appeals to Nietzsche's motifs of the will to power and the eternal recurrence in developing an "immanent ontology" that runs throughout the history of Western philosophy in a "minor" tradition.

[4] Though neither Richardson nor Cox put the point in precisely these terms, it seems that neglecting the perspectivist side of Nietzsche results in reading him as a sort of "bald naturalist" (cf. McDowell 1994, 72-3), whereas neglecting the ontological side of Nietzsche results in ascribing to Nietzsche a sort of "bald aestheticism" (cf. Crowell 2003, 101). I see the first sort of interpretation at work in Heidegger, the second in Rorty.

the extent to which Nietzsche himself attempts to reconcile these two strands of his thinking by means of his commitment to both naturalism and to historicism. Nietzsche's opposition to traditional metaphysics and morality should be understood as a consequence of his working through the consequences of naturalism and historicism for ontology and for epistemology (as well as for ethics). Because he is committed to both a naturalistic conception of human beings and a historicist conception of distinctively human achievements such as religion, art, history, morality, and science, Nietzsche can show how beings capable of interpreting the world and themselves from various perspectives are nevertheless part of the natural world and cannot take up a stance on that world from the outside.[5] Nevertheless, terms such as 'naturalism' and 'historicism' should be not deployed without some attention to the difficulties which surround them.

There are at least as many different versions of naturalism as there are philosophers who defend or criticize some version of naturalism. One need not go far to find distinctions being drawn between "strict naturalism" and "liberal naturalism" (Strawson 1983, 1), "strong naturalism" and "weak naturalism" (Habermas 2003, 22-30), "object naturalism" and "subject naturalism" (Price 2004, 73), "transcendental naturalism" and "scientific naturalism" (Pihlström 2003, 57-93), not to mention between ontological, epistemological, and methodological naturalisms (De Caro and Macarthur 2004, 2-8). Despite this motley crew, however, all seem willing to accept the description provided by Kitcher (1992, 74-76) that naturalism is distinguished by

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[5] However, what Nietzsche will eventually do, and what is no small part of his philosophical achievement, is to give a *naturalistic explanation* of the very *desire* to take up a stance on the world from the outside.

its rejection of all *a priori* epistemological principles. Even Habermas and Pihlström, who want to retain a pragmatic and linguistic version of Kant's transcendental turn, nevertheless accept that no principles can be identified as *a priori* independent of reference to a particular community of speaking and cognizing agents.[6]

There is therefore no longer any *a priori* which can be understood as providing a standpoint external to all possible perspectives, practices, communities, forms of life, etc. It is in this sense of naturalism—the rejection of all *absolute a priori* principles, norms, or values—that Nietzsche should be read as a naturalist. What makes this rejection naturalistic is that it is undertaken as part of a broader attempt to put philosophy on a par with science by rejecting all conceptions of "first philosophy," i.e. traditional metaphysics. Naturalistic philosophy self-consciously refuses to subordinate empirical methods and results to the demandsof transcendent or absolute *a priori* principles, whether epistemological or moral.

Nietzsche is also a naturalist in the sense of what Price calls "subject naturalism" (2004, 73).[7] Rather than begin with those theories which take as their object the ultimate microstructure of the physical world (what Price calls "object naturalism"), subject naturalism is the position that philosophy must take seriously what science has

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[6] In the case of Philström and Habermas, what prevents "naturalized transcendental philosophy" from becoming empiricism is the commitment to *a priori* principles which exercise a rational, normative constraint on particular empirical activities. That these principles are no longer regarded as immutable does not diminish their normative status as rational constraints on action. However, the question remains open as to whether Nietzsche is a "transcendental" or "weak" naturalist in this sense, or whether he denies all apriority altogether.

[7] Price himself recognizes the connection with Nietzsche; " [s]cience tells us that we humans are natural creatures, and if the claims and ambitions of philosophy conflict with this view, then philosophy needs to give way. This is naturalism in the sense of Hume, then, and arguably Nietzsche. I'll call it *subject naturalism*" (ibid. 73; emphasis original).

to say about the sorts of creatures *we* are.   Subject naturalists will therefore

emphasize the empirical analysis of human existence as indicated by the "human

sciences," such as psychology, history, sociology, and anthropology.   Of these,

psychology and history were the most developed in Nietzsche's time and were,

arguably, of the greatest interest to him.[8]   In this connection, however, it is important

to note that Nietzsche was also strongly influenced by late nineteenth-century

"Darwinism."[9] (This influence was largely mediated through the naturalistic neo-

Kantianism of Lange and others by whom Nietzsche was strongly influenced; see

Chapter 2.1.)   Consequently, Nietzsche came to understand that nature is not a mere

backdrop against which the dramas of human history play themselves out.[10] Instead,

nature itself is thoroughly historicized as history is naturalized.   Thus, Nietzsche's

"subject naturalism" is a naturalized historicism and a historicized naturalism.

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[8] However, Nietzsche's interest in the anthropology of his time is discernible in, for example, *GM*.
And Nietzsche's influence on sociology, as mediated through Weber, should not be underestimated.

[9] "Darwinism" can only be used here in a heavily qualified sense, for several reasons.   Firstly,
evolutionary theory prior to the "Modern Synthesis" of the 1950s, in which Darwinian insights were
integrated with population genetics, was very different from what it is today.   Secondly, there is no
evidence that Nietzsche himself read Darwin; his sense of Darwin's strengths and weaknesses was
mediated by way of the neo-Kantian Lange and the social Darwinist Herbert Spencer.   Burrow (2000)
observes that, in a cultural climate still strongly influenced by Hegelianism, German Darwinism was
understood as implicitly teleological.   Ernest Haeckel is a good example of this tendency.   Thirdly,
Nietzsche himself was probably more influenced by the pre-Darwinian tradition of German biology,
which tended to emphasize the relations of forces internal to organisms as opposed to the relation
between organisms and their environment. For the influence of this tradition on Nietzsche, see Moore
(2002). This tradition has only recently been reconciled with post-"Modern Synthesis" evolutionary
theory through what has become known as "evolutionary developmental biology," or "evo-devo."   The
renaissance of the Continental morphological tradition in an evolutionary context has perhaps
contributed to the renewed interest in Nietzsche's philosophy of biology; see Ansell-Pearson (1997),
Richardson (2002; 2004), and Grosz (2004).   The latter three concur that Nietzsche's criticisms of
Darwin arise from his misunderstandings of Darwin, but that despite these criticisms, a strong case can
be made for Nietzsche as supplementing or modifying broadly Darwinian insights, e.g. the continuity
between nature and history.

[10] According to Toulmin (1990), the stark demarcation between nature and history was a crucial
component in what he calls "the scaffolding of modernity" (109-117)

As a subject naturalist, Nietzsche is keenly aware that different cultural achievements (such as those associated with religion, art, science, and morality) are best understood in their historical contexts. We are historical not merely in the sense that we are temporal beings, but in the stronger sense that the conceptual vocabularies in terms of which we understand ourselves and our activities are themselves affected by historical processes.   Consequently the emphasis on contingency and dynamism that characterizes historical processes also characterize our conceptual vocabularies, even when they appear—to those who live "inside" those vocabularies—as fixed and necessary. Much like the American pragmatists—who, as Pihlström (2003, 17) argues, should also be interpreted as situated at the confluence of Kant and Darwin—Nietzsche uses historicism in order to undermine our sense that our conceptual frameworks are necessary, and thereby to provoke us to imagine the world, and ourselves, differently.

Nietzsche's commitment to naturalism and to historicism does not only prompt him to develop a substantial challenge to traditional epistemology and ontology.   It should also be seen as part of his sustained inquiries into the past, present, and possible futures of Western culture through a sophisticated investigation of "subjectivity" and "normativity."   By "subjectivity" I mean the capacity to engage in activities such as thinking, feeling, reflecting, and willing.   By "normativity" I mean the binding force of norms or values that serve as the ends of action. In short, Nietzsche is concerned with both how we live and how we think about how we live, and it is here that his inquiries into naturalism, subjectivity, and normativity find their

true center of gravity. His innovative and contentious ethics, ontology, and epistemology are best understood as the products of his sustained inquiries into the possibilities and dangers of Western culture at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. In this context, I will argue that Nietzsche regards the possibility and desirability of a *naturalized and historicized account of subjectivity and normativity* as being among the foremost dangers, and opportunities, that characterize modernity.

In a recent essay on Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979)*,* Brandom has noted that, according to Rorty,

> near the end of the nineteenth century philosophy was left with two approaches, naturalism and historicism, neither of which gave philosophical understanding any special dispensation. Russell and Husserl, each in his own way, responded to this situation by coming up with something for philosophy to be apodeictic about in the Kantian manner. It has taken us the better part of a century to see through their fascinating fantasies, and work our way back to historicism and naturalism. (2000, 182n9)[11]

Along with James, Dewey, Dilthey, Marx, and Freud, Nietzsche articulates a conception of human life committed to both naturalism and historicism. But what makes Nietzsche distinct from the other grandfathers of the twentieth century is his sensitivity to the severity of the challenge that naturalism and historicism pose to a culture whose most basic self-understandings are grounded in secularized and

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[11] Brandom refers to Rorty's comment that "For a time, it seemed as if philosophy might turn away from epistemology, from the quest for certainty, structure, and rigor, and from the attempt to constitute itself a tribunal of reason" (Rorty 1979, 166; cf 165-9).

demythologized versions of the categories of transcendent metaphysics.[12] What has

made this challenge unavoidable—and what therefore threatens us with the possibility

of nihilism—is *the collapse of transcendence*. It is the collapse of transcendence that

makes a naturalized and historicized account of normative subjectivity both possible

and necessary.

1.2   The Collapse of Transcendence

For the purposes of this project, by "transcendence" I mean the location of the

source of values and norms (both epistemic and practical) in something that is

fundamentally "other-worldly." "Other-worldly" here does not refer simply to

something opposed to or exceeding the empirical world described by our current best

science. Rather, it means that the source of values and norms is conceptualized (and

experienced) as sharply demarcated from the entire sphere of everyday life-worldly

activities. This other-worldly source of values and norms is assumed to have both a

cognitive coherence and an *affective adherence*. By "the collapse of transcendence" I

mean a state of affairs in which this other-worldly source of values has lost cognitive

coherence and affective adherence for us. In losing cognitive coherence, it has ceased

to figure prominently in the conceptual inferences through which we make sense of

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[12] Here I accept, at least in broader terms, the thesis that "modernity" evolved out of "premodernity" through a process of secularization of the public sphere. But this thesis should be heavily qualified in several respects, not least in that there was a series of intellectual revolutions within late medieval and early modern theology which made such secularization possible in the first place. I have been strongly influenced by the versions of this genealogy of modernity developed by Funkenstein (1986), Dupre (1993), and Placher (1996).

ourselves and our activities. In losing affective adherence, it has ceased to figure

prominently in our emotions, desires, and passions.

The danger with which Nietzsche comes to concern himself is that, having been

associated with transcendence for so long, cognitive coherence and affective

adherence *themselves* might become impossible once transcendence has lost its

rational and libidinal hold on us. It is this condition which I shall associate with

nihilism, and it is in order to overcome nihilism that Nietzsche undertakes an analysis

of the collapse of transcendence in both naturalistic and historicist terms.[13] Although

Nietzsche's first attempts to analyze this collapse do not adequately reflect on the

conditions which make such an analysis possible and necessary, subsequent

refinements in his approach give him the conceptual tools both to reflect on the

conditions of his own criticism and to provide him with the resources with which

nihilism might be overcome. A crucial step in the development of Nietzsche's critique

consists of the realization that, since the very rise of modern historicism and

naturalism has, to a large extent, provoked the collapse of transcendence, the

historicized and naturalized self-understanding that he promotes must be able to give

an adequate account of itself in historicized and naturalized terms. If that is the case,

then Nietzsche will be in a position to show the norms and values sustained by

naturalism and historicism are at least as worthy of our cognitive and affective

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[13] "Nihilism" is as fraught with controversy as "naturalism." In characterizing nihilism as the collapse
of both rational constraints and libidinal investments, I am indebted to the work of Warren (1988) and
Bernstein (2001). Strong (2000) and Marmysz (2003) define nihilism slightly differently as a
condition in which we still desire something (the unconditioned, the absolute) which no longer makes
sense to us (due to the rise of modern science). White (1990, 15-25) provides a helpful overview of
how both Nietzsche and his commentators have distinguished between different types of nihilism, as
well as offering a cogent typology of his own.

allegiance as were those of the transcendent metaphysics that has become impossible for us.

One unfortunate consequence of Nietzsche's appropriation by postmodernism is that what I call "the collapse of transcendence" might be interpreted as just the sort of "grand metanarrative" (Lyotard 1984) of which that we have learned to be suspicious, precisely because of what Nietzsche (as mediated through Derrida, Lyotard, and Rorty) has to teach us. But while Nietzsche is an insightful and often vicious critic of totalizing world-historical interpretations (bearing in mind his perspectivist epistemology), he is also, at the same time, advancing a rival world-historical interpretation of his own. Nietzsche's world-historical interpretation is at work in his understanding of his own position in the history of European culture and informs the ways in which his polemics, critiques, and visions emerge out of that understanding. Though I cannot do full justice to his rival conception here, I want to sketch an interpretation of the Enlightenment, and in particular of Kant's critical philosophy as justification of and response to the Enlightenment, in order to focus more precisely on how Nietzsche came to see himself and his work in relation to the collapse of transcendence.

Following the Kantian legacy still championed by Habermas and other contemporary defenders of the Enlightenment, I will construe the Enlightenment as the defining moment of modernity. Considering modernity as a result of the breakdown of the medieval world-view, one of the defining features of modernity is

its anxiety about its relation with the past.[14]   In pursuing this line of thought, Pippin

(1999) argues that what makes modernity a *philosophical* problem, and not merely one

for "the history of ideas," is that the self-conception of modernity is one of a radical

break with the past for which it is unable to account. Hence modern philosophy

cannot depend upon previous forms of justification; we are, as it were, on our own.

Although the full impact of this cosmic alienation did not affect the Western

consciousness much before the late nineteenth century, Nietzsche's work is

remarkable in part because it reconstructs the genealogy of modernity in order to

express the sort of subjectivity that modernity has made possible, i.e. "the free spirit."

In order to make clear Nietzsche's ambiguous and problematic relation with

modernity, it is necessary to focus on Nietzsche's ambiguous and problematic relation

with one of the greatest modern philosophers, Immanuel Kant.

Although it has become commonplace to read Kant's project in the *Critique of

Pure Reason* as the pursuit of a *via media* between Leibnizian rationalism and

Lockean empiricism, I urge here that this epistemological interpretation of the First

Critique ought to be seen against the background of the pursuit of a *via media* between

dogmatism and *skepticism*.[15]   Seen in these terms, Kant's agenda is as much socio-

cultural as it is epistemological; skepticism and dogmatism both threaten a stable

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[14] Pippin (1999) argues that the early moderns were "discontinuity" theorists, and thought of modernity as a radical break. Toulmin (1990) and Dupré (1993) maintain a similar line of thinking. Nietzsche, on the other hand, eventually rejects the "discontinuity" view, and comes to see "modernity" in terms of guiding assumptions and values that he traces back to Platonism and Christianity.

[15] Kant also makes clear that he is concerned to undermine the attractiveness of "**materialism**, **fatalism**, [and] **atheism**, of freethinking **unbelief**, of **enthusiasm** and **superstition**" (B xxxiv).   One might think of Kant as setting himself against materialists like La Mettrie on the one hand and mystics like Swedenborg on the other.

social order that protects and promotes the freedom and equality of all persons. Kantian critique is animated by the hope that such conflicts, both intellectual and political, will be resolvable if we can get clear about the resources available to us for recognizing and evaluating our epistemic and pragmatic commitments. Kant stands out as one of the first truly *philosophical* modernists by virtue of his explicit recognition of modernity's crisis of justification and his response to this crisis through a thematization and problematization of "the subject."[16]

Kant's genius was to realize that the crisis of modernity could be resolved by demonstrating how subjectivity could be self-justifying. If we are thrown back on our own resources, without the hope of transcendent justification, then we must possess the capacity to justify ourselves to ourselves. Hence the entire "modernity problem" turns on the problem of subjectivity: what is subjectivity? What are its conditions of possibility? What does it mean to be rational? What is the relation between subjectivity and autonomy? How is autonomy possible? Kant's problematization of the subject regards the subject as fundamentally *self-justifying*: to be a subject at all is to be capable of setting one's own standards of justification. The subject is able to justify epistemic and ethical claims by means of reason's ability to prescribe to itself the conditions of its own application.[17] The Kantian insight is that our capacity for self-justification alows us to dispense with external justifications without abandoning

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[16] Here I broadly follow the account of Kant's position in modern philosophy developed by Pippin (1999). Adorno (2001) and Allison (1983) have also proven invaluable for my understanding of Kant's "Copernican Revolution."

[17] Self-justification therefore not only plays a central role in Kantian epistemology and moral theory, but also underlies the very possibility of a critique in the first place.

justification.   This emphasis on self-determination, on a rejection of all "givens,"

marks Kant's break with early modern thought.   In Kantian critique, modernity

acquires an adequate self-consciousness, and the project of critique is precisely the

kind of exhaustive self-examination and self-clarification that such self-consciousness

requires. If, on the other hand, this conception of the subject were to be found to

contain serious difficulties, then the Kantian conception of critique would be placed in

serious jeopardy.   It is here, with respect to the conception of the subject, that

Nietzsche's critique of modernity by way of his engagement with the Kantian tradition

can be situated.

The question of Nietzsche's relation to Kant is complicated by controversies as

to how much of Kant Nietzsche understood—and even how much of Kant he read

directly.[18] Nietzsche's engagement with Kant was heavily mediated by Schopenhauer

and by various "neo-Kantians" who were widely read in Nietzsche's day.[19] The

scattered allusions to Kant in Nietzsche's corpus (e.g. *GS* 193; 335) suggest a more

serious engagement with Kant than one would think given the differences in their

styles of philosophizing.   Yet despite the increasing recognition of Nietzsche as a kind

of Kantian, neo-Kantian, or post-Kantian, it has been difficult to show how exactly

[18] Nietzsche was clearly familiar with the *CJ*, and even considered writing his dissertation in philosophy
(rather than in philology) on "The Concept of the Organism in Kant."   Anderson (1996) suggests,
based on *WP* 530, that Nietzsche knew at least the *Prolegomenon*, if not the *Critique of Pure Reason*
itself.

[19] Green (2002) notes that Nietzsche "had read a number of philosophers in the nineteenth-century Neo-
Kantian tradition, such as Schopenhauer, Friedrich Albert Lange, Gustav Teichmüller, and Afrikan
Spir. It is to these writers that we should look primarily to understand what Nietzsche was talking
about, not Derrida or Foucault and not Tarksi or Quine" (3). I agree that the primary focus should be on
Nietzsche's own historical background. On the other hand, Nietzsche's work is frequently so
deliberately anti-systematic that it can be highly useful to approach him with concepts appropriated
from both "analytic" and "Continental" philosophers.

Nietzsche should be interpreted in light of the Kantian tradition.[20] The following

study will be guided by the following assumption: Nietzsche does in fact take Kant as

one of his most important point of departure, and that his relation to Kant is evident in

the centrality for him of the conflict between science, metaphysics (i.e. theology), and

morality.[21] The reason for this can be explained in terms of Kant's ambiguous

relation to transcendence. Kant retains in his moral theory, as "postulates of pure

practical reason" (*CPrR* 5:122-142), the very concepts—the existence of God, the

freedom of the will, and the immortality of the soul—that his anthropocentric

epistemology had ruled out as objects of theoretical cognition. This retention

indicates, I suggest, the affective hold that transcendence retained even when it had

lost its rational force.[22] Nietzsche therefore should be read as beginning where Kant

ends: with a criticism of the affective hold that transcendence retains over us in the

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[20] An important exception is Hill (2003), who shows how Nietzsche carefully engaged with different aspects of Kant's philosophy at different points in his own philosophical development. The present study differs from Hill's in two principal respects: firstly, in emphasizing the importance of the idea of critique; secondly, by emphasizing the naturalized and historicized theory of subjectivity that Nietzsche develops in response to Kant. Hill concludes his study by suggesting that if Nietzsche is Kantian, then perhaps Nietzsche is not as radical as has been supposed. By contrast, I think not only that Nietzsche is a Kantian, but that Nietzsche *is* as radical as has often been supposed, because *Kant* is more radical than has often been supposed! Apart from Hill, Nietzsche's relation to Kant has also been emphasized in Vaihinger (1935), Deleuze (1983), Warren (1988), Houlgate (1993), Babich (1994), Green (2002), and Hussain (2004).

[21] At the same time, it is crucial to hold onto the idea that Nietzsche was strongly influenced by the naturalism and positivism of his day. The point is not merely that Nietzsche was both a naturalist and a Kantian, but rather that he developed his distinctive positions and criticisms in a socio-historical context that was steeped in both Kantian and naturalistic ideas. Small (2001) has helpfully shown how any assessment of Nietzsche's originality must be seen in terms of this background of naturalistic neo-Kantianism, anti-naturalistic neo-Kantianism, and anti-Kantian materialism--not to mention other important influences such as Schopenhauer, Wagner, Burckhardt, and "the Greeks."

[22] This is not to assert that Kant's ethics is noncognitivist—far from it!—but rather to suggest that Nietzsche should be seen as using the distinction between reason and desire to drive deeper the wedge between *CPR* and *CPrR*.

wake of the collapse of its cognitive dimension—that is, in the wake of what

Nietzsche will call "the death of God" (*GS* 108; 125).[23]

As with Kant's critique, Nietzsche's critique is grounded in the structure of

subjectivity; unlike Kant, Nietzsche refuses to build substantive conceptions of

rationality and morality into subjectivity from the outset.   Because Kant incorporated

rationality and morality into subjectivity, his critique necessarily presupposes the

intelligibility and legitimacy of knowledge and morality, and so demarcates the

legitimate boundaries between them without actually criticizing them. By contrast, as

part of a "catharsis" of our affective investment in transcendence, Nietzsche questions

the value and sense of rationality and morality.[24] Nietzsche can perform such a

critique from within the perspectives of subjectivity by inquiring into how cognitive

commitment and affective investments are determined and how they change. At the

same time, subjectivity itself is taken to be conditioned by "life, nature, and history"

(*GS* 344). It is in response to the collapse of transcendence that Nietzsche develops

his conception of how autonomy is possible in light of the naturalized and historicized

account of subjectivity and normativity. This is what Nietzsche calls "the free spirit."

1.3 "The Image and Ideal of the Free Spirit"

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[23] That Nietzsche understood himself as in some way beginning where Kant ended is supported by *GS* 335 (where Kant is compared to "a fox who strays back into his cage. Yet it had been *his* strength and cleverness that had *broken open* the cage!") and the allusion to Kant in "How the True World Became a Fable" in *TI*.

[24] I am indebted to Deleuze (1983) for this way of setting up the relationship between Kant and Nietzsche. The sense of catharsis—ritual purging—as the function that Aristotle assigns to tragedy should not be ignored, though I do not have the time in the present work to develop this line of thought.

One might well think that a critique of modernity haunts all of Nietzsche's writings, from *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and the contemporaneous but unpublished *Philosopher's Book* to the bitter end in the works of 1888—*Twilight of the Idols*, *Ecce Homo*, and *The Anti-Christ*. While this is certainly true, the issues that Nietzsche chooses to pursue, and the methods he employs in order to pursue them, change dramatically. Rather than present an exhaustive overview of the twists and turns in the evolution of Nietzsche's criticism of modernity, here I restrict my attention to the so-called Middle Period.[25] It is here that Nietzsche announces his break from "the artist's metaphysics" of the early period and attempts to develop, for the first time, the naturalized and historicized theory of subjectivity and autonomy that laid the foundation for all his subsequent philosophical work.

By the Middle Period I refer to the span of Nietzsche's texts that begins with the first volume of *Human, All-too-Human* (1878) and ends with the first edition of *The Gay Science* (1882). This period includes the two volumes of *HAH* (*HAH* and *AOM*), *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (*WS*), *Daybreak* (*D*), and *The Gay Science* (*GS*). In the first edition of *GS*, Nietzsche presents these texts as a series:

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[25] I provisionally accept the standard periodization of Nietzsche's texts despite the clear continuities across the breadth of Nietzsche's work. In particular I regard the rejection of "the artist's metaphysics" as the inaugural moment of the Middle Period; see Clark (1998; 2004), Hill (2003), and Hussain (2004). Heller (1988) writes, "The break between *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations* is of the same kind as that between Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871) and his *Human, All-too-Human* (1879). In both cases it was brought about by the abnegation of metaphysics, the loss of faith in any pre-established correspondence between, on the one hand, the logic of our thought and language, and on the other hand, the 'logic' of Reality" (149). The convergence between Wittgenstein's later thought and Nietzsche's Free Spirit series is further explored by Bearn (1997). I am less confident in the distinction between the Middle Period and Nietzsche's later texts; the works composed before and after *TSZ* have clear stylistic differences, but the thematic differences are less obvious. At the same time, the interpretive difficulties posed by *TSZ* and by the silent presence of the attempted but aborted *Will to Power* make any generalizations about "the later period" or "the mature period" difficult to sustain.

> This book marks the conclusion of a series of writings by FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE whose common goal is to erect *a new image and ideal of the free spirit*. To this series belong:
> *Human, All-too-human*. With Appendix: Assorted Opinions and Maxims
> *The Wanderer and his Shadow.*
> *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*
> *The Gay Science*.

Both *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Untimely Meditations* are mentioned as works by the same author, but *not* as belonging to the "Free Spirit Series."   Since Nietzsche himself apparently thought that the "Free Spirit Series" represented a break from his earlier works, and that this series had come to a conclusion in *The Gay Science*, there are good reasons for considering it as concerned with a distinct set of issues.   This leaves entirely open, however, the question of what precisely these issues are, and how they might be fruitfully connected with previous and subsequent stages in the development of Nietzsche's thought.   In what follows I will refer to texts outside of the Free Spirit Series, including the 1887 prefaces that Nietzsche wrote for all the works in this series, only if either the texts under consideration anticipate subsequent positions or the later texts contain formulations that shed light on the arguments of the Middle Period texts.

In *Nietzsche's Middle Period* (2000), Abbey makes two significant observations about this portion of Nietzsche's work.[26] The first observation is that this period presents us with a Nietzsche without the usual Nietzschean bombastic rhetoric; the Nietzsche of the Middle Period is a Nietzsche without "Dionysus," "the *Übermensch,*" "master morality/slave morality," "herd instinct," and the disgust for democracy,

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[26] Abbey accepts the same range of texts as comprising Nietzsche's "Middle Period."

socialism, and feminism that has made many readers, even otherwise sympathetic ones, see Nietzsche as a precursor of fascism. "The eternal recurrence" and "the will to power," two of Nietzsche's most important concepts, make an appearance only very late. As a result, it is not always clear just where the philosophical action is supposed to be.

Abbey's second observation is that because there are fewer rhetorical fireworks in the Middle Period, these works are sometimes superior according to criteria upon which Nietzsche himself insists:

> These three works [*Human, All-too-human, Daybreak,* and *The Gay Science*] realize more fully some of the intellectual virtues he prizes throughout his writings and with which he is associated, such as self-reflexive criticism, anti-dogmatism, and "schooling in suspicion." In these works, Nietzsche is more open to possibilities … The unmasking of becoming in being, the made in the given, and contingency in necessity for which he is renowned are also powerfully evident in the works of the middle period. (Abbey 2000, xv)

I concur with Abbey on both points. Firstly, Nietzsche without the *Übermensch* and the eternal recurrence—not to mention the barely-sketched perspectivalism of his mature epistemology—is not a Nietzsche that is widely recognized. Secondly, the Middle Period texts are some of the finest texts from Nietzsche's corpus, both conceptually and rhetorically, according to criteria that Nietzsche himself endorses. Nevertheless, Abbey does not adequately show, as I will, the presence of a consistent theme that runs through the Middle Period texts—the idea of the free spirit as a response to the collapse of transcendence. It is precisely by "unmasking becoming in being, the made in the given, and contingency in necessity" (ibid.) that Nietzsche

works out the collapse of transcendence in both cognitive and affective terms.   The collapse of transcendence means that there is no longer any conceptually coherent or affectively motivating transcendent ground for being, givenness, and necessity. In the texts of the Middle Period, Nietzsche begins to explore the consequences of this collapse for how we might re-conceive ourselves.   This further implies, however, that conditions of possible experience are not unconditioned, but are themselves conditioned: by history, by tradition, by evolution.   It is with this naturalized and historicized account of human subjectivity that Nietzsche begins his Middle Period.

In what follows, I will develop a reading focused on the collapse of transcendence as Nietzsche works out the significance of this collapse in the texts of the Middle Period. In particular, I will show how the Middle Period develops the following themes from *HAH* through *D* to *GS*:

- the *collapse of transcendence* as the withdrawal of cognitive and affective investment from traditional metaphysics and morality;

- the emergence of *the problem of nihilism* as a consequence of the collapse of transcendence;

- the *naturalized and historicized account of subjectivity* in terms of which Nietzsche analyzes the collapse of transcendence and the problem of nihilism;

- the *possibility* of *autonomous subjectivity* as an ethics of self-fashioning and self-overcoming that can be upheld in light of naturalism and historicism;

- naturalism and historicism as *material conditions of possibility* for the free

spirit to be able to acknowledge and affirm the collapse of transcendence;

- the *desirability* of autonomous subjectivity as an ideal—"the free spirit"—that

can command our cognitive and affective allegiance after the collapse of

transcendence, and so enable us to overcome nihilism.

In "From Naturalism to Nihilism in *Human, All-too-Human*" (Chapter 2) I show how

HAH should be interpreted as Nietzsche's first attempt to deploy a fully historicized

and naturalized account of human existence—one purged of everything super-natural

and super-human—against traditional conceptions of rational and moral agency.   This

attempt fails, however, because Nietzsche's rival conception of all that is "human, all-

too-human" is itself overly constrained by a crude psychological hedonism in light of

which humans are motivated only by the desire to avoid pain and attain pleasure.

Nevertheless, this psychology permits Nietzsche to diagnose a conflict between the

requirements of naturalism and our first-order normative commitments.   Although

Nietzsche strategically deploys naturalism against the conception of agency inherited

from Kant and Schopenhauer, the danger looms that Nietzsche will be unable to

accommodate any first-order normative commitments at all—not even the

perfectionism that he advocates as an alternative to "morality."   For this reason, I

conclude by arguing that *HAH* marks the beginning of Nietzsche's problematization of

nihilism precisely because it ultimately falls into the trap of nihilism itself.

In "Rethinking Subjectivity and Autonomy in *Daybreak*" (Chapter 3), I show

how Nietzsche re-conceives the concepts that underlie any coherent account of

agency.   Here Nietzsche deepens his psychological theory and develops the psychology of drives and affects thatmany have seen as an anticipation of the "depth psychology" of psychoanalysis.   A key innovation in *Daybreak* is the conception of the subject as a multiplicity of drives and affects, hence *not* a pre-given unity. Alongside a new account of subjectivity Nietzsche shows that the drives and affects are themselves always evaluative, hence there is no "objective" standpoint of the kind that the critical philosophy believed it required. By considering how subjectivity is a provisional and contingent organization of drives and affects, Nietzsche develops the tools he needs in order to conceptualize the material conditions of actualization for different forms of subjectivity, and in particular for *heteronomous subjectivity* and *autonomous subjectivity*.   By turning from *formal* to *material* conditions of possibility, and by distinguishing subjectivity from both autonomy and rationality, Nietzsche begins to develop an alternative to conceptions of agency grounded in transcendence.

Nietzsche's critique—of rationality, of morality, and of modernity itself—culminates in *The Gay Science*. In "'*La gaya scienza*': Struggle against the Shadows of God" (Chapter 4), I conclude my analysis of "The Free Spirit Series" with a discussion of how "gay science" functions, why the historical situation of modernity requires a "gay science," and how gay science locates the conditions of possibility of "healthy" agency. I argue that what is "gay" and "scientific" about "gay science" is that it is honest (*redlich)* concerning "the ambiguous (*vieldeutig*) character of existence (*Dasein*)" (*GS* 2).   In these terms I reconstruct the account that gay science

provides of the genealogy of epistemology and of its own position within that genealogy, and so of the account that gay science provides of its own epistemic status. I then analyze what is widely acknowledged to be one of the central themes of *GS*— the "death of God"—and its implications for how humanity should be re-conceived in light of the affective and cognitive collapse of transcendence that is named by "God is dead." Finally I argue that the cultivation of "free spirits" requires both naturalism and historicism in the construction of a new picture of what it *could* mean to be human.

I conclude in "What is the Free Spirit?" (Chapter 5) by summarizing what I take to be the major continuities and shifts within the Free Spirit Series and how these continuities and shifts enable us to answer the question: what is the free spirit?

In *HAH* one encounters a thinker who has discovered the questions and problems that will preoccupy him for the rest of his life. The extent to which *HAH* marks a departure from Nietzsche's earlier romanticism, his affiliation with Schopenhauer and allegiance to Wagner, is vividly described in Safranski's biography:

> Before traveling to Sorrento in the fall of 1876, Nietzsche completed his set of notes in the form of aphorisms ("The Plowshare"), which correspond roughly to part 1 of *Human, All-too-Human*. Over the next year and a half, additional chapters followed. Their titles indicate that topics from the planned series of "Meditations" had found their way in. The first book of *Human, All-too-Human*, entitled "Of the First and Last Things," was the clearest reflection of Nietzsche's crisis-ridden radical change of 1875—the triumph of the will to knowledge over the will to art and to myth. The problem of truth was a primary focus, treated in a highly imaginative manner, from varied points of view. In this chapter, Nietzsche created a stage from which his thoughts would have no need to exit. He would use this stage to try out various postures and perspectives. (Safranki 2002, 159).

In breaking away from "the artist's metaphysics" which had justified the higher value of art and myth over empirical knowledge, Nietzsche begins to rethink subjectivity, rationality, and freedom from the perspective of a historicized naturalism: philosophy without transcendence. Yet while *HAH* is the beginning of this project, it is not the end. *HAH* is instructive not merely because it is Nietzsche's first attempt to develop a consistent interpretation of human existence from the perspective of a historicized naturalism, but because it fails. As we arrive at a better understanding of how *HAH*

is a failure, we will be in a better position to appreciate the positions that Nietzsche develops to replace it.

The status of *HAH* has remained unclear, in part, because it has been frequently dismissed as an example of the uncritical positivism under which the Middle Period as a whole has been classified. For this reason, uncertainty persists as to the structure and scope of the problems that Nietzsche discovered for himself when he rejected the consoling and edifying illusions of the Dionysian world-artist and attempted to consider human beings as a piece of nature, and so as they show up as nothing supernatural, but simply as "human, *all too* human."[27] In order to focus more clearly on the problematic location of *HAH* within Nietzsche's philosophical development, the following interpretation will consider only the first edition of *HAH* and not take into account either *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* or *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, both of which were re-issued as the second volume of *HAH* in the 1886 edition.

I begin by considering why, and with what justification, *HAH* embraces a kind of "positivism." I will show that this characterization is not entirely inappropriate if one considers positivism as a species of what I will call "methodological naturalism." In *HAH*, Nietzsche explicitly commits himself to a deflationary account of the psychology of intentionality, motivation and action. Consequently he deprives

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[27] I follow Hill (2003) and Hussain (2004) in thinking that the Nietzsche of the "early period" was committed to the intelligibility of the thing-in-itself, though I find congenial Hill's argument that even then Nietzsche regarded all employment of the concept of the thing-in-itself as reflective, not determinate, judgment. The metaphysics of the Dionysian world-artist is edifying or consoling, and therefore not a violation of the Kantian restriction of knowledge to possible experience. Considered in these terms, the Middle Period begins to problematize the *desire* for consolation—a problematization that will culminate in Nietzsche's sophisticated psychology of *ressentiment* and the ascetic ideal.

himself of the conceptual resources necessary for making sense of the specifically *normative* character of our basic beliefs, attitudes, and commitments.   In other words, considered merely as one more species of odd little animal, human beings do not show up as specifically *human* at all.   This result generates a tension in *HAH* between the requirement of methodological naturalism and the inherited self-understandings embedded in 'Christian-modern culture.'[28]   As I will show, this conflict is precisely the condition of nihilism: the explicit naturalism conceals an implicit nihilism.   The failure of *HAH* lies in the absence of the conceptual vocabulary required to reflect on this conflict and on its consequences.

Accordingly, I will begin by showing how the positivism of *HAH* should be interpreted as a commitment to methodological naturalism (2.1).   I analyze the critique of theoretical philosophy (2.2) in which Nietzsche uses methodological naturalism to criticize the arguments and conclusions of Schopenhauerian idealism and neo-Kantianism, with the result that it is unclear whether epistemology remains a viable enterprise.   In turning to the practical philosophy and the critique of morality in *HAH*, a parallel problem emerges in which Nietzsche not only undermines Christian-modern morality but is unable to sustain any reasoned normative commitment to the ethics he advocates in its place (2.3).   I conclude by showing

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[28] I have adopted the phrase from Warren's (1988) "Christian-liberal culture."   By Christian-modern culture, I mean predominantly Western society from the beginning of the Middle Ages through to the decline of medieval ontotheology and the rise of science and liberalism.   In using this phrase I wish to emphasize the ways in which modernity retained a secularized conception of human subjectivity even as it rejected the ontotheology which originally provided the context of that conception.   By contrast, Nietzsche shows that even the secularized conception must be extensively modified if the last residues of ontotheology are to be shaken from it.

how *HAH* is enervated by the nihilism implicit in it, and that overcoming nihilism is impossible within the crude psychological theory at work in this text (2.4).

2.1 Versions of Positivism, Varieties of Naturalism

The classification of *HAH* as "positivistic" goes as far back as the 1894 interpretation by Andreas-Salome (2001, 59-

636《ｎ Ǒ】 0倦┌個┐灦,끗 꼬 낑 꾳連迻彡꾈 -《 ¬fmann (1974), Danto (1965), and Wilcox (1974).   More recently, however, the origin and validity of this classification have been subject to critical examination.   Crowell (1999) has argued that the classification of Nietzsche, but especially *HAH*, as positivistic should be seen in terms of the 're-transcendentalization' of neo-Kantian philosophy in the 1860s and 1870s. The reaction against naturalistic neo-Kantiansm (represented by figures such as Lange and Teichmüller) took the form of conflating naturalistic neo-Kantianism with phenomenalism and positivism (e.g. Comte and Mach); as a consequence, Nietzsche also became classified as a positivist.   Nevertheless, it should be noted that Nietzsche was familiar enough with something that he called 'positivism' for him to refer to it throughout his writings, most significantly in "How the True World Became a Fable" (*TI*).   What did Nietzsche mean by positivism and in what respects is Nietzsche's work in general, and *HAH* in particular, positivistic? [29]

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[29] Hussain (2004) provides a detailed overview of the neo-Kantian and positivist influences on Nietzsche, and emphasizes that Ernst Mach was a prominent influence on Nietzsche's later works.   In particular, Hussian argues, the reference to positivism in *TI* is most likely an allusion to Mach. However, Mach's work did not appear until 1886, and so is not strictly relevant for the interpretation of

For Nietzsche, in this period, positivism largely meant the work of Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Two things attracted Nietzsche to Comte's philosophy. Firstly, Comte explicitly and vigorously denies that it is the task of science to speculate on the causes and origins of the phenomena that science investigates; positivism consists of "the rejection of the attempt to go beyond the phenomenal reality we have access to" (Hussain 2004, 344). Secondly, Comte argued that the restriction of science to the phenomenal should be understood as a socio-cultural achievement. Every science, on Comte's view, passes through three stages: a religious-theological stage in which the human mind imagines that there are gods and spirits which determine the hidden nature of things; a metaphysical stage, in which one ceases to think that there are gods in any straightforward or literal sense, but still seeks after ultimate causes and reasons; and a scientific or "positive" stage, in which the very desire for ultimate causes and reasons has been overcome, and one restricts oneself to the merely phenomenal. Comte appears to argue that the scientific stage requires abandoning the very notion of "cause" and simply noting how things appear as they appear; the very notion of causality belongs to the metaphysical stage.

Nietzsche counts as a positivist in at least two respects. Firstly, he holds that the desire for something that is not conditioned by, affected by, or caused by anything further—that is, any ultimate foundation or ground of phenomena—is incompatible with the methodological requirements of modern science. Secondly, he holds that the

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HAH. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that Nietzsche was not merely influenced by neo-Kantianism and positivism at an early age, but remained engaged with it throughout his productive life.

relinquishment of this desire is a decisive step in the evolution of human culture.[30]

Yet, given that Nietzsche frequently appeals to causal relations, e.g. psychological and historical, in *HAH*, it is problematic to assign to him any deeper commitment to positivism than that (for example: he was not committed to phenomenalism, as many positivists were).

In what follows, I propose to understand Nietzsche's positivism as a commitment to "methodological naturalism." What makes such naturalism *methodological* is the premise that it is the methods of successful science which are deserving of respect and emulation. Methodological naturalism is not committed to any ontological position (e.g. materialism, physicalism), and urges caution with respect to ontological and epistemological commitments.[31] As Leiter (2002) puts it:

> … many M-Naturalists [methodological naturalists] drawn to Methods
> Continuity simply try to *emulate* a scientific way of understanding the
> world in developing their philosophical theories. We might call these M-
> Naturalists, accordingly, "Speculative M-Naturalists." … The speculative
> theories of M-Naturalists are "modeled" on the sciences most importantly
> in that they take over from science the idea that natural phenomena have
> deterministic causes. … Just as we often understand events in the
> inanimate world by identifying the natural causes that determined them,
> so, too, we understand human beliefs, values, and actions, by locating
> their causal determinants in various features of human nature. (4-5)[32]

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[30] There is no indication that Nietzsche ever rejected either of these theses, even when he maintained that the value of truth needed to be called into question. To this extent Cohen (1999) is mistaken in regarding Nietzsche's attitude towards positivism as a "fling."

[31] One could, for example, be a methodological naturalist and yet hold that mental phenomena are irreducible to physical phenomena (Spinoza), or even be agnostic on the relation between them (Hume).

[32] Leiter further suggests that, in these terms, Nietzsche should be read as a "speculative M-Naturalist" in the tradition of Spinoza, Hume, Marx, and Freud.

In abstaining from specific ontological commitments, methodological naturalism requires only that the methods of science (e.g. experimentation) be privileged over other tools of explanation-construction.   Philosophical explanations, like scientific explanations, should be regarded as provisional, open-ended, and falliblistic. Philosophy practiced in this way is committed to the methodological premise that "there are no conditionless conditions" (Rorty 1991, 55): for every phenomenon, there exist some circumstances which condition that phenomenon. [33]   Consequently there is no transcendent standpoint from the perspective of which we are lifted up out of the totality of conditions and able to survey the whole. We cannot so much as make good sense of the thought of an absolutely unconditioned ground.[34]

What distinguishes Nietzsche from the methodological naturalists who preceded (and followed) him is his attentiveness to the ways in which methodological naturalism poses a serious challenge to the conception of agency mediated by Christian-modern culture.   In this respect it is important to note the influence of post-Darwinian natural science and the rise of what Leiter (2002, 63-71) has called "German Materialism" (e.g. Helmholtz, Lange, Moleschott, Büchner, Feuerbach) on Nietzsche's practice of methodological naturalism.[35]   The two principal lessons that

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[33] Compare Kitcher's (1992) argument that one of the thesis to which naturalism is committed is a rejection of *a priori* epistemic principles (69-76).

[34] In putting the point this way, I want the notion of methodological naturalism to be broad enough to include both Carnap, who regarded all metaphysics as nonsense, and Dewey, who regarded otherworldly, anti-naturalistic metaphysics as false.

[35] Following Leiter, the German Materialism of the 1830s-1870s came about as a result of the explosive growth in the natural and social sciences (including philology, geology, embryology, ecology, thermodynamics, psychology, and anthropology). For more on the natural sciences of Nietzsche's day, see Leiter (2002), and Small's (2001) highly useful study.

Nietzsche drew from German Materialism were that humanity can be understood in

naturalistic terms, and that historicity extends all the way into nature. Further

consideration of how Nietzsche situated himself with respect to German Materialism

and to positivism will therefore deepen our understanding of Nietzsche's

appropriation and use of methodological naturalism.

In a discarded preface to the first edition of *HAH*, Nietzsche wrote, "It is

necessary to take the entirety of positivism into myself and yet to be a carrier of

idealism" (*KSA* 22[37], 386). This suggests that the point of entry into

understanding *HAH* lies in seeing it in terms of positivism and idealism. Insofar as

he was influenced by the methodological naturalism of the German Materialists, we

can see Nietzsche as close to positivism in some respects but hostile to it in others.

But what did Nietzsche mean by idealism? I suggest here that the answer lies in

Nietzsche's relationship with Neo-Kantianism. The difficulty in specifying the role of

positivism in *HAH* (as in Nietzsche's work as a whole) is emphasized by Crowell:

> If in the then-current French or English sense of the word 'positivism'
> included a *weltanschaulich* realism, commitment to mechanistic
> explanation, a view of science as consisting of facts, and a social
> optimism and liberalism embracing scientific social engineering, then
> Nietzsche was never a positivist. Instead his understanding of the
> significance of science and scientific "truths" reflects the appropriation
> of positivistic tendencies into *Kantianism*, as found in the work of
> Helmholtz and, especially, Lange. (Crowell 1999, 79)

Nietzsche himself recognized that his own commitment to positivism rested on the

relation between positivism and German Materialism on the one hand and the neo-

Kantianism of Schopenhauer, Helmholz, and Lange on the other. It was through the

lens of Neo-Kantianism that he interpreted the methods and results of the natural and social sciences.[36]   Recent Nietzsche scholarship has underlined the importance of naturalistic neo-Kantianism, as represented by Friedrich Lange, and of anti-naturalistic neo-Kantianism, as represented by Afrikan Spir.[37]   Lange and Spir, along with many other neo-Kantians and neo-Hegelians, provided Nietzsche with a set of problems and issues in terms of which he assessed his relation with Schopenhauer, oriented his reading of Kant, and directed his appropriation of antiquity.[38]

We can get a further appreciation of Nietzsche's relation to neo-Kantianism by briefly considering the history of this surprisingly obscure movement.[39]   According to Köhnke (1991), neo-Kantianism can be divided into two main phases: an early phase of naturalistic neo-Kantianism and a later phase where the transcendental interpretation of Kantian philosophy again became important. [40] Naturalistic neo-

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[36] One should note that not all of the neo-Kantians were materialists, and not all of the materialists were neo-Kantians.   As neo-Kantianism tended towards phenomenalism, there were some tensions between it and materialism.   Burrow (2000) argues that phenomenalism was a popular and well-regarded position in the nineteenth century because it permitted one to accept the methods and results of science *without* thereby being committed to materialism (58-9)

[37] The following discussion follows Stack (1983) on Lange and Green (2001) on Spir. Hussain (2004) has also proved extremely useful.

[38] For example, Green (2002) argues that the debates between ancient thinkers that Nietzsche stages in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* have less to do with what the pre-Platonic thinkers themselves thought and more to do with how Nietzsche understood the relations between Kant, Spir, and himself.

[39] *Surprisingly* obscure, because the founding schools of both analytic and Continental philosophy—logical positivism and phenomenology, respectively—were both explicit reactions against neo-Kantianism. But like all such reactions, they retain far more of what they react against than is usually admitted.

[40] The second phase of neo-Kantianism was characterized by a return to transcendental philosophy. Köhnke (1991) suggests that this second phase began with the publication of Hermann Cohen's *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung* (*Kant's Theory of Knowledge*) in 1868, which renewed the emphasis on the rational validity of the categories as opposed to their causal origins.

Kantianism, which began in the 1830s and ran into the 1860s, was characterized by a rejection of "system-building" (i.e. German idealism), an affirmation of the independence of empirical science from philosophical speculation, and a turn towards *Erkenntnistheorie* and philosophy of science. Theorists were particularly concerned with grounding epistemology in a non-metaphysical interpretation of the*Critique of Pure Reason* (i.e. without any commitment to things in themselves) and demonstrating that this interpretation was consistent with the then-blossoming naturalistic psychology.[41]

Foremost among both the neo-Kantians and the German Materialists was Friedrich Lange, whose two-volume*History of Materialism* made almost as great an impression on the young Nietzsche as Schopenhauer did.[42] Nietzsche first encountered Lange's work when it was published in 1866, one year after his encounter with Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*.[43] His initial reaction appears to have been enthusiastic, as when he refers to it as a "treasure-house" of information about natural science and political economy.[44] In their introduction to *Daybreak*, Clark and Leiter suggest that it was through Lange that

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[41] If this sounds like "psychologism," one should bear in the mind that the very allegation of psychologism was formulated, at least in part, in *response* to this approach to theory of cognition.

[42] My account of Lange is indebted to Stack (1983); however, I find myself largely in agreement with Ansell-Pearson (1988) that the real difference between Lange and Nietzsche is that Nietzsche historicizes and criticizes the very desire for metaphysics which Lange attempts to satisfy with "the Standpoint of the Ideal."

[43] Stack argues that Nietzsche carefully read both Lange's revised second edition (1873) and the fourth edition (1882), although he notes that it remains a matter of contention. Nietzsche read the first edition while at Basel but did not purchase it.

[44] Letter of February 1868 to Carl von Gersdorff: *KGB* I/2, 257.

Nietzsche first became acquainted with German materialism (Clark and Leiter 1997, xi). However, Lange is more than a publicist for German materialism; he also develops his own version of a psychologized and naturalized neo-Kantianism that admires the achievements of science but remained highly critical of materialism.

In this context, Lange's *History of Materialism* can be read as a critique of *all* metaphysical systems, *including* materialism (Köhnke 1991, 163). This radical critique is accomplished through a naturalization of the Transcendental Aesthetic that replaces Kant's strictly conceptual argument for the forms of intuition with an argument based on Helmholtz's research in the physiology of vision. In other words, natural science, working strictly within the premises of nineteenth-century materialism, becomes a form of (in Lange's terms) "materio-idealism," in which the assertions of Kantian idealism are substantiated through empirical rather than transcendental arguments. This seemingly paradoxical transformation occurs because scientific investigation into the nature of the human sensory and cognitive apparatus reveals the same fundamental cognitive limitations as described by Kant.   Our knowledge is constrained by the ways in which we can perceive the world.   At the same time, however, Lange dispenses with Kant's *a priori* formal structures in favor of our entire psycho-physical organization, itself the product of evolutionary processes studied by empirical science.   The result can be considered a "naturalized a priori."

What remains of the Kantian transcendental position is the thought that what we can know is conditioned and constrained by the structure of cognition.   The structure

of cognition is a priori in the sense that it conditions possible experience, but not a

priori in the further sense of being itself divorced from empirical investigation.   On

the basis of this naturalized a priori, Lange sets up a strong distinction between

theoretical and practical philosophy. Theoretical philosophy is scientific,

materialistic, egoistic, and determinist; moral norms and values are sanctioned only

through practical philosophy, or what Lange calls "the standpoint of the Ideal"

(Köhnke 1991, 165).[45]   As Nietzsche himself says in a letter to Carl Gersdorff,

> His [Lange's] result is summarized in the following three sentences:
> 1) the sensible world of the senses is the product of our organization;
> 2) our visible (corporeal) organs are, like all other parts of the
> phenomenal world [*Erscheinungswelt*], only a picture of an unknown
> object (*Gegenstandes*);
> 3) our real organization remains as unknown to us as are other real
> things. We continually have nothing but the product of both before us.
> (*KGB* I/2, 160)[46]

From Lange, Nietzsche would have become intimately familiar with the argument that

empiricism and materialism are incompatible, and that empiricism implies idealism.

As Hussain argues, the inference from empiricism to idealism turns on the assertion

that "[p]hysiology shows us that the sense organs *don't* show us how the world really

is and indeed that our very concept of matter may have nothing to do with what is

really there is the world" (Hussain 2004, 331). Lange leans on physiological and

psychophysical findings, above all about the structure and function of our sensory

apparatus, to conclude that "the world we think we see is radically different from the

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[45] But see Ansell-Pearson (1988) for an insightful discussion of how deeply Nietzsche's mature views departed from Lange in rejecting precisely this distinction.   For the mature Nietzsche, the domain of facts and the domain of values cannot be neatly disentangled.

[46] Letter of August 1866 to Carl von Gersdorff:. Translation mine. Hussain (2004) notes that Nietzsche is citing Lange—apparently from memory, since the quotation is not exact.

way the world really is" (ibid., 332).   Lange attempts to resolve this antithesis by adopting a position of dual phenomenalism (or, as he sometimes calls it, "materio-idealism" (Stack 1983, 97).

On the one hand, we have established the phenomenality of the inner world (sensations, e.g. pleasures and pains); on the other hand, we find the phenomenality of the outer world (forces and matter).   The antithesis of materialism and idealism is expressed by our inability to "explain" or "ground" the outer world in terms of the inner one or vice versa.   In either case we have access only to representations (of sensations or of objects), and not to "things-in-themselves." Nevertheless we require some explanation of how representations arise. This problem leads Lange to speculate that if the world is merely *Vorstellung*, then "the world of material forces or processes and the world of sensation must be manifestations of some 'third' unknown something: *ein unbekanntes Drittes*" (Stack 1983, 104). This "*unbekanntes Dritte*" (or "unknown third") clearly cannot be known, since the condition of representability cannot itself be represented, and it would therefore be a mistake to regard it as either fundamentally mental (idealism) or as fundamentally matter (materialism). Lange resolves the antinomy of idealism and materialism through a phenomenalism that is very close to the spirit of positivism, in that he explicitly refuses to endorse any metaphysical position that goes beyond what is provided by the limits of representation.

A similar skepticism regarding the fidelity of the senses arises in the work of Afrikan Spir: "The problem precisely with the kind of empirical theory of knowledge

Nietzsche would be exposed to from Lange and Spir is in fact that the results of

inquiry themselves make us worry that empirical inquiry is, as far as the external

world is concerned, futile" (Hussain 2004, 334). According to Hussain, both Lange

and Spir accepted some version of phenomenalist neo-Kantianism.   On their view,

not only do we lack any knowledge which is not ultimately analyzable in terms of our

own sensations, but the idea that there is a material world which exists independently

of our sensations and concepts is just the sort of dogmatic metaphysics against which

Kant warned us.   What Lange and Spir are concerned to explain is why, given that

phenomenalism is required by our best empirical theories, it seems to us that there is

an objectively real world.   Spir, interestingly, does not deny that there is a noumenal

world; he argues only that "we can say absolutely nothing positive about the

relationship between the unconditioned world of the thing-in-itself and the world of

experience constituted by our sensations" (Hussain 2004, 342).

A similar line of thought has been forcefully articulated in Green's *Nietzsche

and the Transcendental Tradition* (2002, 36-57). [47]   Green interprets both Spir and

Kant as "anti-naturalists."   The rationale for this interpretation turns on Kant's

emphasis on the objective validity of judgments.   Judgments have objective validity

just in case the truth-value of the judgment can be determined solely by considering

the relation between the judgment and the object judged.   But naturalist accounts of

judgment cannot guarantee that judgments will be objectively valid in that sense,

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[47] According to Green (2002), Spir's major works are *Inquiry into Certainty in the Cognition of Reality*
(1869) and *Thought and Reality: Attempt at a Renewal of the Critical Philosophy* (1st ed. 1873; 2nd ed.
1877). Green notes that Nietzsche "read and made notes on *Denken und Wirklichkeit* in 1873-74, early
1877, 1880-82, and 1885, and that his copy shows signs of having been read very carefully" (Green
2002, 46. Cf. Small (2001).

because such accounts turn on causal explanations as to why we make some judgments and not others. Naturalism is therefore incompatible, on Green's analysis, with any account of judgment which aims to preserve objective validity: Green argues that Spir turns Kant's anti-naturalism on its head by arguing that the conditions never obtain for the application of logical principles to the disorganized whirl of sensations. In other words, Spir accepts Kant's anti-naturalist account of judgment as an account of how judgments would have to be formed in order for them to be count as objectively valid, but argues that such conditions never obtain for judgments concerning empirical objects. Consequently none of our empirical judgments can be objectively valid.

Both naturalistic neo-Kantianism and German Materialism exerted considerable influence on Nietzsche's first attempt to work through the consequences of historicized naturalism for our understanding of ourselves as normatively constrained subjects. Nietzsche finds it impossible to regard humanity as an entity radically distinct in kind from the other objects of scientific inquiry, nor can nature be regarded as an ahistorical mechanism against which the dramas and comedies of human existence are played out. The historically contingent succession of cultural forms consists of nothing other than the adaptations of one particular kind of biological organism. Once we come to see ourselves as nothing other than evolved, natural organisms, it becomes difficult to understand our commitment to epistemic or practical norms and to accept responsibility for those commitments. As I will show, this difficulty arises in part because the naturalistic psychology at work in *HAH* is too

crude to explain what requires explanation, namely, the full range of human cultural life. But to substantiate this claim, it is necessary to turn to the critiques of epistemology and ethics at work in *HAH*.

2.2 *HAH***: The Critique of Theoretical Philosophy**

From the beginning of the first chapter of *HAH*, "Of First and Last Things," Nietzsche's methodological naturalism is announced by a stark contrast between "metaphysics" and "science":

> *Chemistry of concepts and sensations*. — Almost all the problems of philosophy once again pose the same form of question as they did two thousand years ago: how can something originate in its opposite, for example rationality in irrationality, the sentient in the dead, logic in unlogic, disinterested contemplation in covetous desire, living for others in egoism, truth in error? Metaphysical philosophy has hitherto surmounted this difficulty by denying that the one originates in the other and assuming that for the more highly valued thing a miraculous source [*Wunder-Ursprung*] in the very kernel and being of 'the thing in itself.' Historical philosophy, on the other hand, which can no longer be separated from natural science, the youngest of all philosophical methods, has discovered in individual cases (and this will probably be the result in every case) that there are no opposites… All we require, and what can be given us only now the individual sciences have attained their present level, is a *chemistry* of the moral, religious, and aesthetic representations and sensations [*Vorstellungen und Empfindungen*] … . (*HAH* 1)

In constructing this list of conceptual opposites, (rationality and irrationality, logic and unlogic, truth and falsity), Nietzsche first draws our attention to the categories in terms of which we conceptualize the world, then asserts that these categories are

themselves the products of historically contingent practices.[48]   (The influence of naturalistic Neo-Kantianism can be seen in the fact that Nietzsche analyzes metaphysics, including Kantian idealism, in terms of the *causal origins* of our conceptual frameworks rather than their *rational validity*.) "Metaphysical philosophy," however, lacks the capacity to acknowledge the fluidity of our categories; for the metaphysician, the positively esteemed term in each conceptual pairing requires a *Wunder-Ursprung* to account for its origin.

Metaphysics therefore rests on a mistake about the nature of our conceptual practices; since metaphysics hypostasizes concepts, and is unable to acknowledge or explain the historical development of concepts, it regards positively valued concepts as having an origin in something radically other than the ordinary world of sensory experience. The miraculous origins that metaphysics seeks are exempt from change and becoming; this project culminates in Kant, for whom the quest for *Wunder-Ursprungen* leads to an account of the universal and necessary structure of objectively valid cognition. For Nietzsche, the rejection of the "thing in itself" goes together with the rejection of *a priori* cognition. If our cognitive capacities are themselves products of historically contingent processes, then we can no longer meaningfully speak of determining the boundary concepts (*Grenzbegriffe*) of all possible cognition, beyond which lies "things in themselves." The conditions of cognition, previously

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[48] Vattimo (1988) argues that this passage announces a shift in Nietzsche's work because Nietzsche "no longer… imagines that a way out of modernity could be discovered through recourse to eternalizing forces, and instead seeks to dissolve modernity through a radicalization of its own innate tendencies" (166). I agree that Nietzsche here announces his rejection of "eternalizing forces," as well as the idea that Nietzsche is attempting a "radicalization of its [modernity's] own innate tendencies" but I disagree with Vattimo's claim that this radicalization should be read as a dissolution of modernity. By contrast, I propose to read Nietzsche as attempting to actualize fully the potential of modernity.

regarded as transcendental and hence as a priori (universal and necessary), are now

regarded as amenable to a scientific (natural and historical), and so a posteriori,

inquiry. On Nietzsche's view, science should retain the transcendental idealist insight

that there are categories which condition our cognition, but such categories

themselves have a history; understanding their history can contribute to our on-going

self-interpretations. For this reason Nietzsche regards history as both a branch of the

natural sciences and as "the youngest of all philosophical methods."   We moderns

must abandon the search for *Wunder-Ursprungen* and instead seek the origin of things

in that which is "human, all-too-human."

Central to the task of understanding ourselves without metaphysical pretensions

is understanding how the faculty of cognition itself is the product of change and

becoming, rather than isolated from it *("dass auch das Erkenntnissvermögen*

[cognitive capacity] *geworden ist*") (*HAH* 2). Learning how to understand ourselves

in this way, however, is not merely a theoretical task, but also and at the same time a

practical project. The reason for this is that although the becoming of cognition is

presented as a strictly scientific claim, not all cultures esteem science equally. On the

contrary:

> It is the mark of a higher culture to value the little unpretentious truths
> which have been discovered by rigorous methods more highly than the
> errors handed down by metaphysical and artistic ages and men, which
> blind us and make us happy. At first the former are regarded with scorn,
> as though the two things could not possibly be accorded equal rights:
> they stand there so modest, simple, sober, so apparently discouraging,
> while the latter are so fair, splendid, intoxicating, perhaps indeed
> enrapturing. Yet that which has been attained by laborious struggle, the
> certain, enduring and thus of significance for any further development of
> knowledge is nonetheless the higher; to adhere to it is manly and

demonstrates courage, simplicity, and abstemiousness. Gradually not
only the individual but all mankind will be raised to this manliness….
(*HAH* 3)

Here we can see how Nietzsche sets up two different ways of contrasting science and

metaphysics. One contrast is epistemological, the other evaluative or, one might say,

ethical. Nietzsche opposes science and metaphysics in epistemological terms by

opposing them in terms of truth and falsity; science gives us "truths," while

metaphysics has given us "errors." This contrast, however, is quickly set in the

background in favor of an ethical distinction. The truths given us by science are

"little" and "unpretentious"; they are "modest, simple, sober, and discouraging," and

scientists therefore require certain virtues—"courage, simplicity, and

abstemiousness"—in order to accept and continue this "laborious struggle." Science

should be accorded a higher value than metaphysics because the virtues demanded by

the pursuit of scientific method act as a kind of educational project both for individual

scientists and for humanity as a whole.[49]

In emphasizing the cultural value of science, and in particular the "rigorous

methods" of science, Nietzsche endorses a kind of humanism insofar as he highlights

the value of science relative to specifically human projects and concerns. One should

also note that Nietzsche's models of science, at least in the early sections of *HAH*, are

psychology and history.[50] Nietzsche stresses the importance of a scientific self-

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[49] The positive valuation of science in socio-cultural terms is close to that of Comte. See Conway
(1997) for a discussion of moral perfectionism and political perfectionism in Nietzsche's work.

[50] With respect to Nietzsche, the very distinction between the *Naturwissenschaften* and the
Geisteswissenschaften is anachronistic, since the distinction received its clearest initial description with
Dilthey. Nietzsche himself often speaks of "*Wissenschaft*" as either "natural" or "social," depending

understanding as a means for advancing broadly cultural projects, where this science is restricted to the specifically human sciences. Thus, Nietzsche's concern lies not with the place of humanity in a world viewed from nowhere in particular, but rather with how the methods and concepts of science require us to revise our self-understandings. At the same time, Nietzsche's humanism is tempered by his naturalism. In his attacks on "metaphysics," Nietzsche rejects those cultural interpretations that contradict scientific conclusions and violate scientific methods. In place of such accounts Nietzsche stresses the importance of cultural interpretations which cohere with the methods and concepts of science.

One example of how scientific methods and concepts require us to revise our self-understandings can be found in Nietzsche's naturalistic analysis of metaphysics itself. Rather than taking metaphysical claims as the *explanans* for experience, Nietzsche turns the problem around and regards metaphysics as the *explanandum*. In a series of intriguing, though not entirely plausible, arguments, Nietzsche suggests that the origins of metaphysics lie in dreams (*HAH* 5), because in dreams we often experience extraordinary powers, visit with the deceased, etc. Subsequently Nietzsche argues in *HAH* 13 that dreams themselves are only the interpretation of physiological events, which can be understood in strictly naturalistic terms. Though it might seem reductionistic, not to mention far-fetched, to suggest that fantasies of hell were occasioned by nocturnal dyspepsia, the force of the thought-experiment is that metaphysics need not be treated as holy ground where none may tread. On the

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on context. More importantly, however, Nietzsche thought that Darwinism implied that there could be no substantial difference between the science of nature and the science of humanity.

contrary, metaphysics is a human practice just as cooking is, and can be subjected to similar physiological, psychological, and anthropological analyses.

With this insight in play, Nietzsche finds himself in need of a more specific method. He finds such a method in *HAH* 10, where he proposes a science of moral, artistic, and religious ideas, "the physiology and developmental history of organisms and concepts" (*der Physiologie und der Entwicklungsgeschichte der Organismen und Begriffe).*[51] The goal of such a science would be to understand how these ideas function from a developmental and physiological perspective. While it might seem that Nietzsche endorses a crude version of reductive materialism, his proposal calls for a methodological heuristic, rather than a substantive theory. The value of such a heuristic lies in its contrast with metaphysical explanations of the origins of the idea of the supersensible realm. In making this argument, Nietzsche takes over from Schopenhauer the view that, following Kant, all metaphysics is only an interpretation or explanation of experience.[52] If the guiding interest of metaphysics consists in "explaining or interpreting experience," then we should see whether science delivers better interpretations of experience than metaphysics does. In order to do so, we should attempt the experiment of extending the premises of science as far as they will go, including treating human beings as nothing other than purely natural organisms. The diversity of human institutions and practices (morality, art, religion, politics, family) are then to be seen as the behavior of biological organisms of a specific kind,

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[51] Trans. modified from Hollingdale. I have translated "*Entwicklung*" as "development" rather than as "evolution" in order to avoid saddling Nietzsche with Darwinistic connotations that he might or might not accept.

[52] See *The World as Will and as Representation* II, 183.

and as such, explicable using the same sorts of concepts as are employed in natural

science generally. Considered in this light, the much-dismissed "uncritical

positivism" of the Middle Period should be regarded as a series of experiments in the

construction of a deflationary self-understanding that is in keeping with the

valorization of experimentation (and anti-systematization) characteristic of

Nietzsche's mature and late thought.

　　Immediately after announcing this ambitious project, however, Nietzsche argues

that language itself has introduced systematic errors into how we think about the

world. In his terms,

> The significance of language for the development of culture lies in this,
> that humanity set up in language a separate world besides the other
> world.… To the extent that man has for long ages believed in the
> concepts and names of things as in *aeternae veritates* he has appropriated
> to himself that pride by which he raised himself above the animal: he
> really thought that in language he possessed knowledge of the world [*in
> der Sprache die Erkenntnis der Welt*].… A great deal later—only now—
> it dawns on men that in their belief in language they have propagated a
> tremendous error. Happily, it is too late for the evolution of reason,
> which depends on this belief, to be again put back. (*HAH* 11)

Formerly, we had believed that "concepts and names" provide us with access to a

world of eternal truths, whereas there are in fact no such eternal truths (i.e. all truths

are conditional, provisional, and subject to change). Nietzsche's view that language

is inherently falsifying can be made more plausible if one takes into account his

understanding of what concepts are and how they function. Nietzsche takes it for

granted that conceptual representations are generalizations rather than particularities,

fixed rather than fluid, and timeless rather than temporal.[53] For this reason it is easy

to mistake concepts *simpliciter* for *aeternae veritates*. This claim is strikingly similar

to the analysis of *HAH* 1, where metaphysics was criticized for its purported inability

to recognize the fluidity and contingency of our concepts; Nietzsche uses very similar

language in his criticisms of metaphysics and language.   Both can be criticized on

the same grounds, and for the same reasons. Nietzsche regards both German

Materialism and neo-Kantianism as culminating in the knowledge that conceptual

representations falsify experience. At the same time, however, Nietzsche is close

enough to Comtean positivism to temper his indictment for two reasons. Firstly,

logic, language, and mathematics have had tremendous practical benefits; secondly,

our entire understanding of ourselves and our world depends on them—so that we

could not jettison them even if we wanted to do so. And it is far from clear why we

would want to do so, that is, what could count as a motive for wanting to eliminate the

only concepts in terms of which we can interpret our experience.

   In the process of laying out his naturalistic project, Nietzsche contrasts his

position with both "metaphysicians" or "philosophers" (e.g. Kant and Schopenhauer)

and "logicians" (e.g. Spir). Nietzsche addresses both camps in *HAH* 16:

> Philosophers are accustomed to station themselves before life and
> experience—before that which they call the world of appearance—as
> before a painting that has been unrolled once and for all and
> unchangeably depicts the same scene: this scene, they believe, has to be

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[53] Nietzsche is partly responsible for the assumption, which has proven influential on post-structuralists such as Levinas, Derrida, de Man, and Nancy, that conceptualization is reification.   Cf. "Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense": "truth is… a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding" (Breazeale 1999, 84).   For the difficulties with the theory of concepts at work in post-structuralism, see May (1997, 104-128).

correctly interpreted, so as to draw a conclusion as to the nature of the
being that produced the picture: that is to say, as to the nature of the thing
in itself, which it s customary to regard as the sufficient reason for the
existence of the world of appearance.

Here, as elsewhere in *HAH*, Nietzsche uses "philosophy" and "philosophers" as an

allusion to Kant and, above all, to Schopenhauer. Idealism, in both the Kantian and

Schopenhauerian varieties, conceives of the basic structure of our cognitive capacities

as static. By invoking the metaphor of a "painting" (*Gemälde*), Nietzsche suggests

that idealism consists of comportment towards the world that is fundamentally one of

disinterested contemplation. With this unquestioned (and, within the terms of this

comportment, unquestionable) assumption in place, philosophers can proceed to

inquire into the nature and origins of the "object." Schopenhauerian idealism claims

to discover the fundamental nature of the being that has produced this object—the

human being as *will*—through an interpretation of the world. In this way idealism

attempts to infer the unconditioned—the world as will (*Wille*)—from the

conditioned—the world as representation (*Vorstellung*). Yet the main alternative to

Schopenhauerian metaphysics, the logic and science associated with neo-Kantianism,

fares little better in Nietzsche's lights:

> As against this, more rigorous logicians, having clearly identified the
> concept of the metaphysical as that of the unconditioned, consequently
> also unconditioning, have disputed any connection between the
> unconditioned (the metaphysical world) and the world we know: so that
> what appears in appearance is precisely *not* the thing in itself, and no
> conclusion can be drawn from the former as to the nature of the latter.
> (ibid.)

Nietzsche approves of neo-Kantianism's insistence that "the unconditioned" can never

be inferred from the conditioned. Neither experience nor science permits us to make

any metaphysical speculations; the abyss between the sensible and supersensible cannot be spanned by intuitions or by concepts.

Yet in neo-Kantianism's very insistence that the unconditioned can have no relation with the conditioned, Nietzsche detects the same underlying theoretical orientation found in Schopenhauer: "Both parties, however, overlook the possibility that this painting—that which we humans call life and experience—has gradually *become*, is indeed still fully in the course of *becoming*, and should thus not be regarded as a fixed object on the basis of which a conclusion as to the nature of its originator (the sufficient reason) may either be drawn or pronounced undrawable (ibid.)." The original sin of both idealist metaphysics and neo-Kantian epistemology is that they treat life and experience as itself a kind of object. In order to reify and objectify lived experience, philosophers have regarded the world as if from some position external to it, as mere spectators. Having reified lived experience, both "metaphysicians" and "logicians" (including scientists) seek to understand the source and justification of the world-as-appearance in the world-as-real, the unconditioned thing-in-itself. Metaphysicians seek the unconditioned outside of the world; "logicians" deny that there is any contact between the unconditioned and the conditioned, yet commit themselves, through that very denial, to the assumption that one could speak intelligibly about "the unconditioned."

Nietzsche contends that both positions assume that the world has a deep, essential structure—that we know what we're talking about when we entertain this assumption—and so only argue about whether this structure is or is not accessible

from within human experience. Hence both "philosophers" and "logicians" commit

the same fundamental error: a conception of the world as static and inert, and a

conception of thought as contemplative and disengaged. In rejecting the assumptions

shared by both "philosophers" and "logicians," Nietzsche further elaborates his

position that cognition itself is inextricably linked with the ceaseless flux of life and

experience (cf. *HAH* 1, 2). Now, however, Nietzsche is in a position to consider the

demands that this view places on philosophical methodology:

> With all these conceptions the steady and laborious process of science,
> which will one day celebrate its greatest triumph in a *history of the
> emergence of thinking* [*Entstehungsgeschichte des Denkens*], will be
> finished in a decisive way; for the outcome of this history may well be the
> conclusion: That what we now call the world is the outcome of a host of
> errors and fantasies which have gradually arisen and grown entwined with
> one another in the course of the overall evolution of the organic being,
> and are now inherited by us as the accumulated treasure of the entire
> past—as treasure: for the value of our humanity depends upon it. (ibid.)

Nietzsche proposes that if we succeed in developing a detailed physiological and

historical explanation of how we have come to be the kinds of beings that we are ("the

history of the emergence of thinking"), we will also come to see how much of our

supposed knowledge consists of illusions and errors. The concepts through which we

interpret the world, e.g. "causality," "substance," "identity," and "equality"—concepts

that, for the past two thousand years, we have taken to be fundamental properties of

the world itself—are no more than tools of our own construction.

Having presented a naturalized and historicized conception of cognition in *HAH*

16, Nietzsche then applies this method to central claims made by idealism (*HAH* 17)

and by neo-Kantianism (*HAH* 18). In *HAH* 17, Nietzsche begins by indirectly posing the question of the *value* of metaphysics. Why do people seek out metaphysical explanations—and, moreover, are they actually satisfied by such explanations? Here Nietzsche proposes to examine the problem by looking at the psychological consequences, and more precisely the psychological *benefits*, of metaphysical explanations. Apparently drawing on his own encounter with Schopenhauer's philosophy (and perhaps also considering Schopenhauer himself), Nietzsche observes that metaphysical explanations have two psychological effects. Firstly, one comes to believe that one's own melancholy is only an expression of the misery of existence itself, and for this reason one no longer feels responsible for one's own unhappiness. Secondly, things become much more interesting. In other words, one feels less egoistic—to put it metaphorically, less trapped within one's own skin. For these reasons, someone who finds value in metaphysics will also find that "physical and historical explanations produce that feeling of irresponsibility at least as well, and that interest in life and its problems is perhaps enflamed even more by them" (*HAH* 17). Yet Nietzsche does not take up the question of the rational validity of metaphysics; instead, he side-steps that question entirely by addressing only the psychological basis of the desire for metaphysical knowledge, and how that desire can be satisfied through science.

In *HAH* 18 Nietzsche turns his sights from Schopenhauerian idealism to Spirean neo-Kantianism. Nietzsche begins with an allusion to a future time when "the history of the emergence of thinking" has been written. That project, which Nietzsche

himself can only announce, will provide us with not merely a new philosophical system but a new context in which to evaluate philosophical systems:

> When one day the history of the emergence of thinking comes to be written, the following sentence by a distinguished logician will also stand revealed in a new light: 'The original universal law of the knowing subject consists in the inner necessity of recognizing every object in itself as being in its own essence something identical with itself, thus self-existent and at bottom [*Grunde*] always the same and unchanging, in shortas a substance.' This law, too, which is here called 'original,' developed: one day it will be shown how gradually, in the lower organisms, this tendency comes into being.… The first stage of the logical is the judgment, and the essence of the judgment consists, according to the best logicians, in belief. At the bottom [*Grunde*] of all belief *lies the sensation of pleasure or pain* in reference to the sensing subject. [translation slightly modified from Hollingdale]

Recent scholarship has confirmed that the "distinguished logician" referred to here is Afrikan Spir (Green 2002; Small 2001). Spir claimed that in order for there to be objectively valid cognition at all, there must be recognition of identity, which consists in the judgment that the object perceived at time t_1 is the same object perceived at time t_2. This judgment is necessary, and as necessary, the foundation of all other cognition. Spir identifies this judgment with the attribution of substance, which he connects with the concept of the ego.

Much as with his criticisms of Schopenhauer's metaphysics, Nietzsche refrains from engaging with the rational validity of this version of neo-Kantian epistemology. Instead, he attempts to show that this claim, like metaphysical claims, should be understood as having a naturalistic ground. The "developmental history of thinking" provides us with a new context in terms of which logical principles should be understood; not as *a priori* valid for all rational beings, but as the consequences of

historical and evolutionary processes. Considered within this context, Nietzsche claims that the origin of the judgment—and so of logic—lies in sensations of pleasure or pain. Consistent with a naturalized account of human activity, there is no reason to distinguish between logic and psychology.

In this section, Nietzsche makes three quick points that bear on the criticism of metaphysics and on a culture whose self-understanding remains mediated by metaphysical concepts. Firstly, Nietzsche argues that the *origin* of judgments has nothing to do with their *validity*. The categories in which we understand the world result from the needs of life; it is as a consequence of our needs as organisms that we interpret the world in terms of causality and substance. Secondly, we have no reason to think that our categories originate in an attempt to capture correctly the way that the world really is (although we also have no reason to think that they do not). Thirdly, we moderns have good reason to regard our fundamental concepts as errors: there is no place for notions such as causality or substance in a ceaseless flux, but the ontology of ceaseless flux is indicated by our best empirical science.[54] The cardinal sin of metaphysics is that it hypostasizes these categories that are, at best, merely useful: "Insofar, however, as all metaphysics has had principally to do with substance and freedom of will, one may designate it the science that treats the fundamental errors of mankind—but does so as though they were fundamental truths" (*HAH* 18). Thus, although Nietzsche does not reject Spir's principle that the attribution of substance is the most basic form of judgment, he denies the fundamental (i.e.

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[54] The connection between the respect for empirical science and a metaphysics of process is one of the many points of convergence between Nietzsche, Dewey, and Whitehead.

transcendental) status that Spir attributes to his principle. Logic and language, for Nietzsche, are not closed systems or self-supporting structures but rest (however uneasily) on something deeper: life and becoming. Nietzsche's subsequent criticisms of logic and language (e.g. *HAH* 19, 31, 32) argue that logic and language are not understood in relation to life and becoming because they have been understood as hermetically sealed against intrusions by "experience" or "life."

The question remains, however, as to what a culture that understood itself in those terms might look like, and what could count as a recommendation of such a culture to us. Since it is precisely by means of culturally-mediated concepts, symbols and practices that we understand who we are, a transformation in culture is necessarily a self-transformation. But it remains far from clear what could count as a reason for participating in a project of cultural renewal, much less why such a project should be regarded as desirable or worthwhile. If *HAH* uses psychological and historical explanations against both "metaphysics" and "logic"—the two viable heirs of Kant's critical philosophy—then it might seem as though the critical project is shipwrecked on the shores of naturalism. In that case, however, Nietzsche seems to have deprived himself of the very resources he needs to recommend any sort of cultural transformation.

2.3 *HAH***: The Critique of Practical Philosophy**

Before we can see how *HAH* proposes cultural transformation, we must first consider how Nietzsche's naturalism works when deployed against traditional conceptions of practical philosophy. Here I will consider the structure of the attack on morality in *HAH*. Critics and defenders of Nietzsche alike have often been puzzled by Nietzsche's strident (though sophisticated) attacks on morality. Does Nietzsche intend to criticize all morality, or only some moralities (e.g. Christian morality)? From what perspective does Nietzsche press his attacks? Does Nietzsche argue that we ought to abandon morality, and if so, is this a self-contradictory position? In the English-speaking world, Nietzsche's critique of morality has frequently been interpreted as merely an argument for the *naturalization* of morality, i.e., an account of moral phenomena in strictly naturalistic terms. One would regard morality as something done by particular pieces of the natural world (i.e. human beings) which do not differ in kind from other pieces of the natural world (i.e. everything else).

The problem with this interpretation is that it makes it difficult to understand why Nietzsche would attach so much importance to the possibility of attempting a transition "from a moral to a wise mankind" (*ob die Menschheit aus einer moralischen sich in eine weise Menschheit umwandeln könne*) (*HAH* 107). I contend that, at least with respect to *HAH*, Nietzsche does not advocate merely the naturalization of morality, but rather the total elimination of morality in favor of a purely naturalistic self-understanding. Whereas a naturalized morality shows how moral concepts and judgments can be re-interpreted within a broadly naturalistic framework, Nietzsche argues in *HAH* that there is simply no room for them. If

naturalized ethics is usefully regarded as "reductionist," then Nietzsche's criticism of morality in *HAH* is the "eliminativist" rejoinder: it is not that moral concepts can be translated into a scientific picture of the world, but that there is no room for any moral concepts at all in such a picture. Naturalism trumps morality *simpliciter*—but, as I will argue, only because Nietzsche inherited from Kant and from Schopenhauer a specific conception of morality.

Nietzsche pursues two different, but intersecting strategies in his attack on morality in Book Two of *HAH*, "On the History of the Moral Sensations" (*Zur Geschichte der moralischen Empfindungen*). At times, Nietzsche criticizes traditional morality as resting on assumptions that are incompatible with the findings of empirical psychology. In particular, Nietzsche denies that there are purely unegoistic actions and that we can freely choose unegoistic actions over egoistic ones (*HAH* 39, 70, 106, 107). Nietzsche also shows that the feelings and judgments which were justified in terms of traditional morality can be given a perfectly adequate naturalistic explanation in terms of non-moral psychological motivations (*HAH* 49, 57, 81, 99, 107). Explanation eclipses the space in which justification used to function. Nietzsche's two-pronged attack on morality therefore consists of showing that the traditional justification is incompatible with naturalistic explanation and that explanation renders justification unnecessary.

The criticism of traditional morality begins with an analysis of the idea that there exists a free will which can choose purely unegoistic actions over egoistic ones. On a commonsense view of responsibility, we can be held responsible only for

something we have chosen freely. By contrast, Nietzsche claims that if our entire

nature is thoroughly determined, then it cannot be something for which we are

responsible. Nietzsche presses this point in response to Schopenhauer's argument that

the feeling of guilt is an indication that one could have done otherwise than one did,

and consequently, that we possess practical freedom.[55] The argument for intelligible

freedom holds that because we experience a sense of remorse or regret, we really are

free ("the error of the freedom of the will"). The critical premise in Schopenhauer's

argument is that the feeling of guilt must be rationally justified, and this could be the

case only if we really were free to act otherwise.

Against this, Nietzsche argues that the feeling of guilt, considered as a

psychological (and hence empirical) feeling, indicates nothing: there is no reason why

it could not be just as naturalistically determined as any other empirical sensation that

we might happen to have. Nietzsche's counter-argument has two distinct moments.

Firstly, since we ourselves are natural organisms, our entire nature is determined out

of necessity, and therefore freedom of the will is an illusion or error:

> Thus one successively makes men answerable for their effects, then for
> their actions, then for their motives, and finally for their nature. Now one
> finally discovers that this nature, too, cannot be responsible, insofar as it
> is entirely and completely a necessary consequence, and assembled from
> the elements and influence of thing past and present: as such, man cannot
> be made responsible for anything, not for his nature, also not for his
> motives, also not for his actions, also not for their effects. Therefore one
> attains the knowledge that the history of the moral sensations is the
> history of an error, the error of responsibility—which rests on the error of

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[55] Schopenhauer argues that, although one's empirical character is entirely determined, one
nevertheless recognizes one's intelligible freedom: "The *operari* of a given person (what he does) is
necessarily determined from without by the motives, and from within by his character; hence
everything that he does necessarily takes place. In his *esse* (what he is), however, the freedom lies. He
could have *been* a different man, and guilt or merit lies in what he is" (Schopenhauer 1995, 112).

> freedom of the will. – Schopenhauer concluded otherwise: thus, because certain actions bring after them a feeling of *displeasure* ('consciousness of guilt'), there must be responsibility; for there would exist *no ground* for this displeasure if not only all the actions of man were determined … but also man himself acquired his entire *nature* by the same necessity. (*HAH* 39)

The argumentative move here agrees with the Schopenhauerian view that our sense of guilt is necessary, but then asserts that our entire nature is just as necessary. At no point are we permitted to infer that our sense of responsibility is thereby *justified*. As a feeling of displeasure which accompanies certain actions, and hence as a mere sensation, it has not greater justification than any other sensation of pleasure or pain one might have, i.e. none at all. Here it must be noted that Nietzsche's criticism of morality presupposes the disjunction proposed by Schopenhauer. To that extent the criticism of morality in *HAH* still operates in Schopenhauerian terms.

Alongside of the criticisms directed against the doctrine of intelligible freedom, Nietzsche also shows that the phenomena of moral life—the feelings, desires, assessments, and practices that comprise morality—do not require any sort of metaphysical baggage in order to be rendered conceptually coherent. Instead, Nietzsche argues, we can make do with a psychologically and historically informed understanding of how this kind of sensation has become associated with certain kinds of actions and not others. Even if we feel that guilt is necessarily connected with some actions and not with others, Nietzsche objects that the very feeling of necessity, like all feelings, is itself the consequence of natural, and hence entirely contingent, development. Here a history of the moral sensations is indispensable, and on the

basis of such a history we will finally see that "it is because man regards himself as free, not because he is free, that he feels remorse and pangs of conscience. – This feeling is … a very changeable thing, tied to the evolution of morality and culture and perhaps present in only a relatively brief span of world-history" (*HAH* 39).

In moving from a discussion of the concept of "intelligible freedom" to a discussion of "the feelings of remorse and pangs of conscience," Nietzsche has made a quick but crucial move. Instead of resorting to "intelligible freedom" as a way of justifying certain kinds of feelings, Nietzsche is interested in understanding only the feelings themselves—and, considered as feelings, psychological and historical concepts and methods are entirely adequate tools for constructing hypotheses. The concept of intelligible freedom is therefore rejected as unnecessary for explaining a psychological feeling. In other words, Nietzsche's concern is less with what it means to be moral per se, and more with what is happening, from a psychological perspective, when we evaluate ourselves and others by means of "moral" judgments. In so doing, Nietzsche shifts the field of battle from a *justification* of those judgments towards an *explanation* of them. The question, "what do these judgments mean?" is no longer interpreted as "why these judgments rather than others?" but rather "how do these judgments function, and what do they do?"

Nietzsche provides a clue to the function of these judgments when he introduces the idea of an "order of rank": "The accepted order of rank of desirable things, according to whether a low, higher, or highest egoism desires the one or the other, now determines whether one is moral or immoral … The order of rank of desirable

things itself is not erected or altered in accordance with moral considerations, but once it has been established it then determines whether an action is moral or immoral" (*HAH* 42). Although we can distinguish between "lower" and "higher" egoisms, the standard for this evaluation is not a moral one; instead, egoisms are ranked in terms of "the higher, more refined, more spiritual motives which a new culture has introduced" (*HAH* 42). The foundation of the order of rank is *egoism*, because egoism determines what things we judge to be moral or immoral. At this point Nietzsche has not urged us to abandon morality altogether, but he has begun to displace the category of the moral by seeing it as an effect rather than as a cause.

However, it is not yet entirely clear why a naturalistic account must eliminate morality as such. To see the shape of the problem, consider the following response to Nietzsche: "I grant your premise that 'knowledge can allow as motives only pleasure and pain, utility and injury' (*HAH* 34), but why does that count as an attack on morality? Why couldn't one defend morality precisely on such grounds, e.g. in terms of enlightened self-interest?" Such an interlocutor might continue that the reduction of morality to a species of egoism is a venerable tradition. Moreover, it was a common position in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially among the French moralists whom Nietzsche admired (e.g. La Rouchefoucauld). Precisely along these lines, Clark and Leiter (1997) claim that one of Nietzsche's basic assumptions in *HAH* is psychological egoism, and that psychological egoism permits Nietzsche to reject the concept of morality: morality requires the existence of unegoistic motivation, but there are no such motivations, therefore morality is

impossible. However, this reconstruction of Nietzsche's argument fails to acknowledge the variety of motivations that his psychology takes into consideration, even at this stage.

Consider what precisely psychological egoism is committed to. Let us regard psychological egoism as "an explanatory theory to the effect that we are all egoists in the sense that all our actions are always motivated by concern for our own best interest or greatest good" (Baier 1993, 197).   If psychological egoism has any explanatory force, it must lie with this strong claim that all action has an egoistic motive.   Yet in many cases, perhaps the overwhelming majority of cases, agents do not believe that they are acting out of self-interest. The psychological egoist would argue that in those cases, self-regard or self-interest remains the fundamental motivating factor even in the absence of the agent's awareness of that motive. (Psychological egoism is not committed to any particular claim about the mechanism at work here: it could be self-deception, lack of introspection, psychological repression, etc.)   One need only peel back the initial layer of self-deception or repression, the psychological egoist would tell us, and egoistic motives will be revealed.

Nietzsche does accept that there is no such thing as "unegoistic action" (*HAH* 37), and more radically, that the very notion of unegoistic action is a contradiction in terms: "… under strict examination the whole concept 'unegoistic action' vanishes into thin air. No man has ever done anything that was done wholly for other and with no personal motivation whatever; how, indeed, should a man be *able* to do something

that had no reference to himself, that is to say lacked all inner compulsion (which would have its basis in a personal need)? How could the ego act without the ego? (*HAH* 133)." The argument here is that the ego is required for all action, hence if the ego were not involved, there could be no action. But this is merely to claim that egoism is *necessary* for action. Nietzsche does not assert, as a psychological egoist would, that all *motivations* are egoistic. In fact Nietzsche explicitly recognizes that there are many different kinds of motivation, including unegoistic motivations ("Good-naturedness, friendliness, politeness of the heart are never-failing emanations of the unegoistic drive" *HAH* 49). So, even though there are genuinely unegoistic motivations for action, there are no purely unegoistic actions. The key to reconciling these apparently inconsistent positions lies in the theory of action. Egoistic motivation is always necessary for action, but not all motivations need be egoistic.[56] Nietzsche can recognize that the same action can arise through a number of different motivations (e.g. *HAH* 58), and conversely, that the same motivation can result in a number of different actions (e.g. *HAH* 57).

We can now return to the question of why Nietzsche regarded the arguments in *HAH* as amounting to a rejection of morality. Clark and Leiter correctly recognize that Nietzsche's argument hinges on the impossibility of unegoistic action (though not of unegoistic motivation). The foregoing has shown that Nietzsche regards naturalism as undermining the cognitive plausibility of both free will and of unegoistic action.

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[56] Notice, however, that even the unegoistic motives can be ascribed to a *drive*, and are therefore susceptible to a psychologically naturalistic analysis. The existence of unegoistic motivations is no indication that the experienced world is the veil of Maya (Schopenhauer) or that we possess noumenal freedom (Kant).

Yet it remains unclear just why Nietzsche regards these claims as individually necessary and jointly sufficient for the elimination of morality *tout court*.

The answer to this problem lies in a deeper appreciation of the influence of Kantian moral theory, especially as mediated by Schopenhauer, on Nietzsche's thought. Nietzsche begins by accepting the idealist analysis of morality: morality consists in actions done from duty, hence impartial and not grounded in the inclinations, as Kant attempts to show in *GMM* (cf. 4:440-5) and as Schopenhauer asserts in *WWR*.[57] The inclinations can be used to explain features of our empirical psychology, but morality requires something more than naturalism can provide for its rational justification. Morality would have to be grounded in an anti-naturalistic account of how we are causally independent of the world. In short, what is needed is something like a Kantian-style incompatibilism.[58] (Insofar as one supposes that morality and egoism are compatible, he has failed to understand properly what morality is supposed to be.) From this starting-point shared with Kant and Schopenhauer, Nietzsche shows how the concept of morality nevertheless fails to connect with anything in the world.   Nietzsche's argument here is that since all putatively moral phenomena can be explained in non-moral terms, the concept of morality can be regarded as a superfluous hypothesis.

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[57] The significance of the morality-egoism opposition in Kant and Schopenhauer was made clear to me by Clark and Leiter (1997, xv-xxvi). Although Kant and Schopenhauer differ profoundly on how it is that we can overcome egoism, they both maintain that morality cannot be grounded in egoism, and this grounds their hostility to naturalistic ethics (which Kant criticizes as "heteronomy").

[58] On this point, see Allison (1990) on Kant's "compatibility of compatibilism and incompatibilism" (249).

We are now in a better position to reconstruct Nietzsche's argument against morality as follows:

1) morality is possible if and only if we can freely choose unegoistic actions over egoistic ones ("act out of respect for the moral law");

2) but we cannot freely choose unegoistic actions over egoistic ones, because

3) free choice presupposes intelligible freedom, but

4) there is no intelligible freedom, since:

   a. the feeling of guilt does not demonstrate intelligible freedom, since

   b. it is only a feeling, and can be subjected to psychological and historical explanations;

   c. hence it does not require the theory of intelligible freedom in order for us to be able to make sense of it (*contra* Schopenhauer);

5) and there are no purely unegoistic acts, since:

   a. while there are unegoistic motives, these are due to "the unegoistic drive" (and, as the expressions of a drive, they can be understood in exclusively naturalistic terms), and

   b. unegoistic motives are never sufficient for an action;

6) since there is no intelligible freedom, and there are no purely unegoistic actions, we cannot freely chose unegoistic acts over egoistic ones;

7) therefore, morality is impossible.

It should be emphasized that (1) is the central thesis of the idealist moral theory shared by Kant and Schopenhauer. (4) and (5) are key components of Nietzsche's

naturalistic psychology and theory of action.   Nietzsche does not explicitly register

his commitment to (1), but his commitment to (7) only follows from (4) and (5) if he

is also committed to (1).   In other words, Nietzsche's conclusion that morality does

not exist takes Kant's analysis of the concept of morality as a premise.

The Kantian assumption guides Nietzsche because Nietzsche reads Kantian

moral theory as a symptom or expression of the values of Christian-modern culture.

Therefore, if there is something deeply amiss with Kantian moral theory—as

Nietzsche clearly thinks there is—then there is also something deeply amiss with the

culture which the theory purports to interpret and within which the theory is

intelligible. If Nietzsche proposes a naturalistic critique of Kantian theory, he is

simultaneously proposing a shift towards a culture whose self-understanding is

thoroughly naturalistic and hence non-moral. Nietzsche can now pose the question of

the status of moral judgments: regardless of whether morality actually exists, there are

nevertheless acts and intentions which we judge to be moral or immoral.

Nietzsche explains the function of putatively moral judgments of our actions and

intentions through an egoistic perfectionism. According to Nietzsche, we have only

now, in the third stage of morality reached so far, attained the knowledge that our

moral judgments express our evaluations of what is in our own best interest, however

one understands what is in one's best interest (*HAH* 94, 95).[59] Armed with this

knowledge of the true meaning of moral judgments, Nietzsche can proceed to deliver

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[59] At *HAH* 94 Nietzsche claims that we are presently in the third stage in the evolution of morality, in the first stage, one acts out of considerations of long-term utility, and in the second stage, one acts out of considerations of honor.

the *coup de grâce* to morality. Nietzsche argues that if morality truly aims at

increasing general utility, then it should aim at increasing egoism:

> Ought a significant alteration in this point of view not to lie just ahead,
> now when it is realized more and more that it is in precisely the most
> *personal* possible considerations that the degree of utility is at its greatest
> also for the generality: so that it is the strictly personal action that
> corresponds to the current conception of morality (as general utility)? .…
> Even now let us work for our fellow men, but only to the extent that we
> discover our own highest advantage in this work: no more, no less. All
> that remains is what it is one understands by *one's advantage*: precisely
> the immature, undeveloped, crude individual will understand it most
> crudely. (*HAH* 95)

Nietzsche here promotes an ethical and social perfectionism that owes much to the

Greeks: one should seek one's own perfection *and* work towards the perfection of

humanity, and one should only contribute to the betterment of humanity insofar as this

is compatible with one's individual perfection.   Nietzsche's position is therefore one

of ethical egoism without psychological egoism; we are not always motivated by

unegoism, but we should be.   The ethical egoism is mitigated by a perfectionism that

distinguishes between different conceptions of self-interest according to an "order of

rank" (*HAH* 42). The order of rank refers to both cultural evolution (*HAH* 42, 43, 94)

and to the development of the individual (*HAH* 95), and it is for the enhancement of

position in the order of rank that one must work, both individually and collectively.

On Nietzsche's terms, however, this perfectionism should not be mistaken for a kind

of morality.[60] Firstly, ethical egoism is incompatible with morality taken in the

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[60] While ethical perfectionism remains a theme of Nietzsche's work, it undergoes substantial re-
working. See, for example *BGE* 201 between the "pre-moral," "moral," and "extra-moral."   My own
sense of the importance of perfectionism in Nietzsche is indebted to Cavell (1990; 2003) and to

Kantian sense. Secondly, Nietzschean perfectionism requires that one reject the illusion of free will and accept "the belief in total unaccountability" (*HAH* 91, 107).

"The belief in total unaccountability" might appear *prima facie* as nothing more than determinism. Here again it may seem that Nietzsche begins from Kantian premises. Determinism and free will are incompatible, but there is no free will, hence determinism. But Nietzsche's view is more sophisticated than straightforward determinism, because Nietzsche not only affirms determinism but accepts implications that hard determinism usually rejects. According to hard determinism, determinism is true and free will is false. But a hard determinist could nevertheless concede that our interpersonal dealings are so thoroughly imbued with notions such as responsibility, blame, and shame that, although hard determinism is correct, we nevertheless act as if we were free. The fact that determinism works fine as a heuristic for guiding objective or clinical evaluations of other people cannot conceal the fact that it fails miserably for guiding those intersubjective relations in which we ourselves participate:

> Thus it is that gratitude, goodwill, resentment, moral indignation and so forth are so integral to our concept of ourselves and others as persons, that we could not abandon them in the way urged by the hard determinist [an incompatibilist who denies free will]. The hard determinist, in effect, insists that we judge the significance of these reactive attitudes from the objective or impersonal standpoint, a feat which it is impossible to carry out in our interpersonal dealings with others. (Young 1993, 539)[61]

Conway (1997). It should also be noted that more attention to Kant's own perfectionism would mitigate the force of the contrast drawn here between Kant and Nietzsche.

[61] Young credits this argument to Strawson (1982).

Although Young (following Strawson) takes this as an argument against hard determinism, there is no reason why it must be taken as such. All this objection does is show that it is very difficult to see how we would act if we acted as if hard determinism were true.

The distinctiveness of Nietzsche's view in *HAH* is his willingness (if not enthusiasm) to bite the Strawsonian bullet. If determinism means that we can no longer make sense of our moral attitudes and practices (such as assigning responsibility and blame), Nietzsche might say, then so much the worse for those attitudes and practices. Hard determinism therefore cuts against ordinary moral judgments just as much as it does against the Kantian concept of morality that provides a non-naturalistic justification of those judgments. This is why hard determinism upsets our ordinary moral judgments in favor of "the belief in total unaccountability." A society in which no one held any one else responsible for his or her actions would undoubtedly be a very different society from what even most hard determinists would find desirable. Such is the inertia of tradition.

We are at last in a position to see why the naturalistic analysis of morality results in the elimination of morality in favor of knowledge (*HAH* 107, 144). Knowledge of the nature and history of moral feelings—that is, our dispositions to act and react in certain ways—has nothing to do with the objective validity of morality, with what is universally and necessarily justified. Moral feelings are themselves contingent and flexible. Moral concepts, on the other hand, are systematic distortions

(e.g. "unegoistic action"), with no more epistemic warrant than superstitions and dogmas. In the face of the collapse of these concepts, however, our moral feelings may also require substantial transformation as we confront the total unaccountability of all things. The liberation from morality, Nietzsche argues, is made possible through knowledge, "the feeling of complete sinlessness, complete irresponsibility, which nowadays everyone can acquire through scientific study" (*HAH* 144). (One should note here the extent to which Nietzsche still places his faith in the Enlightenment ideal of self-transparency: that one should know what one does, why one does it, and what the consequences of that action are, and then act on the basis of that knowledge.)

In light of the conflict between the conditions of scientific knowledge and the conditions of Christian-modern morality, Nietzsche argues for the elimination of the latter in favor of the former. But here a terrible danger lurks: that methodological naturalism, because it can "accept as motives only pleasure and pain, utility and injury" (*HAH* 34), cannot accommodate our normative commitments to knowledge and action.   In terms of the argument sketched above, it seems that hard determinism undermines the very resources that Nietzsche draws upon in recommending his (largely Greek) version of ethical perfectionism as an alternative to the Kantian interpretation of Christian-modern agency. Nietzsche even goes so far as to acknowledge the possibility: "Is it true, is all that remains a mode of thought whose outcome on a personal level is despair and on a theoretical level a philosophy of destruction?" (*HAH* 34). I shall argue below that the conflict between naturalism and

normativity leads to a philosophy of destruction not merely on a theoretical level but also on a practical one; that is, it culminates in the condition of nihilism.

2.4   The Birth of Nihilism Out of the Spirit of Naturalism?

Thus far I have developed an interpretation of Nietzsche's project in *HAH* in terms of a rejection of the Kantian formulations of both theoretical and practical philosophy in light of methodologically naturalistic knowledge.   What remains to be seen is why this explicit rejection on Nietzsche's part should be interpreted as an implicit working-out of the logic of nihilism.   The logic of nihilism can be understood as follows: methodological naturalism undermines the cognitive coherence of unconditional principles and values, because the commitment to methodological naturalism requires that we cannot render intelligible the idea of something conditioning without antecedent conditions.   But if unconditional principles are required for normative evaluations, methodological naturalism turns out to be incompatible with the requirements of agency, as understood within Christian-modern terms.   This is why we are bound to drastically misunderstand the thrust of Nietzsche's criticisms if we understand them as primarily directed against the theories of other philosophers. Nietzsche's object of concern is not theory *per se* but theory *qua* expression of cultural self-understanding. Taken in these terms, liberation from

metaphysics is itself a consequence of a "very high level of culture" in combination with "the greatest exertion of mind," but even this is not enough:

> *Then,* however, he [the one liberating himself from metaphysics] needs to take a *retrograde* step: he has to grasp the historical justification that resides in such ideas, likewise the psychological; he has to recognize that they have been most responsible for the advancement of mankind…. In regard to philosophical metaphysics, I see more and more who are making for the negative goal (that all positive metaphysics is an error), but still few who are taking a few steps back; for one may well want to look over the topmost rung of the ladder, but one ought not to want to stand on it. The most enlightened get only so far as liberating themselves from metaphysics and looking back on it from above: whereas here too, as in the hippodrome, at the end of the track it is necessary to turn the corner (*HAH* 20; emphasis in original)

Nietzsche, building on German Materialism and neo-Kantianism, has reached the end of the track of positive metaphysics, but it is necessary to turn the corner. He does so by taking into account the historical and psychological explanations of metaphysical ideas, the practitioner of "the history of the emergence of thinking" comes to understand the role that metaphysics has had in the development of culture; without metaphysics, our culture would not have developed the institutions and practices that it has and for which it is understandably proud. But this historical narrative should not obscure the fact that metaphysics has finally outlived its usefulness, and so must give way to a new culture based on scientific knowledge. That scientific knowledge requires us to revise or reject some of our most fundamental and cherished concepts—e.g. moral concepts—is just what it means to create a new kind of culture.

In this sense, Nietzsche is less concerned with whether metaphysics or science is "right" or "true" (in a dogmatic or naïve sense) and more concerned as to which should serve as the basis for culture, that is, which better responds to the cultural

questions and problems that comprise what we regard as our situation. Nietzsche has rejected the cluster of epistemological questions formerly regarded as central to Christian-modern culture. The question now concerns the value of knowledge for the construction of a better culture. Nevertheless, we must note that Nietzsche's reasoning here still depends on his use of science and logic; it is as a result of science that we must turn from epistemology, at least as traditionally conceived, to "the psychology and history of knowledge."[62]

The turn from "the negative goal" (the critique of metaphysics) to "the positive goal" (the construction of a new culture) paves the way for the remarks on culture that make up the rest of "Of First and Last Things." The end of *HAH* 23 sets the tone: "Let us rather confront the task which the age sets us as boldly as we can: and then posterity will bless us for it – a posterity that will know itself to be as much beyond the self-enclosed original national cultures [*Volks-Kulturen*] as it is beyond the culture of comparison, but will look back upon both species of culture as upon venerable antiquities." The project, then, is neither one of returning to "the folk" out of nostalgia nor one of resigning ourselves to the "fragmentation" of "the age of comparison." Instead we must participate in the construction of a new culture precisely by engaging in the selection of higher moralities and the elimination of lower moralities (*HAH* 23).

How, then, are we to do this? We can do so only through knowledge, and in particular we must "attain to a hitherto altogether unprecedented knowledge of the

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[62] I owe this phrase to Jurist (2000).

preconditions of culture as a scientific standard for ecumenical goals. Herein lies the tremendous task facing the great spirits of the coming century" (*HAH* 25). Knowledge is not to be despised or mocked simply because it fails to satisfy our metaphysical yearnings for the supersensible. On the contrary, knowledge (above all, psychological, historical, and sociological knowledge) can serve an eminently practical function in aiding the construction of a new, and better, culture. In order to build a culture grounded in scientific knowledge, including knowledge of the ways in which "knowledge" itself has been understood metaphysically, we must clear away many superstitions. The rest of *Human, All-too-Human* is designed to begin this task and convince others (the "free spirits" for whom it is written) to continue it. To this extent, *HAH* conceives of "the free spirits" as contributing to the perfectionism announced in *HAH*, but their contributions are understood in *epistemic* terms.[63]

In reconstructing Nietzsche's criticism, I have presented these psychological benefits as *reasons* why one who is attracted to metaphysics should prefer science and history. Yet one can imagine a critic who interjects with the following: "I'll readily grant that these are *motivating* reasons for a particular agent, given a specific motivational set of beliefs, desires, needs, and interests. Yet these are not *justifying* reasons; they fail to explain why one should prefer science over metaphysics in the absence of the motivational sets of particular agents. But isn't that precisely the kind of reason that we require? Justification isn't merely a question of understanding why particular agents prefer one over the other. Rather, one must begin with an argument

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[63] Compare this with the presentation of the "philosophers of the future" in *BGE* 211 who are "commanders and legislators" of new values.

as to why one is desirable over the other. Only in light of that argument can the claims of particular agents make any rational sense." By this standard of justification, Nietzsche has failed to provide us with a satisfactory argument as to why science is preferable to metaphysics, and thereby failed to justify the choice of one over the other.

What is striking about this objection is how completely alien it is to Nietzsche's philosophical practice. The objection rests on the assumption that the terrain on which metaphysics and science must compete is that of objective justification. At work here is an understanding of justification in terms that are (implicitly or explicitly) a-historical, disengaged, and abstracted from the texture of everyday life with its diverse needs, desires, and behaviors. Nietzsche's philosophical method, on the contrary, begins with precisely our various needs and desires, as expressed through and interpreted by our social practices. As a consequence, Nietzsche can evaluate the differences between metaphysics and science in terms of how each one, as a matter of empirical fact, satisfies specific psychological desires that are historically contingent, despite their apparent necessity. One should not be misled, however, into regarding "empirical fact" as merely the scientific verification of the superiority of science over metaphysics—a circuitous *petitio principii*. Rather, Nietzsche adopts a stance of reflective judgment towards his own experience in an attempt to elicit a similar judgment on the part of his audience: when we consider Nietzsche's claims, we are invited to make a reflective judgment on his reflective

judgment.[64] If the judgments cohere with each other and with lived experience, then the judgment "makes sense"; if they do not cohere, then we begin a process of reflecting on the conditions of that incoherence—a process that could lead to a re-evaluation of our evaluations.

Taken in its own terms, this might seem to be no more than an epistemological claim, however skeptical. Yet Nietzsche concludes by saying that the power of "rigorous science" lies in its ability to make us realize that that which we formally held to be valuable is actually "empty of significance" (*HAH* 16). Nietzsche is not concerned merely to stake out an epistemological position. In the Kantian and post-Kantian tradition, transcendental reflection reveals the conceptual structures that make possible various world-disclosing discursive practices, including our self conceptions. This basic idealist insight is coordinated with Nietzsche's use of natural science to undermine the universality and necessity that Kant attributes to the human cognitive apparatus. Hence our conceptual structures are themselves local and contingent.

If so, however, then the repercussions for our self-understanding are serious, since this argument implies that our understanding of what it means to be human lacks the universality and necessity which it previously appeared to have. Put differently: once we see that our self-understandings are themselves the consequence of local and contingent historical developments, the conceptual space opens up in which one can ask how we might live otherwise than we currently do, that is, how we might transform ourselves. If one of the conditions of possibility of self-transformation is

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[64] I am indebted to Bernstein's (2001) discussion of how to interpret Adorno's aphorisms in *Minima Moralia* for this way of thinking about how aphorisms work. Cf. Strong's (1997) analysis of Nietzsche's aphorisms in his introduction to *Twilight of the Idols*.

the belief that self-transformation is indeed possible, then much of Nietzsche's address to free spirits in *HAH* consists of showing that self-transformation is possible; he does this by showing that the conceptual coherence of older ways of understanding ourselves has collapsed. We have no choice but to figure out how to understand ourselves as "human, all-too-human" In doing so, however, Nietzsche must confront, and perhaps even affirm, the logic of nihilism.

What makes nihilism a consequence of naturalism is the retention of a traditional conception of normativity. On this view, normativity requires objective validity: an epistemic or moral norm, in order to count as a norm at all, must be objectively and not merely subjectively valid. A norm is merely subjectively valid if one says that it is merely "right for me." But subjectivism is too thin a foundation for genuine normativity; nothing can be true or right "for me" and still count as being *true* or *right*. For a prescriptive statement to make a claim to truth or rightness (i.e. be evaluable as an epistemic or moral norm), it must make a claim to objective validity.

Now we are in a better position to recognize the consequences of Nietzsche's methodological naturalism. If methodological naturalism means that there are no Dennettian skyhooks (Dennett 1995), "conditionless conditions" or true synthetic a priori statements, and yet normativity (*qua* objective validity) requires that there be an unconditioned standpoint from which competing normative claims can be adjudicated, then there is no room for normativity within naturalism. Consequently, both epistemic norms and moral norms can find no purchase: considered from within a rigorously naturalistic perspective, nothing is true and nothing is right. But

methodological naturalism is a double-edged sword: it not only works against the Christian-modern assumptions that Nietzsche finds expressed in Lange and Schopenhauer, but it also undercuts his own positive normative commitments that he proposes in their place.

Given this conclusion, it is tempting to reject methodological naturalism, and even urge Nietzsche to do the same. But doing so, Nietzsche implicitly argues, rests on a serious misunderstanding of the nature of our world-historical situation. As moderns, we find ourselves in a society in which science has become a source of hermeneutic authority, and it is just this which makes our society distinctive modern. By "hermeneutic authority," I mean that it both provides us with concepts and methods in terms of which we understand ourselves and our world, and that it has a higher value than other interpretative frameworks. We're inclined to believe astronomers rather than astrologists, not simply because the former are right and the latter are wrong (epistemic authority), but because our self-understandings are grounded in science rather than in magic (hermeneutic authority). Since Nietzsche is explicitly concerned with the ways in which scientific theories alter our self-understanding, he also focuses on the cultural implications of science. One of Nietzsche's central projects in *HAH* (as in the rest of the "Free Spirit" series) is the demonstration of the possibility and desirability of a "scientific culture": a culture whose self-understanding is a demonstration of the scientific method in that it exhibits the rigor, patience, fallibilism, and anti-dogmatism that characterize science at its

best.[65] A scientific culture will provide us with a deflationary self-conception compared to that afforded by metaphysics.

At the same time, however, a scientific culture will prefer the deflationary conception to the grandiose one on the grounds that it is not only epistemically superior but that preferring the deflated over the grandiose is itself the mark of cultural superiority (*HAH* 3).   In using naturalistic considerations to undermine Kantian positions, Nietzsche is drawing our attention to the looming confrontation between two sources of self-understanding within modern Western culture: on the one hand, the concepts and methods integral to the natural sciences; on the other, the remnants of Judeo-Christian metaphysics that he diagnoses in our subjective and social practices. Put another way, the tension lies in two different sources of self-understanding: ourselves as *organisms* and ourselves as *persons*.   The analyses of *HAH* suggest that, having granted science such hermeneutic authority, modern Western culture must now confront the problem of nihilism.

Consider one aspect of how traditional Western culture functions. As a culture, it must provide individuals with a set of symbolically-mediated concepts and values. Insofar as we find these to be both cognitively and affectively meaningful, we can draw upon them as we construct interpretations of both ourselves and our relationship with society and the world. Yet a peculiar feature of traditional Western culture, and one to which Nietzsche gave increased attention as his philosophical thought matured, is that our concepts and values are meaningful only in relation to "transcendence"—

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[65] See *HAH* 237 for an assessment of the virtues of science as read through the significance of the Renaissance for European culture.

that is, to something other than mere "life, nature, and history" (*HAH* P)—regardless of whether the account of transcendence hinges on Platonic Forms, the Christian deity, or pure Reason itself.[66] (It is, of course, a characteristically Nietzschean thought to run all these together as so many variations on a theme.) Nietzsche's conceptual innovation is that, regardless of the *epistemic* value of such transcendent accounts, they have a *cultural* value, for we interpret ourselves in terms of transcendentally-oriented concepts and values. Yet naturalism, as Nietzsche construes it, undermines these concepts and values so drastically as to render them cognitively empty.

The relation between naturalism and nihilism can be understood by noting the following distinct moves:

      (a) agency implies normativity

      (b) normativity implies transcendence

      (c) naturalism implies no transcendence

      (d) naturalism implies no agency

Nietzsche cannot reject (c), since (c) is just an expression of methodological naturalism (i.e. "you can't go home again," e.g. *HAH* 20.) But Nietzsche also cannot reject (a), since to reject (a) means that one denies that to be an agent—to be minded—is to act according to norms. The result is nihilism. Nihilism is a consequence of our having a certain conception of agency (the Christian-modern conception which was made explicit in Kantian critique) in conjunction with a certain

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[66] The preface to *HAH* was written in 1886, but on this specific point I am unconvinced that Nietzsche's views changed substantially between 1878 and 1886.

cognitive practice (methodologically naturalistic science). Methodological naturalism has a hermeneutic authority for us moderns; that is, it exercises an authority over our interpretative activities, over how we make sense of ourselves. Yet the hermeneutic authority of science is incompatible with the hermeneutic authority required by the Christian-modern conception of agency. This formulation of the logic of nihilism is made explicit by Nietzsche in a late note: "This antagonism—*not* to esteem what we know, and not to be *allowed* any longer to esteem the lies we should like to tell ourselves—results in a process of dissolution" (*WP* 5).

Bearing in mind that nihilism is a cultural problem, and not merely a theoretical one, overcoming it requires an alternative to (b): a way of both making normative commitments and of conceiving of those commitments that avoids the demand for unconditional, transcendent foundations. Failing to do so will result in the continuation of the oscillation between nostalgia and cynicism, and between apathy and fanaticism, that has characterized, with few exceptions, the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. What we require, in short, in a way of creating a short circuit in the inflation of normativity into justification, and of justification into an appeal to transcendence.

In order to show that such a short circuit is possible, and that it plays an important role in Nietzsche's middle period, I shall conclude with a brief discussion of a different sense of normativity. The alternative to this conception is to think of normative commitments as being already at work in the act of judging or evaluating

itself. Our judgments express our normative commitments as well as being themselves available for reflective evaluation. Only through our evaluative concepts do we make sense of ourselves as agents interacting with a world. Up to here I agree with Korsgaard (1996) regarding the ineliminability of normativity. On the other hand, I part company with Korsgaard with respect to the connection between normativity and justification. For Korsgaard, our conception of normativity is necessarily connected to questions of obligation and justification. Yet Korsgaard overlooks how this way of thinking about normativity is itself an aspect of our historically conditioned social practices. Put another way, normativity is always at work in the ways we engage the world and make sense of ourselves, but there is no final justification to which we could appeal on behalf of our various normative commitments. To deny that the normativity-justification connection is itself historically contingent would be effectively to argue that Nietzsche is "wrong" and Kant is "right."[67]

Nevertheless, even if I am correct in thinking that dissolving the logic of nihilism requires an alternative way of thinking about normative commitments, the Nietzsche of *HAH* clearly does not have the resources for that alternative conception. The chief difficulty of *HAH* is that it does not have a sufficiently rich psychological

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[67] Korsgaard's own historical reconstruction (Korsgaard 1996, 1-5) accepts that our thinking about normativity is historically conditioned, since she clearly acknowledges that for the ancient Greeks, normativity was conceived in terms of excellence rather than in terms of obligation. Korsgaard nevertheless maintains that, given the enormous shifts in philosophical methodology between antiquity and modernity, Kant remains the clearest guide for how we moderns should think about normativity. I maintain, by contrast, that if "God is dead," then Kant can no longer guide us, and that this thought motivates much of Nietzsche's investigations into knowledge, morality, and religion in the Middle Period
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theory to describe how normative commitments are always presupposed by our practical, value-laden judgments. The accounts of drives and affects, of the ways the drives play into our desires, of the interaction between desires over history—in large part, some of the very things that make Nietzsche the influential thinker he is—are by and large missing from *HAH*. Consequently, at the conclusion of *HAH*, Nietzsche is locked into the logic of nihilism.

Having completed his analysis of what humanity looks like without transcendence—in other words, what it means to be "human, all-too-human" and nothing more besides—Nietzsche optimistically hopes for a "philosophy of the morning" (*HAH* 638). Such a philosophy can be pursued by those "free spirits" who have not only understood what it means to live without transcendence, without ultimate foundations, but who regard this knowledge as a great liberation and who want to celebrate it. These free spirits will be in a position to begin reforming our culture along the lines of "the bicameral system of culture" (*HAH* 251)—science and art working together for the betterment of all.[68] A bicameral culture will no longer regard the collapse of transcendence as a shock or a loss, but as a step forward in human development.

Nevertheless, Nietzsche's optimism is unwarranted. Nietzsche has thus far failed to understand how deeply rooted the aspiration for transcendence is in Western culture, and he cannot understand this until he is able to explain the psychological presuppositions of this aspiration. Without that, one will not be in a position to

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[68] In *HAH* 251, Nietzsche proposes that we think of the brain as consisting of a "power-source" that generates ideas, concepts, and feelings—i.e. "art"—and a "regulator" that analyzes and criticizes.

analyze correctly why methodological naturalism appears so threatening or whether a

wholly secular culture—a culture without transcendence—could be found worthy of

affirmation. To consider these problems requires a more sophisticated psychological

model than the rather crude psychological hedonism Nietzsche uses in *HAH*.[69] The

development of a more intricate psychology, and the deployment of such a

psychology in richer accounts of subjectivity and autonomy, are the principal

achievements of Nietzsche's next major work, *Daybreak*.

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[69] It may be that Nietzsche's psychological hedonism in *HAH* bears some relation to its basically
phenomenalistic epistemology. Clark and Dudrick (2004) argue that in *HAH* Nietzsche accepts
"Spirean phenomenalism." Whether Spir is correctly interpreted as a phenomenalist, and the influence
of neo-Kantian phenomenalism on Nietzsche's epistemology, remains a contested issue; see Green
(2002), Hussain (2004), Clark and Dudrick (2004).

RETHINKING SUBJECTIVITY AND AUTONOMY IN *DAYBREAK*

Long overshadowed by the works before and after it, *Daybreak* (1880) is rightly regarded as crucial for Nietzsche's mature philosophy (Clark and Leiter 1997, viii). Not only does *D* continue the re-conceptualization of human existence from within the perspective of a historicized naturalism (or naturalized historicism) begun in *HAH*, but it breaks with *HAH* in developing both a more complicated historical narrative and a more sophisticated psychological theory. In *HAH* Nietzsche was principally concerned with showing that the conceptual foundations of our traditional self-understanding had been undermined by methodological naturalism. In that respect *HAH* remained within the orbit of the Enlightenment project as continued through German Materialism and neo-Kantian epistemology.

By contrast, in *D* Nietzsche re-appropriates what is of value in Romanticism as a way of furthering the project of human liberation.[70] He does so by working out his first attempt to explain our *affective* investment in traditional self-understandings in terms of a drive-psychological theory of subjectivity. It is in terms of the drive-psychology that Nietzsche also presents his first attempt at a naturalized theory of autonomy. When Nietzsche evaluated *Daybreak* in *Ecce Homo*, he asserted that "with this book my campaign against morality begins" (*EH* "Books" *D*:1). If we are to take Nietzsche at his word—often a risky proposition—then we should read *Daybreak* as

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[70] In this respect I regard *D* 197 as a way to understand *D* as a whole: using the counter-Enlightenment to further the Enlightenment.

marking an advance over *HAH* (as well as *AOM* and *WS*) in two respects: in the critique of morality and in the positive project that Nietzsche advances in place of morality.

The critique of morality differs from Nietzsche's previous polemics in two respects. Firstly, *D* thematizes morality more clearly as a *problem*; morality itself is regarded as questionable, as something not at all obvious or clear, and hence requiring sustained investigation. Secondly, *D* focuses on morality as an affective evaluation as well as a cognitive one. The attack on morality in *HAH* took as its center of gravity the idea that, if scientific concepts are a source of authority (and a recognition of this authority is at least partially constitutive of specifically modern self-consciousness), then moral concepts are undermined because they do not and cannot cohere with naturalistic concepts.[71] The criticism of morality in *D* complements that argument with a line of thought that dislodges our affective adherence to morality.

The positive project of *Daybreak* has two aspects: the psychological analysis of the structure and conditions of subjectivity and the account of autonomy grounded by the analysis of subjectivity. It proposes a model of subjectivity which reveals the possibility of different forms of subjectivity as different organizations of drives and affects, the material conditions to actualize these different forms, and the criteria according to which they can be evaluated as superior or inferior. In other words, the drive-psychology allows Nietzsche to develop an account of what I call "the material

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[71] In Chapter 3.3, I showed that this conflict arises in part because Nietzsche agrees with neo-Kantianism and materialism that science is restricted to the conditioned world, and in part because Nietzsche nevertheless accepts the Kantian-Schopenhauerian account of morality as transcending the conditioned.

conditions of subjectivity": the historical, social, and natural conditions that make possible a given form of subjectivity.   This model, in turn, permits Nietzsche to theorize the difference between autonomy and morality in material rather than formal terms.[72]

In what follows, I reconstruct the criticism of morality in *D* and show how Nietzsche criticizes morality on both cognitive and affective grounds (3.1).   This method of criticism is grounded in Nietzsche's theory of the material conditions of subjectivity, and in particular what he calls "the drives and affects" (3.2).   I then show that this theory can be used to conceptualize Nietzsche's contrast between morality and individuality as a contrast between heteronomy and autonomy (3.3). Finally, I conclude by showing how the rethinking of subjectivity in *D* advances Nietzsche's conception of the relation between morality and maturity as against that of Kant (3.4)

3.1   The Structure of *Moralkritik* in *Daybreak*

In order to understand how *D* articulates a new theory of subjectivity, we must first understand the structure of the criticism of morality in *D*.   This criticism proceeds along two different lines: the *cognitive coherence* of morality and the *affective adherence* of morality.[73]   By "cognitive coherence" I mean the formal and

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[72] In light of this difference Nietzsche was able to write, seven years later in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, of "the sovereign individual … the autonomous trans-moral individual ("autonomy" [*autonom*] and "morality" [*sittlich*] have nothing to do with each other)" (*GM* II:2).

[73] I owe this distinction to Bernstein (2001), although my presentation of it is somewhat different from his.

material inferential relationships that hold between concepts both within and between

different discursive practices of a culture.[74]   If the cultural institutions enable

cognitive coherence, then the members of that culture will not experience significant

discrepancies in the inferential commitments of their assertions as they move from one

discursive practice to another (e.g. politics, academia, domestic life, science, religion,

etc.).   By "affective adherence" I mean the behavioral dynamics that result from

libidinal investments and somatic experiences.   If the cultural institutions permit

affective adherence, then the members of that culture will experience these institutions

as mattering to them, as being something that they deeply and passionately care about.

A well-functioning culture, according to these criteria, would exhibit the cognitive

coherence and command the affective adherence of its members: it both makes sense

to them (cognitively) and they care about it (affectively).   What is wrong with

Christian-modern morality, Nietzsche contends, is that it has lost its cognitive

coherence but it retains its affective adherence for us: we still care deeply and

intensely about it, but we have difficulty saying why we should.

While this distinction trades on the spirit, if not the letter, of Nietzsche's mature

critical philosophy, it plays no role in the argument of *HAH*.   (This is one of the

reasons why *HAH* lacks the conceptual resources for reflecting on the collapse of

transcendence and the nihilism that results from it.)   By contrast, Nietzsche's attack

on morality in *Daybreak* is designed to undermine *both* the cognitive coherence *and*

the affective adherence of morality. Nietzsche evaluates morality both as a system of

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[74] This definition of cognitive coherence is indebted to Brandom (2000).

thought (hence evaluable in terms of cognitive coherence) and as a system of value (hence evaluable in terms of affective adherence). Insofar as *D* challenges the cognitive coherence of moral concepts, it appeals to epistemic values whereby we come to judge morality as false. Insofar as *D* disrupts the affective adherence of moral values, it appeals to practical values whereby we come to evaluate morality as unhealthy.[75] Nietzsche will use both arguments to disrupt our cognitive and affective attachment to morality, and to offer in its place an ethics of autonomy as self-fashioning.

At this point a note on terminology is in order. In order to concentrate on the substance of Nietzsche's criticisms, I will henceforth use "morality" to mean "morality in the pejorative sense (MPS)" (Leiter 2002, 74). "MPS," as Leiter calls it, includes a descriptive component and a normative component. The descriptive component consists of the claims that human beings are, at least potentially, fully aware of their intentions, that these intentions can be submitted to evaluation, and that humans have the capacity to choose freely between different intentions on the basis of these evaluations. The normative component consists of the claim that humans ought to act for the good of all concerned. I will use MPS and "Christian-modern morality" interchangeably in order to underscore the fact that the formal criteria of MPS have a

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[75] Consequently, I agree both with Magnus and Higgins (1996, 34), who argue that *D* is supposed to show that morality is unhealthy, and with Clark and Leiter (1997, xiii), who argue that *D* is supposed to show that morality is false.

specific cultural and historical context.[76]   In contrast to "morality," I will use "ethics"

to indicate the normative and explanatory account that Nietzsche advocates.[77]

As a work subtitled "Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality," one might expect

Daybreak to present a first attempt at a "genealogy of morality."   That expectation

finds some satisfaction in Nietzsche's reconstruction of the history of morality.   Here

the driving question is: how did we come to think that morality entails a commitment

to duties or obligations that command us unconditionally, where unconditional

obligations are understood as independent of sensuous motivation, i.e. impartial?

Nietzsche finds part of the answer in what he calls "the morality of custom" (*der*

Sittlichkeit der Sitte).   "The morality of custom" is proposed as a story about the

origins of morality, and not as a description of how we think about morality today.

The point is to show how incompatible our current beliefs about morality are with the

original character of morality.   In a line of thought that continues the "chemistry of the

moral, religious, and aesthetic concepts and sensations" (*HAH* 1), Nietzsche proposes

to interpret the phenomenon of morality in terms of "the concept of the morality of

custom (*Begriff der Sittlichkeit der Sitte*)" (*D* 9).   He begins by noting that, by pre-

modern moral standards, ours is a deeply immoral age—a claim that Nietzsche tacitly

endorses, although this endorsement will be subject to a subsequent reversal.   The

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[76] Again, by "Christian-modern" I refer to a series of assumption, both descriptive and prescriptive, about human nature which cut across both traditional Christian culture *and* its ostensibly "enlightened," secular successor.   The liberal, secular society is not as different from its more overtly oppressive predecessor as it would like to admit.   For a further elaboration of this point, see Connolly (1999).

[77] I do not regard myself as committed to any "morality/ethics distinction"; one could just as well refer to "Nietzschean morality" as to "Nietzschean ethics," provided that "Nietzschean morality" is sharply distinguished from MPS.

basis for this claim lies in the idea that older conceptions of morality depended on some notion of custom:

> … morality is nothing other (therefore *no more*!) than obedience to customs, of whatever kind they may be; customs are, however, the *traditional* way of behaving and evaluating. In things in which no tradition commands there is no morality; and the less life is determined by tradition, the smaller the circle of morality. The free human being is immoral because in all things he wants to depend on himself and not on tradition. … What is tradition? A higher authority that one obeys, not because it commands what is *useful* to us, but because it *commands*. (*D* 9; trans. modified from Hollingdale)

In formulating the concept of the morality of custom, Nietzsche shows that the meaning and value of morality change over time.   For pre-moderns, morality consisted in obedience to tradition for nothing other than the sake of tradition itself. It is here that we find the historical origins of the belief in the unconditional character of moral principles.

The history of morality, then, is not just the history of what we Westerners currently regard as morality. The history of what *we* have called morality must be set in the context of the role that morality has played in earlier human societies.   At work in those societies is a morality of custom and tradition, of which the Romans function for Nietzsche as a kind of final flowering before Christianity takes over the Western world—which is why "to a virtuous Roman of the old stamp every *Christian* who 'considered first of all his *own salvation*' appeared—evil" (*D* 9).   By contrast, Nietzsche thinks of modernity as a societal organization in which notions of individual self-regard that originated in Christianity have become general features of society and its self-understanding (this is part of why I employ the term "Christian modern").   It

is a distinctive feature of our sense of morality that we think that it requires rational

justification and that we think that justifications are possible. It is less important, on

Nietzsche's view, whether we ground morality in enlightened self-interest, the greatest

interest of the greatest number, or the structure of rationality itself. What is more

important is that we have failed to realize that all attempts to justify morality take

place against the assumption that a rational justification of morality is both required

and possible. In other words, reasons as to why we should be moral only count as

reasons for us because of the sense of morality we already have.

Nietzsche concludes this section with a double-gesture: on the one hand, he

endorses that individuality which the morality of custom regards as evil or immoral,

and at the same time, he rejects the moral evaluative framework which imposes this

value on individuality. Although the morality of custom has lost its cognitive force—

as is evident for Nietzsche in the fact that we find ourselves in need of "justifications"

for morality at all—the morality of custom has lost none of its *affective* power, as

Nietzsche suggests when he notes that, from the perspective of the morality of custom:

> Every individual action, every individual mode of thought arouses dread;
> it is impossible to compute what precisely the rarer, choicer, more
> original spirits in the whole course of history have had to suffer through
> being felt as evil and dangerous, indeed through *feeling themselves to be
> so*. Under the dominion of the morality of custom, originality of every
> kind has acquired a bad conscience; the sky above the best men is for this
> reason to this very moment gloomier than it need be. (ibid.)

Hence, although Nietzsche agrees that we moderns are "immoral" by the standards of

the morality of custom, Nietzsche refuses to endorse reflectively those standards. If

morality says that individuality is evil, then so much the worse for morality. There is

no turning back from the historical situation of modernity (cf. *HAH* 20). What we need now is a revaluation of values, as a consequence of which we will cease to regard ourselves as *evil* simply because we are *individuals*; in short, the development of a new evaluative framework that will enable us to esteem—and to become—what we are.[78] As moderns, we are individuals, one might say, but due to pre-modern affective commitments, we are ashamed of our individuality. By tracing the origin of those affective commitments to the morality of custom, Nietzsche demonstrates how the desires and values that were appropriate for a premodern social organization are at odds with our contemporary requirements.[79]

Concurrent with the criticism of our affective adherence to morality, Nietzsche continues to criticize the cognitive coherence of morality: "In the same measure as the sense for causality increases, the extent of the domain of morality decreases; for each time one has understood the necessary effects and has learned how to segregate them from all the accidental effects and incidental consequences (*post hoc*), one has destroyed a countless number of *imaginary causalities* hitherto believed in as the foundations of customs—the real world is much smaller than the imaginary—. (*D* 10)"

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[78] As frequently happens in Nietzsche's thought, generalized approval or condemnation turns out to be more nuanced than it first appears. In this context, one must note that the morality of custom requires a practice of self-overcoming so that one's personal advantage will not interfere with obedience. In this respect we moderns remain very much indebted to it, for without it this *askesis* might not have developed at all. Nietzsche develops this point further in *D* 18 and *D* 60.

[79] Of course Nietzsche also argues that the suppression of the individual is characteristic of Christianity. In this respect Christianity is continuous with the morality of custom. But Nietzsche is also attentive to the fact that the importance of the individual was possible as a result of Christianity. What distinguishes Nietzsche from Christian thinkers who also emphasize the individual (e.g. Kierkegaard) is the thought that the development of individualism is part of "the self-sublimation of morality," or of Christianity—that is, part of the way in which Christianity is *overcome by itself*.

Here Nietzsche both reiterates and augments his argument from *HAH* that rigorous natural science is incompatible with the assumptions that underlie morality (see Chapter 2.3). In *D* 11, Nietzsche elaborates further: morality depends on a relationship between guilt and punishment—as if the former bore a rational and causal relation to the latter. Moral notions such as "free will" or "guilt" have the same credibility, viewed from the perspective of a scientific psychology, as superstitions, dogmas, and "old wives' tales." Without these concepts, the morality of custom loses its cognitive hold over us, but without undergoing a corresponding relaxation of its affective grip.

Considered as both cognitive structures and as affective attitudes, the unquestioning obedience demanded by the morality of custom is incompatible with the attitude of free and skeptical inquiry upon which scientific practice rests. To the extent that science is granted hermeneutic authority, the authority of custom, and so of morality, must be correspondingly diminished. Nietzsche nevertheless retains the optimistic, Enlightenment confidence that knowledge liberates, for each element of scientific understanding means that "a piece of anxiety and constraint has vanished from the world" (*D* 10). In order to be fully liberated and enlightened, we must learn to regard morality as we do all other superstitions, as both false and dangerous: "Popular medicine and popular morality belong together and ought not to be evaluated so differently as they still are: both are the *most dangerous* pseudo-sciences" (*D* 10). That is, Nietzsche asserts, we do not evaluate them as similarly as we should, or as we would if we understood them correctly.

Nietzsche continues his assault on our self-understanding (for we still regard ourselves as beings for whom morality has normative force) when he considers the role of pleasure in the development of morality. While in *HAH* Nietzsche devoted some attention to the general connection between morality and pleasure, in *D* Nietzsche considers more extensively *what* we find pleasurable, and among the pleasures he finds cruelty: "Cruelty is one of the oldest festive joys of mankind … for us to practice cruelty is to enjoy the highest gratification of the feeling of power [*Machtgefühls*]" (*D* 18). This is not the kind of pleasure we like to acknowledge, and intentionally causing someone pain is very far removed from what we commonly regard as "morality." Nevertheless, Nietzsche insists, much of what we call morality evolved from the pleasure of causing pain in another or watching another in pain. Nietzsche takes it as axiomatic that we can take pleasure in cruelty, although he acknowledges that it is a very old and "primitive" pleasure. Nietzsche's narrative would have it that the pleasure taken in cruelty led human beings to believe that the gods also enjoy it (since they imagined the gods to be like themselves), and consequently they came to believe that suffering is intrinsically valuable. This led to belief in the moral value of voluntary suffering, that is, cruelty practiced towards oneself.

One might object that this narrative only has critical force if one commits the genetic fallacy by assuming that validity depends on genesis. Nietzsche would commit the genetic fallacy if he thought that we should regard morality as invalid once it were shown to have its origins in cruelty or any other practices that we today would

evaluate as wrong or bad. However, Nietzsche's project here does not rest on the genetic fallacy. Rather, Nietzsche asks us to acknowledge the socio-historical reality of that which we evaluate as positive or good.   In *HAH*, Nietzsche simply challenged the cognitive coherence of moral concepts by showing that methodological naturalism undermines the concepts of intelligible freedom and unegoistic action that morality, considered in Kantian-Schopenhauerian terms, requires. In *D* Nietzsche advances this project by asking us to examine our affective adherence to morality as well. If we respond to the history of morality with a feeling of disgust or discomfort, then perhaps we are not yet ready to acknowledge what morality is.   Alternatively, one might think that our feeling of disgust only indicates how different our morality is from that of older cultures—presumably *they* would not have responded in such a way. (It was not so long ago that public executions were a form of entertainment for all ages and sexes.) We therefore need to acknowledge that *our* morality is not *theirs*.   But just for this reason, Nietzsche would have us ask ourselves whether what we practice today is really "morality" at all and why we should continue to think that we have become more "moral."

In this light, we can see that Nietzsche avoids the genetic fallacy because a certain picture of the source of morality is partially constitutive of the normativity that morality purports to have. As Abbey (2000) puts it, Nietzsche's historically informed accounts do not involve a genetic fallacy because their capacity "to dislodge values is contingent upon the story a morality tells about the source of its values" or as she puts

it elsewhere, "how it [morality] gives itself authority" (5-6). [80]   That is, morality has

normative force at least partially because of what we take to be the source of that

normativity.   Moral concepts and feelings are embedded in a story that morality tells

us about its own origins, and these origins are, among other things, claims about the

source of the normativity that we regard morality as having. Suppose that the concept

of morality entails a kind of universal respect for all humanity.   Suppose further that

one argues that this concept of morality places moral acts and intentions in a category

distinct from other kinds of acts and intentions, and this is in large part why we regard

morality as deserving the distinctive kind of authority that it has. If we thereby think

that morality could not have arisen from the ordinary passions and pleasures of human

beings—those very passions and pleasures which *we* consider "immoral"—then

Nietzsche's account has a critical force against morality because the authority that

morality claims for itself, and so the self-understanding built in to morality, is

inseparable from its claim to a non-naturalistic grounding. [81]

At this point we can formulate with greater precision how Nietzsche's criticism

of morality is supposed to work. Nietzsche does not argue that the morality of custom

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[80] Here Abbey is explicitly referring to "genealogy."   Whether or not the historical reconstructions of morality should be considered as *genealogical* remains contentious.   Owen (2003) argues that *GM* ought to be read as resolving problems in *D*, or put otherwise, that *D* is marked by serious flaws that are only addressed in *GM*.   While there is much about Owen's analysis that I find congenial, the turn in the historical narratives in *D* from conceptual refutation to affective dislodging is at least one respect in which *D* also anticipates subsequent developments.   For this reason I consider Abbey's explanation as to why genealogy does not involve the genetic fallacy relevant to *D*.

[81] This suggests that Nietzsche retains a very "Kantian" way of thinking about morality. When Nietzsche attacks utilitarianism in *Genealogy*, he calls it to task for naïve psychology and superficial historical understanding, not because it lays claim to a transcendent source of value. From a Nietzschean perspective, utilitarianism (like Spencer's evolutionary ethics) is a compromise between MPS and naturalism; as he puts it, "They've gotten rid of the Christian God, and now they hold onto Christian morality all the more: that's *English* logic … " (*TI*, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man" 5).

is identical with contemporary (bourgeois) morality; rather, he uses the concept of the morality of custom, both conceptually and rhetorically, to divorce the cognitive from the affective. Cognitively, the morality of custom is not ours; this is most evident in the ways that we seek to ground morality in something else (e.g. self-advantage, general utility, the structure of rationality). Nevertheless, the morality of custom remains ours at an affective level. In terms of what we desire and feel, we moderns are still pre-modern, obedient to the morality of custom and to tribe-morality; this is why "the sky above the best men is … to this very moment gloomier than it need be" (*D* 9). We may have achieved considerable cognitive freedom, but Nietzsche urges us to continue the Enlightenment through a project of affective liberation.[82] What we still desire in morality is internalized obedience to authority, the internalization of the needs and interests of the community within the individual. In other words, what we *desire* in morality, and what maintains our affective engagement with it, is nothing other than our continued self-enslavement. Put another way, the problem of morality is the problem that we desire our own oppression.[83] As we come to see that morality is a matter of affective adherence as well as of cognitive coherence, we are in a better position to understand how it is that with *Daybreak*, Nietzsche's "campaign against *morality* begins."

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[82] If one considers the strong emphasis on the feelings and drives that distinguished German Romanticism, one can better understand why Nietzsche regards his project as appropriating counter-Enlightenment forces for the continuation of the Enlightenment; see *D* 197.

[83] Framed in this way, Nietzsche's concerns closely resemble those of Reich (1970) and Deleuze and Guattari (1983).

This is not to imply that Nietzsche therefore must hold a noncognitivist metaethics; Nietzsche need only claim that moral judgments (like all judgments) have an affective component, not that they are primarily (much less exclusively) affective (e.g. emotivism or expressivism).   The falsity or fictionality of the presuppositions of morality only count as a reason to reject morality if one holds morality up to a cognitivist metaethical standard and finds it wanting. If Nietzsche's metaethics were simply noncognitivist, the claim that moral judgments are not based on truth would not count as a reason to reject those judgments, as it clearly does for Nietzsche:

> 'To deny morality' … can mean: to deny that moral judgments are based on truths. Here it is admitted that they really are motives of action, but that in this way it is *errors*which, as the basis of all moral judgment, impel men to their moral actions. This is *my* point of view … Thus I deny morality as I deny alchemy, that is, I deny their presuppositions: but I do *not* deny that there have been alchemists who believed in these presuppositions and acted in accordance with them. — I also deny immorality: *not* that countless people *feel* themselves to be immoral, but rather that there is a ground in *truth* for them to feel as they do. It goes without saying that I do not deny—presupposing that I am not a fool— that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged—but I think: *the one, as the other, for other reasons than hitherto*. We have to *learn to think differently* [umzulernen]—in order at last, perhaps very later on, to attain even more: *to feel differently* [umzufühlen]. (*D* 103; trans. modified from Hollingdale)

Nietzsche's denial that moral judgments are based on truths has often been interpreted as a rejection of cognitivism.[84] Reading Nietzsche in this way depends, however, on just what one takes the "presuppositions" (*Voraussetzungen*) of morality to consist of. I have argued that Nietzsche's criticisms of morality can best be understood in light of

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[84] Nietzshce's metaethical views have been heavily contested in recent literature. For a defense of Nietzsche as global non-cognitivist, see Green (2002). For a defense of Nietzsche as cognitivist, see Wilcox (1974) and Schacht (2000).

Kant's celebrated justification of morality. Nietzsche regards at least some normative

claims—namely, those associated with Christian-modern morality—as false. In that

respect he is clearly committed to some cognitive component to normative claims. As

it turns out, such claims are false because they presuppose an incorrect theory of

agency (i.e. one that assigns causal power to fictions such as "free will").[85]

Independently of the cognitive reliability of normative claims, Nietzsche also assesses

the affective status of moral normative claims; it is this which enables him to analyze

morality as driven by paranoia, resentment, and hate, as well as how people continue

to maintain their affective investment in morality despite its lack of cognitive

coherence. It is this which enables him to explain how people desire their own

repression. One can see both strategies at work in Nietzsche's polemic against Pascal:

> Whatever proceeds from the stomach, the intestines, the beating of the
> heart, the nerves, the bile, the semen—all of those distempers,
> debilitations, excitations, the whole chance operation of the machine of
> which we still know so little!—had to be seen by a Christian such as Pascal
> as a moral and religious phenomenon, and he had to ask whether God or
> Devil, good or evil, salvation or damnation was to be discovered in them!
> Oh what an unhappy interpreter! How he had to twist and torment his
> system! How he had to twist and torment himself so as to be in the right!
> (*D* 86)

Pascal, here taken as paradigmatic of Christian-modern morality (MPS), suffers from

both cognitive and affective deformities. Pascal suffers, in part, because he

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[85] If Nietzsche were committed to noncognitivism, it would be inconsistent for him to argue that some normative claims are false; noncognitivism argues that such claims are not truth-evaluable at all. On the one hand, Nietzsche could subscribe to some version of Mackie's "error theory," according to which *all* normative claims are *false* because they purport to describe states of affairs that do not exist. This is, admittedly, an attractive way out. On the other hand, if Nietzsche were committed to there being some true normative claims, then he could not be an error theorist. The question then turns on whether or not normative claims such as "one ought to create oneself as a work of art" are to be taken as true. If this claim is supposed to be taken to be true, then Nietzsche cannot subscribe to noncognitivism or to an error-theory.

presupposes that basically natural phenomena—i.e. his own body, in all of its fleshy contingency—must be assigned a non-naturalistic interpretation. As a discursive practice, morality acts as a procrustean bed for psychological and biological phenomena. The "chance operation of the machine" cannot even show up as an object for empirical investigation, since every aspect of morphology and physiology must assume a religious-moral meaning. The Christian-modern interpreters of the body are poor philologists of embodiment, much as Catholic opponents of Galileo were poor philologists of nature when they insisted that the sun must go around the earth because the sun stopped during the battle of Jericho. But there is a crucial difference between poor interpretation of nature and poor interpretation of oneself. The Christian-modern moral interpretation is also a cause of self-hatred and paranoia: he is an "unhappy interpreter" who must "twist and torment" himself in order to be "in the right."[86] The dogmas of Christianity, whether articulated as religious doctrines or as postulates of pure practical reason, are symptoms of the cognitive and affective deficiency of morality.[87]

If that is the case, however, we are still owed some account of what Nietzsche would advocate as an alternative to morality and an account of the criteria according to which Nietzsche would advocate this alternative. In order to understand how

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[86] On the close relationship between Christianity and hatred, see also *D* 411. Nietzsche comments on the roots of hatred in Judaism in *D* 377, and at *D* 516, he suggests that self-hatred is the cause of the devaluation of egoism and positive valuation of unegoism.

[87] Notice that it does not follow that any non-naturalistic interpretation of our activity and agency will cause suffering in the same way that morality does. One might think of Kant's ethics as a non-naturalistic account which does not cause suffering; Kant's injunction to respect humanity, whether in one's self or in that of another, seems at first far removed from the self-loathing of Pascal or Luther. On the other hand, it should be pointed out that it is *humanity* which commands our respect, not one's own unique self.

Nietzsche attempts to discharge both of these theoretical obligations, we must turn

next to a more detailed discussion of how the criticism of morality depends on an

account of the material conditions of subjectivity (3.2). Only in terms of these

conditions will we be able to appreciate the difference between autonomy and

morality (3.3).

3.2   The Material Conditions of Subjectivity

In referring to the material conditions of subjectivity, I want to show how

Nietzsche is committed to thinking of subjectivity as conditioned by historical, social,

psychological, and even biological factors that all admit a methodologically

naturalistic analysis.   While all of these factors play some role in the criticisms of

morality in *Daybreak*, Nietzsche devotes the most attention to developing a

naturalistic psychology of the unconscious. This theory of "the drives and affects"

specifies how conceptually structured mental states (e.g. beliefs, thoughts) and their

affective correlates are conditioned by unconscious drives and impulses.   Though

philosophers prior to Nietzsche had developed a theory of the unconscious, Nietzsche

is distinctive in that, like Freud, he regards the unconscious as simultaneously

individual *and* general.[88] The unconscious is individual in that it exerts causal

influence on an individual's thoughts, desires, motivations, and actions. The

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[88] In this respect I distinguish between Nietzsche and Freud from previous philosophers such as
Schopenhauer and Hartmann, for whom the unconscious is only general.   The existence of an
individual unconscious is acknowledged by Leibniz, as Nietzsche himself notes (*GS* 357).

unconscious is general in that it comprises the drives and instincts of our shared

biological and cultural heritage.   There will therefore be both individual and general

components to the unconscious, the relative importance of which will depend on

which aspects of our cognitive and affective evaluations one is interested in

understanding.

    With the assumption that there are unconscious psychological states, Nietzsche

is committed to the assertion that conscious thought rests on a ground that cannot be

conceptually articulated and to that extent cannot be rendered an object of

consciousness. Nietzsche claims that unconscious mental states include "drives" (*D*

109), "sensations" (*D* 117), and even thoughts (*D* 382: " … *conclusions* grow up in us

like fungus: one morning they are there, we know not how, and they gaze upon us,

morose and grey.").[89]   All of these cases are alluded to in Nietzsche's use of "the

drives" (alternatively, "the drives and affects").   Nietzsche assumes that

consciousness is not self-supporting or self-maintaining; what one calls the 'soul' is

just "the sum of the inner movements which a man *finds easy*, and as a consequence

performs gracefully and with pleasure" (*D* 311).   Nor does Nietzsche allow us to

consider the intellect as somehow separate from the drives: " … our intellect is only

the blind instrument of *another drive* which is a *rival* of the drive whose vehemence is

tormenting us. … At bottom it is one drive *which is complaining about another*; that is

to say: for us to become aware that we are suffering from the *vehemence* of a drive

presupposes the existence of another equally vehement drive or even more vehement

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[89] Clearly, a more fully worked out account of Nietzsche's psychology would need to do justice to all of
these cases.

drive, and that a *struggle* is in prospect in which our intellect is going to have to take

sides (*D* 109)." In cases where the intellect is positioned in a conflict between

drives—which is to say, throughout the entirety of one's psychological existence—it

is not even clear if the intellect has any choice as to which side to take; it may be that

the intellect must simply take the side of the stronger drive.[90]

A distinctive feature of Nietzsche's psychology concerns the plasticity of the

unconscious: the unconscious is partially conditioned by past experiences.[91] For this

to be true, it has to be the case that conscious states can causally influence

unconscious states.[92] As Nietzsche argues, "… whether or not he has a courteous

memory in the end determines … whether he regards his own inclinations and

intentions with a noble, benevolent, or mistrustful eye; and it determines, finally, the

nature of these inclinations and intentions themselves" (*D* 278). That is, one's

conscious attitudes towards one's inclinations and intentions—which are usually

regarded as unconscious states—can nevertheless causally affect those states.

In order to clarify the relation between drives and evaluations, Nietzsche needs

to provide an account of how the drives and affects can generate cognitive and

affective evaluations and how these evaluations can in turn affect the expression of the

drives. Nietzsche argues that drives are interpreted in moral terms only against a

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[90] In light of the fact that *D* 109 outlines several different methods of attenuating the intensity of a drive, it would appear that the intellect has some capacity for independent choice. Nevertheless, it is on account of the drives that it *must* choose.

[91] As *D* 109 suggests, Nietzsche clearly acknowledges that the drives are plastic with respect to their expression. What Nietzsche lacks is a theoretical vocabulary, such as that of Freudian psychoanalysis, with which to explain that plasticity.

[92] On the importance of causal interactions between conscious and unconscious states, see Katsafanas (2005).

background of moral evaluations, and that the same drive can be expressed in different

ways, under different socio-historical conditions, according to differences in the

context of already-evaluated drives:

> The same drive evolves into a painful feeling of *cowardice* under the
> impress of the reproach custom has imposed on this drive: or into the
> pleasant feeling of *humility* if it happens that a custom such as the Christian
> has taken it to its heart and called it *good*. … In itself it has, *like every
> drive*, neither this moral character nor any moral character at all, nor even a
> definite attendant sensation of pleasure or displeasure: it acquires all this, as
> its second nature, only when it enters into relations with drives already
> baptized good or evil or is noted as a quality of beings the people has
> already evaluated and determined in a moral sense. (*D* 38)

Nietzsche here argues that no particular drive has any value (much less specifically

moral value) in itself (that is, considered in abstraction from all other drives); a drive

is simply an impulse or need. The drives acquire value and significance only when

interpreted, and such interpretation always takes place within a social context already

conditioned by other drives that have been imprinted with meaning and value.

Whether a drive is expressed through feelings of cowardice or of humility—and so

whether it is associated with pain or pleasure—is not determined by any properties

intrinsic to the drive. The phenomena of moral psychology are grounded in drives

and affects that, taken by themselves, have no moral significance or value whatsoever.

If we really are constituted by relations and conflicts between drives and affects,

why is this not generally noticed? Nietzsche accounts for this in terms of the

inadequacy of our conceptualizations of the drives and affects:

> Language and the prejudices upon which language is based are a manifold
> hindrance to us when we want to explain inner processes and drives:
> because of the fact, for example, that words really exist only for
> *superlative* degrees of these processes and drives … *We are none of us*

that which we appear to be in accordance with the states for which alone
we have consciousness and words, and consequently praise and blame;
those cruder outbursts of which alone we are aware make us
misunderstand ourselves. … *Our opinion of ourselves*, however, which
we have arrived at by this erroneous path, the so-called 'I,' is therefore a
fellow worker in the construction of our character and our destiny. (*D*
115)

Since we lack the requisite conceptual vocabulary for the drives and affects—

including our own—we lack immediate, non-inferential knowledge of them. "Our

character and destiny" ("*unseres Charakters und Schicksals*")—one is immediately

reminded of Heraclitus—is therefore formed by something other than what we

identify ourselves with. We refer to ourselves as "I" (*Ich*), and we identify with this

"I" or "ego."[93] Yet the ego is erroneous, for in fact our psychic life is comprised of

numerous "inner processes and drives" for which we have neither language nor (and

perhaps consequently) consciousness. We are far more than we think we are. The

assurances of rational self-consciousness cannot be maintained.

Nietzsche repeatedly insists on the incompleteness of our knowledge of drives

and affects: "the primeval delusion still lives on that one knows, and knows quite

precisely in every case, *how human action is brought about*" (*D* 116). However,

Nietzsche stresses that, "no amount of knowledge about an act *ever* suffices to ensure

its performance, that the space between knowledge and action has never yet been

bridged even in one single instance" (ibid.). It is due to this "unbridgeable space"

that, even for someone dedicated to knowledge, "nothing can be more incomplete

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[93] In the translation from *D* 115 I have replaced Hollingdale's "ego" with "I" as a translation of "*Ich*."
However, I shall continue to use the term "ego" except where I wish to emphasize the deceptive nature
of first-person experience for Nietzsche.

than the image of the totality of drives which constitute his being" (*D* 119).   Our

conceptually-articulated representations must therefore fall short of capturing the

totality of our sensations and affects in their corporeal and visceral context.

    With this in mind, we can now return to the problem of subjectivity.   On the one

hand, Nietzsche's naturalistic psychology holds that we are constituted by an

unknowable totality of drives.   On the other hand, as a matter of phenomenology, we

understand ourselves as coherent unities and not as a collection of drives.[94]   Insofar as

we consider ourselves as agents (from a "first-person" perspective), we have non-

inferential, immediate knowledge of ourselves as unified subjects of experience and

action.   Insofar as we consider ourselves as natural organisms, we have empirical, and

so inferential, knowledge that we are an assemblage of instincts, drives, and affects.

How can a multiplicity of drives and affects constitute a feeling and thinking subject?

(Even if the unity of the subject is a just a narrative center of gravity à la Dennett, one

still wants to know how *that* is possible.)

    Nietzsche requires an account of how an organization of drives and affects

comes to be the sort of thing that is not only a part of the world but also inhabits a

perspective on the world.   In other words, what Nietzsche requires is an account of

the origin of subjectivity.   He finds the beginning of an account in the fact that the

drives and affects themselves are already at work interpreting, in that they constantly

select for those situations which will permit them to discharge their particular amount

of energy.   As interpreting, drives construe the indeterminate world (cf. the

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[94] Allison (1996) stresses this point in his analysis of Kant's response to Humean challenges to personal identity.

"unknowable but *felt* text" at *D* 119) as consisting of meaningful and valuable objects and situations. But as interpreted, one never has immediate access to the drives themselves, one experiences their activities in the feeling of finding something meaningful and/or valuable. What is experienced is not the organization of drives and affects (except in rare cases of mental illness) but one's awareness of having a perspective on the world. Having such a perspective depends on the coherence and stability of the overall organization of drives. If the organization is sufficiently coherent, then conflicts between drives can be either sublimated or repressed. So long as conflicts between drives can be dealt with in one of those ways, we can say that the drives are organized in a form which we can call a subjectivity, a point of view on the world.

The above line of thought can be summarized as following. A form of subjectivity is a mode of evaluation that depends on certain activities for its continuation and enhancement. The required activities are those that are regarded as valuable and meaningful by that form of subjectivity. For this reason, one can follow Deleuze (1983) in saying that values are expressions of modes of evaluation.[95] What a subject regards as valuable depends on the requirements of that mode of evaluation. Different modes of evaluation, i.e. forms of subjectivity, are made possible by virtue of different material conditions which can be understood through empirically testable psychological and historical hypotheses. These "material conditions of possibility"

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[95] "On the one hand, values appear or are given as principles; and evaluation presupposes values on the basis of which phenomena are appraised. But, on the other hand and more profoundly, it is values which presuppose evaluations, 'perspectives of appraisal,' from which their own value is derived" (Deleuze 1983, 1).

include historical, sociological, psychological, and biological conditions, i.e.,

conditions which are themselves conditioned.[96] Psychologically, a specifiable

arrangement of drives is the material condition of possibility for a corresponding

mode of subjectivity.   By emphasizing how the conditions of subjectivity are

themselves conditioned, Nietzsche's psychology is consistent with "methodological

naturalism": the methodological exclusion of the a priori.   As material rather than

formal, the conditions are contingent, not necessary; local, not universal; and plastic,

not fixed.   For this reason, different socio-historically specific conditions make

possible different forms of subjectivity as different modes of evaluation. Each mode

of evaluation corresponds to a form of subjectivity: a way in which the world shows

up as containing affordances of meaning, purpose, and value.

The account of the material conditions of subjectivity in *Daybreak* can therefore

be seen as the thesis that subjectivity is never simply "given," but instead is

constructed over both historical and personal time, that there are as many different

forms of subjectivity as there are stable configurations of drives, and that there are

conditions of possibility that differ from one form of subjectivity to another. We

should no longer refer to *the subject* that we discover to be apodictically given to

itself. Rather, we interpret ourselves in terms of *multiple subjectivities* This means

that subjectivities are conditioned by determining structures that, on the one hand, are

made and not given, and on the other, are not simply the consequences of the

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[96] For example, Nietzsche recognizes that what is regarded as beautiful, worthy of reverence, and hateful can vary significantly from one culture to another; see *D* 170. Nietzsche raises, but does not answer, the question as to the extent to which someone from our culture can understand Greek art in light how differently they thought about beauty and sexuality.

intentions of particular conscious subjects. With this shift in theoretical perspective, Nietzsche can ask how different kinds of subjectivity are made possible by different social conditions, i.e. questions of "breeding."   Only in these terms, I shall argue, can sense be made of Nietzsche's "campaign against morality" and of what constitutes a "free spirit."

3.3 Morality versus Autonomy

In light of his criticisms of morality, it should be emphasized that Nietzsche's goal through *Daybreak* is not the abolition of all normative standards and criteria. Rather, he is concerned to reject a particular way of thinking about norms and their place in human affairs—a way of thinking that he calls "morality."   But what exactly is wrong with morality, and what alternative does Nietzsche offer?   This question can be approached by way of Nietzsche's objection: "'And in *summa*: what is it you really want changed?' — We want to cease making causes into sinners and consequences into executioners" (*D* 208).   But is there a mode of evaluation, and a corresponding form of subjectivity, which is consistent with a methodologically naturalistic self-conception, or are we moderns doomed to incompatible cognitive and affective commitments?   If liberation from Christian-modern morality is both possible and desirable, it lies in a form of subjectivity whose affective investments are consistent with a cognitive commitment to methodological naturalism.

Throughout *Daybreak*, Nietzsche maintains, in contrast to "morality," a commitment to the positive value of "individuality." By this I mean the importance of thinking and feeling for oneself, according to one's own principles. (One's existence as a temporally and spatially discrete biological entity may be a necessary condition for individuality in this sense, but it is far from sufficient.) As shown above (3.1), part of Nietzsche's critique of morality in *D* consists of showing how the affective adherence demanded by Christian-modern morality causes a systematic devaluation, or undervaluation, of individuality. The imposition of moral categories on creativity and individuality means that creative individuals understand themselves in moral terms, and as such, as evil. But Nietzsche also insists that simply being an individual is exceedingly difficult, both because of societal forces which prevent the emergence of individuality and because of psychological forces which prevent most people from becoming individuals. I will show that we can better understand both the societal and psychological restraints on the cultivation of individuality by considering how morality should be regarded as a form of heteronomous subjectivity, and that autonomous subjectivity, i.e. individuality, requires overcoming heteronomous subjectivity by way of the critique of morality.

In the course of criticizing morality, Nietzsche makes three points about how society mounts resistance to the cultivation of individuality. First, he notes that individuals are regarded as a threat to social cohesion; this is why one "never tires of enumerating and indicting all that is evil and inimical, prodigal, costly, extravagant in the form individual existence has assumed hitherto, one hopes to manage more

cheaply, more safely, more equitably, more uniformly if there only exist *large bodies and their members*" (*D* 132).   I take "large bodies and their members" to be a Nietzschean gloss on the array of socially available identities, i.e., workers associations, social clubs, cultural organization, political associations, media, academia, etc.   It is not clear whether Nietzsche is concerned with the existence of people who play no part whatsoever in any of these "large bodies"; what is clear, however, is that Nietzsche is concerned with those who do not find within these large bodies the cognitive and affective resources for constructing their entire identity, and who therefore must engage, to some degree or another, in a process of self-construction.

Second, Nietzsche recognizes that fear of the loss of social cohesion plays an important role in maintaining social cohesion.   Although Nietzsche condemns and mocks the "fear of the individual" (*D* 173), he also recognizes that society is right to fear "the danger of dangers—*the* individual!" (ibid.).   This fear is understandable because "the individual" really is a threat to social cohesion, as social cohesion is commonly understood.   Nietzsche also asserts that the fear of loss of social cohesion provides a means of libidinal investment, "For it uses up an extraordinary amount of nervous energy, which is thus denied to reflection, brooding, dreaming, worrying, loving, hating …" (ibid.).   This fear thereby prevents the expression of those emotional registers by means of which individuality flourishes.

Thirdly, Nietzsche claims that morality is one of the principal mechanisms whereby social cohesion is maintained.   It is by virtue of their own adherence to

moral norms and standards that "the sky above the best men is for this reason to this very moment gloomier than it need be" (*D* 9).   In so far as "the best men"—those who are capable of cultivating their individuality—evaluate their own individuality from the moral perspective, as a deviation from "what one does," morality serves to inhibit the acknowledgment and further cultivation of their individuality. One of the purposes of Nietzsche's critique of morality is to provide such individuals with the tools they require in order to break themselves free of the moral codes through which they self-censor their thoughts and actions.

We can now see that Nietzsche criticizes morality because its presuppositions are basically false; more specifically, it uses concepts that are intelligible in relation to a presupposition that is thoroughly undermined by a naturalistic psychology of drives and affects. Consider how Nietzsche characterizes morality in terms of a tendency to identify oneself and others with their social roles. Such identification is only possible if one regards oneself as a fixed identity which can be entirely known to the agent and to others. More specifically, Nietzsche is concerned with the *intra*-subjective deformations that are grounded in this false presupposition. The belief that one has a fixed identity makes it possible to blame oneself for things in one's past. If one regards oneself as being a certain kind of person, one can become obsessed with questions as to the kind of person that one is. Is one a "sinner" or a "good person"? Is one going to Hell or to Heaven?   The resulting paranoia and self-hatred is both cognitively dangerous and affectively undesirable.   It is cognitively dangerous because the obsession with a fixed identity is grounded in false beliefs about the

structure of subjectivity (e.g.. a denial that subjectivity is constituted by plastic and contingent factors and a denial that consciousness is conditioned by the unconscious). [97]

Yet if unreflective identification with a dominant societal role were the crux of the problem, one would be able to mount effective resistance to this tendency through an appeal to being true to one's self (call this the "Polonian strategy"—"to thine own self be true").   Let the first sort of morality—identification with a dominant social role—be called "the ethics of adaptability." Let the second approach, the Polonian strategy, be called "the ethics of authenticity." [98]   If one thinks of heteronomy as a sort of successful internalization of structures of domination; then the ethics of authenticity, with its emphasis on the integrity of the individual, would seem to suffice for autonomy.   One would no longer judge oneself guilty as a result of having been regarded as guilty by others. In judging oneself guilty, one internalizes one's powerlessness; one dis-empowers oneself.   The authentic individual no longer acts this way.   One might think that as a consequence the ethics of authenticity—the Polonian strategy—counts as a form of autonomy.   But this is not the case.

On the one hand, the ethics of authenticity does mark a significant advance over the ethics of adaptability by valuing the decision and integrity of the individual over his or her ability to conform to the norms of a group or groups. On the other hand, the

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[97] There is another line of thought in Nietzsche's critique of morality, both in *D* and subsequently: that the moralistic obsession with fixed identity will tend to undercut or inhibit techniques that would result in increased self-knowledge through the construction of empirical (hence naturalistic) hypotheses about the constitution of one's subjectivity.

[98] On both "ethics of adaptability" and "ethics of authenticity," see Owen (1994, 221).

ethics of authenticity, just like the ethics of adaptability, assumes the existence of a

fixed and stable self.   There are two problems with this assumption. The first

problem is that it is inconsistent with a naturalized drive-psychology. As shown above

(3.2), the material conditions of subjectivity include heterogeneous drives and affects

that cannot be adequately represented in consciousness but which nevertheless

influence every action.   The Polonian strategy presupposes a model of subjectivity

that is falsified by a naturalistic drive psychology.

The second problem is related to the first. The assumption of the fixity of the

self is not only inconsistent with the dynamics of the drives and affects that constitute

any form of subjectivity, it also denies that the norms and values according to which

we act are only an expression of authority, and so of power—whether that of others

over oneself, or one's own self-mastery.   If norms and values are imbued with

normative authority only insofar as we take them to be so, such that there is no

foundation for normative authority other than our own activity of taking-as-normative,

then everything with which we normally identify—our various commitments, projects,

and decisions—are contingent and revisable, just because the normative authority is

itself contingent and revisable.   There is no barrier or limit, either external *or* internal,

to self-creation. Yet both the ethics of adaptation and the ethics of authenticity

presuppose that norms and values are given rather than constructed. The ethics of

adaptation construes norms and values as external constraints on action, usually

located in some authority figure, either real or fictional. The ethics of authenticity

rejects all external constraints but nevertheless accepts that there are *internal*

constraints—internal to the self—which constrain, or at least regulate, the possibilities for thought and action.   The parallelism between the ethics of adaptability and the ethics of authenticity shows that both are species of heteronomous subjectivity.   The difference between them is that the ethics of adaptability is an external heteronomy, whereas the ethics of authenticity is an internalized heteronomy.   Autonomy cannot be achieved through the pursuit of authenticity.

Heteronomous subjectivity is made possible by two features of the moral interpretation.   The first, already discussed, is that morality employs anti-naturalistic concepts in its interpretation of human agency. The second is that the moral interpretation fails to recognize that it is an interpretation. (In light of the role that the drives and affects play as interpreters of the indeterminate world, a naturalistic psychology is committed to the inescapability of the hermeneutic circle.[99]) Consequently, morality takes itself, and demands that it be so taken, to be the truth about subjectivity *tout court*.   For this reason, moral self-interpretations inhibit the process of calling into question accepted and established norms and values that is required for autonomy. Insofar as morality refuses to consider itself as an interpretation, it refuses to acknowledge the truth about itself—namely, that it is only an interpretation and so only a particular form of subjectivity.   By contrast, a fully naturalistic account would be committed to acknowledging that, since we are constituted by multiple interpreting drives and affects, there is no fixed essence that can be rendered transparent to consciousness. Realization of this is a necessary

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[99] Cox (1999) argues that Nietzsche's naturalism is a "hermeneutic naturalism," according to which the mutual entailment of naturalism and hermeneutics necessarily results from the collapse of traditional metaphysical systems.

condition for autonomous subjectivity; if autonomy is possible, would consist of the formation of a type of subjectivity in which one is no longer wracked by paranoia, guilt, and self-hatred. It would be a form of subjectivity in which one no longer desires one's own oppression.[100]

In order to show that autonomous subjectivity is both possible and desirable on a naturalistic psychology, Nietzsche needs to satisfy two conditions. Firstly, he needs to retain a deflated conception of freedom according to which self-determination is possible; if self-determination is impossible, then so is autonomy. Secondly, he needs to distinguish this conception from the various "anti-naturalistic" posits with which it has been entangled, such as a counter-causal free will. He needs, in other words, to insist on the desirability of freedom while at the same time maintaining that "the realm of thought appears to be, in comparison with the realm of action, willing, and experience, a *realm of freedom*: while in reality it is, as aforesaid, only a realm of surfaces and self-satisfaction" (*D* 125). I will show that Nietzsche is committed to a suitably deflated concept of self-determination that does not conflict with his naturalistic drive-psychology.

Nietzsche's concept of self-determination can be reconstructed from his theoretical and practical insights concerning the cultivation of individuality. Thus, for example, he claims, "[O]ne should regard oneself as a variable quantity whose capacity for achievement can under favorable circumstances perhaps equal the highest ever known: one should thus reflect on one's circumstances and spare no effort in

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[100] Compare *GS* 275: "*What is the seal of having become free? —* No longer to be ashamed before oneself."

observing them" (*D* 326). Here two characteristically Nietzschean themes are sounded: that individualization should be understood as a sort of ethical perfectionism, and that such individualization is accomplished by means of constant and intense observation of oneself and the situations in which one finds oneself.[101] And, in what seems to be a typically self-aggrandizing confession, Nietzsche notes, "If we take the decisive step and enter upon the path which is called our 'own path,' then we will find that all those who formerly were our friends are offended once we have taken a distance away from them. What are we to do? My advice is: to inaugurate our sovereignty by promising all our acquaintances a year's amnesty for all their sins" (*D* 484). Of particular importance here is the assumption (which may have been borne out by Nietzsche's own experience) that the development of one's individuality necessarily causes the resentment of one's "friends and familiars."

Two further points are worth noting. The first is that Nietzsche allows, at least so far as *Daybreak* is concerned, that the path to individuality is open and available to everyone. The second is that most people are inhibited from pursuing this path because of either an internal cognitive or affective resistance. Thus, Nietzsche notes, "[A]ll this we are at liberty to do: but how many know we are at liberty to do it? Do the majority not *believe* in *themselves* as in complete *fully-developed facts*? Have the great philosophers not put a seal on this prejudice with the doctrine of the unchangeability of character?" (*D* 560). Here Nietzsche stakes out his opposition to the denial of psychological fluidity that underpins both the ethics of adaptability and

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[101] It should not be thought that ethical perfectionism requires that there be some antecedently given self which is perfected. On the contrary, perfectionism and self-creation can be regarded as consistent; see Cavell (1990).

the ethics of authenticity.   But, even apart from this cognitive block, there remains an affective one: even those who engage in self-cultivation still feel that, in doing so, they are "evil":

> … we shall restore to men their goodwill towards the actions decried as egoistic and restore to these actions their *value—we shall deprive them of their bad conscience*!   And since they have hitherto been by far the most frequent actions, and will continue to be so for all future time, we thus remove from the entire aspect of action and life its*evil appearance* ! This is a very significant result! When man no longer regards himself as evil he ceases to be so! (*D* 148)

The vast majority believe that all egoism is evil. As a consequence of having successfully internalized the evaluative framework of morality, they continue to evaluate themselves according to that framework even—or especially—when they violate it.

None of this is to suggest that Nietzsche's positive ideal should be understood as acting according to whatever whim or passion happens to come along.   On the contrary; Nietzsche maintains that even individuals require certain virtues: "*Honest* towards ourselves and whoever *else* is a friend to us; *brave* towards the enemy; *magnaminous* towards the defeated; *polite*—always: this is what the four cardinal virtues want us to be" (*D* 556).   Nietzsche does not appeal to Christian virtues, such as humility or chastity, but he appeals to virtues nevertheless, which suggests that freedom consists of adopting some attitude or set of attitudes towards oneself.   Being a free spirit—"one who has *become* free"—is Nietzsche's version of autonomy as self-determination.   But since self-cultivation requires some fundamental egoism—it is, after all, one's own self that is taken as intrinsically valuable—self-cultivation also

turns out to be evil, as evaluated within the moral framework. Undermining this framework on both cognitive and affective grounds thereby creates the space for an ethics of self-cultivation.[102]

The naturalized theory of freedom consists of the following commitments. Firstly, a theory of self-determination entails reflective endorsement of one's subjectivity: one acknowledges (constructs an interpretation of) and affirms one's own subjectivity. Nietzsche indicates his commitment to this thesis in the emphasis he places on self-cultivation. Secondly, this commitment is based on a naturalistic understanding of subjectivity. Subjectivity is therefore understood as conditioned by multiple unconscious drives, such that the structure of the subject is a consequence of the history of the drives and their relations. Though unconscious, these drives determine that one has the beliefs, desires, and intentions that one has. As a consequence of this second commitment, reflective endorsements incorporate the naturalistic insight that subjectivity is never an apodictic given. Even the process of reflective endorsement is only a "second-order interpretation": it is an interpretation of that interpretation which one is (since the drives themselves are, in some sense, also interpreting). Therefore, since naturalistically informed reflective endorsement is itself an interpretation, there must be a drive which lies behind and gives rise to this activity. This drive is what Nietzsche refers to as "the passion for knowledge"

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[102] Corresponding to his insistence on the cultivation of individuality, Nietzsche denies that there should be a single moral code that applies universally. One should not preach a single morality for everyone, but to "a single individual, and in doing so [one] looks neither to the right nor to the left" (*D* 194).

(*Erkenntnisleid*), a new drive that distinguishes us from our ancestors.[103]   The passion

for knowledge is harnessed to the desire for self-knowledge; with the fulfillment of

this desire, one comes to realize that one is conditioned by a historically contingent

arrangement of drives and affects, and it is only by recognizing this that the project of

liberation that Nietzsche identifies with the Enlightenment can be brought to

completion.

Consequently, we see that an autonomous subject has, at a minimum,

reflectively endorsed the historically contingent practices whereby the elements came

together into a unified willing, desiring, and thinking subject. That is, one does not

reflectively endorse one's present identity, but rather endorses the process whereby

certain elements have come together in a contingent and temporary arrangement.[104]

Acknowledgment of the historical contingency of one's psychological character is a

condition both for exerting one's will to reject those parts of the self which are not

endorsed *reflectively*, and for engaging (and in continuing to engage) in practices that

bring more drives and affects into the orbit of the conscious, willing ego.[105]

Autonomous subjectivity is therefore possible only if one acknowledges that, because

one is always already a multiplicity of drives and affects, there is no fixed, self-

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[103] "Our *drive to knowledge* [Erkenntnisleid] has become too strong for us to be able to want happiness without knowledge or the happiness of a strong, firmly rooted delusion. … Knowledge has in us been transformed into a passion …" (*D* 429).

[104] This entails that one will also endorse subsequent re-arrangements.

[105] I think of Nietzsche's ethics as being, in part, an anticipation of Freud's motto, "where It was, there I will become."   The other part of Nietzsche's ethics, which I do not find in Freud, consists of experimenting on the self in ways that open it up to further heterogeneous elements, drives and affects: "One must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star" (*TSZ* Prologue 5). For a slightly different analysis of the dialectic between integration of affects into one's self and increasing one's inner turmoil, see Richardson (1996, esp. 68-9).

transparent identity. One is nothing other than a work in progress. The ethical task is not to discover the kind of person one is, but to construct oneself or to work on oneself, both cognitively and affectively—to engage in "the arts of the self."[106]

This much suggests that the distinction between heteronomous and autonomous subjectivity does not lie in whether normative standards are imposed on one by others or if they are self-imposed—since that is the basis of the distinction between adaptability and authenticity—but in whether one accepts that norms and values are made, not given. Nietzsche is clearly committed to the thought that recognition of the historicity and "fictionality" of all norms and values is a condition of possibility for the creation of norms and values that express one's own individuality and particularity. But put this way, one could conceivably both acknowledge the historicity and contingency of all norms and values without thereby contesting any of the norms or values to which one is subjected. Nietzsche's theory must be able to accommodate this sort of case in order to avoid becoming a merely aesthetic voluntarism.

One of the ways in which voluntarism gets going is with the assumption that whatever the subject is conscious of can be made the object of the subject's will; hence, if one is aware of the historicity and contingency of norms, one can contest them. But the easy slide from consciousness to will is only put into action by means of the very sort of model of subjectivity that is undermined by Nietzsche's theory of

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[106] I owe the phrase "the arts of the self" to Connolly (1999), as well as his important point that the arts of the self work in both cognitive and affective registers. (Connolly takes the term from Foucault).

material conditions.   On the other hand, that same theory shows that it is possible for one to revise or create new norms and values under at least some conditions.

We can now use the distinction between heteronomous and autonomous subjectivity to re-cast Nietzsche's criticism of morality as well as the ethics of individuality and creativity he advances in its place. Heteronomous subjectivity, as an internalization of domination, is a subjectivity that has been structured through social practices which one has not subjected to critical examination.[107] One might identify with a set of social practices and locate oneself with respect to them, but in doing so one does not lay claim to or take responsibility for one's own individuality.   As a heteronomous subject, I do not act as an individual who bears responsibility for his beliefs, but as someone who does "what one does" as a "good citizen" or "member of society," in terms of a fixed identity. My intentions and actions are the consequence of how my drives and affects are structured, but the structure itself is not one that I have reflectively revised or endorsed.

Since the heteronomous subject does not recognize his own heteronomy, he cannot see how he himself is imbricated in affective investments and cognitive structures embedded in those social practices in terms of which he understands himself and the world.   The totality of conditions and relations that determine how the world shows up for him as possessing certain ranges of significance and value is opaque to

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[107] The interpretation of self-determination as the capacity to *revise* norms and practices has been helpfully emphasized by Guay (2002). In contrast with Guay, I take the object of revision to be one's own subjectivity, including the drives and affects themselves, and so not merely normatively guided practices. While emphasizing Nietzsche's historicism, one should take care not to lose sight of his naturalism (or vice versa). Keeping both in focus simultaneously has been difficult for both Anglophone (Nehemas, Leiter) and Continental (Derrida, Deleuze) Nietzscheans.

his consciousness.   As a consequence, one can say that he avoids the material

conditions of his own subjectivity.   By contrast, an autonomous subjectivity has

organized itself by engaging in those practices which contribute to organizing the

drives and affects in specific ways. An autonomous subject can only be autonomous

by participating in the material conditions of her own subjectivity, and this is

impossible without a corresponding degree of acknowledgement of those

conditions.[108]   Hence, we can say that heteronomy and autonomy are characterized by

attitudes of avoidance or acknowledgement with respect to the totality of conditions

and relations which make them possible. The distinction between heteronomous and

autonomous subjectivity can be understood in terms of the relation between individual

consciousness and material conditions (including history and embodiment).

One must notice, however, that there are limits to how far one can go with

one's self-creation. We do not create the raw materials from which we create

ourselves: the body, the drives and affects, the discursive and non-discursive

practices of the culture into which we are socialized. Recognition of this provides

us with an alternative to Leiter's (1998) "paradox" of determinism and self-

creation: self-fashioning is contingent on acknowledgement of the material

conditions of subjectivity. This contingency works in two respects. Firstly,

reflection on the material conditions of subjectivity reveals that subjectivity is not

fixed. Secondly, such reflection is the first step in determining what can be

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[108] It should be emphasized again that neither the acknowledgment nor the participation can be freely chosen by the subject *ab initio*.   Under conditions where subjects desire their own oppression, they must be seduced into desiring their freedom.   The process of seducing people into desiring their own freedom is education.

affected and how it can be affected, since one must know what one is in order to influence what one will become. In both respects, acknowledgment of the material conditions of subjectivity is a condition of possibility for self-fashioning and not, according to Leiter's "paradox," its negation.[109] By engaging in various forms of self-transformation, we come to recognize that identity is not fixed, but rather fluid, provisional, and available for contestation and revision.

3.4 Morality and Maturity from Kant to Nietzsche

The absence of a fixed and original point of reference and meaning in either the object (pre-Kantian) or the subject (post-Kantian) means that we find ourselves on our own (non-foundationalism). Acknowledging this state of affairs means acknowledging that we have no other norms for determining what our cognitive commitments and affective investments should be other than those other norms which we have already accepted. It is up to us to decide what we should be; this is what it means to count as *mature*, both as individuals and as a culture. Although one can find this theme sounded in both Kant and Nietzsche, it is developed in strikingly different directions; for Kant, maturity means correctly recognizing what was the basis of our epistemic, practical, and aesthetic judgments all along. By contrast, for Nietzsche, maturity means recognizing that we are on our own for the first time. In Nietzsche, then, modernity is something genuinely new, and the sort of maturity that

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[109] In fairness to Leiter, he concludes his essay with something like this; the paradox is defused. If so, however, then the "paradox" arises from his attempt to interpret Nietzsche through categories and concept that are alien to Nietzsche's thought.

modernity requires consists of recognizing the novelty of our historical situation. At the same time, however, the ways in which Nietzsche thinks about modernity and maturity remain indebted to Kant. Further clarification of this point, especially with respect to the relation between modernity and autonomy, is therefore in order.

In regarding freedom as self-determination, Nietzsche positions himself squarely in the post-Kantian tradition. The most important and distinctive feature of Kant's analysis of moral agency is his argument that being a moral agent, i.e. acting on the basis of respect for the moral law—consists of nothing other than correctly understanding one's own subjectivity (i.e. "the fact of reason" at *CPrR* 5:30). This argument proceeds in two stages. Firstly, Kant argues that an analysis of the concept of morality reveals that morality is nothing other than autonomy. Secondly, Kant argues that autonomy is nothing other than the correct self-understanding of the subject. Consequently, all subjects and only subjects are autonomous, and hence capable of giving themselves the moral law in an act of self-legislation.[110]

By contrast, since Nietzsche's theory of freedom turns on the distinction between heteronomous and autonomous subjectivity, it requires that we sharply distinguish between subjectivity and autonomy. Here the contrast between Nietzsche and Kant is brought into sharp relief. Kant argues that a subject fails to respect herself *qua* subject whenever she determines her will according to a principle other than pure

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[110] These two parts of the argument corresponds roughly to the distinction between parts I-II and part III of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (*GMM*). In the *Critique of Practical Reason* (*CPrR*) Kant also distinguishes between the "analytic" and "synthetic," although the order of presentation is reversed from that in *GMM*. In *GMM*, Kant attempts to deduce pure practical reason from theoretical reason (*GMM* 4:448). In *CPrR* Kant abandons this strategy, though he continues to regard the moral law as the expression of pure practical reason. See Allison (1990) for a discussion of this shift in Kant's moral theory.

practical reason, i.e. herself. For Nietzsche, to be a subject is just to be a system of forces that have become organized as they are by virtue of the contingencies of biology and of history.   Such an organization is never simply "given": it must be, in some sense, *imposed*. Consequently all subjectivity is, initially, *heteronomous* (in both a Kantian and Nietzschean sense) because it is organized according to procedures and techniques (e.g. ontogeny, tradition, authority) that are outside of the consciousness and will of the organized subject. Hence the question arises for Nietzsche as to how one can become a "free spirit," how one can *become* free, or in the terms used here, how can a heteronomous subject become an autonomous subject?

Here lies the paradox of education that concerned Nietzsche at least since his days at Basel: one must work on a heteronomous subject in order to initiate the work on the self that constitutes genuine autonomy.   Put otherwise, one must assist, urge, or seduce another into freedom. All subjects begin as heteronomous, subjected to the multiple interests and desires of others: only as a consequence of this are we formed into subjects at all.[111]   Subsequently, having become subjects, we can become free, which is to say that we can participate in re-constructing ourselves as subjects. Therefore, autonomy must always be a work in progress: a subject begins in heteronomy and becomes increasingly autonomous as more of her norms and values are examined, revised, rejected, or accepted.   But since all norms and values are themselves expressions of one's drives and affects, this process of revision, rejection,

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[111] I take this point to be roughly that we are subjects only insofar as we are members of discursively regulated communities, such that there is no subjectivity prior to membership in at least one such community.   But it is difficult to show how to specify the Nietzschean-Foucaultian "practice of freedom" in terms of a more general theory of social discursive practices.

and acceptance is also a process whereby more drives and affects are integrated into her overall character.[112]   The account of heteronomous subjectivity is complicated by the fact that most subjects are not merely heteronomous, but are in thrall to an array of socially-mediated mechanisms that prevent them from correctly perceiving their own heteronomy.   Accordingly, Nietzsche's ethics must find a way to confront two tasks: to show subjects that they are heteronomous, even (or especially) when they believe that they really are free, and to transform heteronomous subjects into autonomous ones.[113]

By severing the link Kant forged between subjectivity and autonomy, Nietzsche can now argue that Kant's theory of the subject contains an element of heteronomy at its heart.[114]   Despite Kant's attempt to show that the normative force of morality rests on pure practical reason, he nevertheless perpetuates the model of morality as heteronomy insofar as he is committed to denying the historical contingency of the moral law.   The moral law is not made, but *given*—given to the subject by the subject.

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[112] While I cannot develop the point further here, I think that here lies the connection between autonomy and sublimation that has surfaced in recent work on Foucault and Freud; cf. Whitebook (1999); Oliver (2004).

[113] The problem with the latter task is that if one takes it upon oneself to transform heteronomous subjects into autonomous ones, one cannot do so without contradicting their (future) autonomy; on the other hand, heteronomous subjects, as subjects that passively submit to the authority of others, will not take it upon themselves to become their own authority.   This is the paradox at the heart of all education as a self-negating authority, a paradox that Nietzsche dramatized in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

[114] Hill (2003) presents Nietzsche's criticisms of Kant as charging Kantianism with kind of crypto-heteronomy.   Hill defends this interpretation by reading *Genealogy of Morality* against *Critique of Practical Reason*.   Nietzsche evidently read *CPrR* in 1886, but was familiar with it as early as 1881. It is unclear, however, whether he was familiar with it at the time that he was working on *Daybreak*. I consider it unlikely, because *Daybreak* does not clearly distinguish the differences between Kant and Schopenhauer. I therefore consider it more likely that at the time of *Daybreak* Nietzsche still interpreted Kant's moral theory through a Schopenhauerian lens; cf. *D* 142.

Although one is no longer subjected to external coercion (threats of punishment or promises of reward), Kantian morality still insists on a split within the subject, between the commands of pure practical reason and the sensuous inclinations.

The significance of this split was not lost on Nietzsche: "To demand that duty must *always* be something of a burden—as Kant does—means to demand that it should never become habit and custom: in this demand there is concealed a remnant of ascetic cruelty" (*D* 339). [115] One can neither fully identify oneself with reason (since reason is universal and persons are particular), nor with the sensuous inclinations (since doing so amounts to the denial that we are rational). Kantian moral agency is agency divided against itself, and so it is heteronomous: "But up to now the moral law has been supposed to stand *above* our own likes and dislikes: one did not want actually to *impose* this law on oneself, one wanted to *take* it from somewhere or *discover* it somewhere or *have it commanded to one* from somewhere" (*D* 108). In other words, we think of the moral law in a way that confutes our own autonomy just because we want to have it given to us rather than as something that we freely impose on ourselves. Genuine autonomy entails thatwe give up the desire for a transcendent and absolute ground for our normative evaluations. In this respect, Nietzsche retains and approves of the autonomous/heteronomous distinction while shifting morality from one side of the distinction to the other.   In doing so, Nietzsche requires a new content for his notion of autonomy: autonomy demands the overcoming of morality in favor of an ethics of self-fashioning.

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[115] In this analysis of cruelty one can see the beginnings of Nietzsche's sophisticated treatment of the ascetic ideal.

One may object that autonomy and heteronomy mean, in their "Nietzschean" sense, almost precisely the opposite of what they mean in the modern ethical tradition that culminates in Kant. For Kant, autonomy consists of radical motivational independence from all sensuous inclinations. The autonomous subject is one who can take reason alone as a motive for action, i.e. one for whom pure reason can be practical. On the Kantian account, this is nothing other than what it means to be a subject in the first place. Those who act according to some sensuous motive (e.g. fear of being damned in Hell for all eternity) are not merely heteronomous. If I act wrongly, yet insist that I couldn't help myself, I am implicitly denying my own status as a subject; I fail to distinguish myself from the domain of causally-determined objects.[116] In short, Kantian autonomy consists of recognizing one's independence from nature, and Kantian heteronomy consists of failing to recognize this, and consequently regarding oneself as part of nature. Nietzschean autonomy, on the other hand, consists of having a true self-understanding, which in turn presupposes a correct theory of subjectivity, and a part of that theory holds that subjectivity is constituted by naturalistic (drives and affects) and historical (customs and practices) conditions. Conversely, Nietzschean heteronomy consists precisely of the failure or inability to recognize these conditions, such that one suffers from an inadequate account of one's own subjectivity, i.e., one has the kind of cognitively and affectively deficient self-interpretations of Christian-modern morality.

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[116] In this case, I have acted from freedom, which is to say that I have acted on the basis of some maxim that I have incorporated into my motivational set. But I deny that I have acted from freedom, which is to say that I deny my own subjectivity.

It should be noted that, despite this substantial difference in their construals of autonomy and how it can be achieved, Kant and Nietzsche concur with respect to a crucially important thesis: *the acknowledgment of the conditions of subjectivity is the condition of possibility of autonomy*. In Kant, this thesis is the result of Kant's argument that affirmation of one's autonomy is the same as affirmation of the *formal* conditions of subjectivity, which is to say, one's status as a rational being who is not merely at the whims of his inclinations (*CPrR* 5:30). Denying that one is free, Kant therefore thinks, involves a kind of "performative contradiction" (which is not to deny that some people, and perhaps even most, actually commit it).   By contrast, Nietzsche argues that acknowledgment of the *material* conditions of subjectivity—the organization of drives and affects, the sediment of interpretations, one's personal past and the past of one's culture—is required in order to begin working on oneself, transforming one's self. Self-knowledge and self-transformation go hand-in-hand.

Consequently, the difference between Kant and Nietzsche with respect to their theories of freedom should be seen in light of their differing theories of subjectivity. In regarding subjectivity as a universal and necessary *a priori* structure, Kantian morality attempts to restrict the relationship with the self that the categorical imperative commands: there are echoes of fixed identity and obedience to authority at the heart of Kantianism. Because Kantian morality insists on ascribing an *a priori* status to pure practical reason—that is, insists that the form of morality is universal and necessary—it effectively re-introduces heteronomy into autonomy. Against this, Nietzsche's ethics of autonomy requires that each individual determine for himself (or

herself) the kind of being that he (or she) wills to become. Nietzsche's contribution to the self-understanding of modernity is an attempt to conceive of autonomy in terms of a psychologically naturalistic account of subjectivity. As a consequence, the Nietzschean question is not the Kantian question "What are the formal conditions of any possible autonomy?" but rather "What are the material conditions of an autonomy that is possible for us?"

3.5 Freedom without Transcendence

Taken as whole, I have argued that *D* should be interpreted as concerned with the affective as well as the cognitive dimensions of our evaluations and interpretations; the material conditions of subjectivity, including history and the body, which need to be explored in ways consistent with methodological naturalism; and a distinction between heteronomous and autonomous subjectivity defined in terms of the avoidance or acknowledgement of the material conditions of subjectivity. We must now consider how these lines of thought running throughout *D* relate to *D*'s status as a stage in the development of Nietzsche's thinking through the collapse of transcendence, the logic of nihilism, and the possibility of the free spirit. One indication of how these different lines of thought converge is provided by Nietzsche himself:

> Who would now be in a position to describe that which will one day do
> away with moral feelings and judgments! — however sure one may be
> that the foundations of the latter are all defective and their superstructure

> beyond repair: their obligatory force must diminish from day to day, so long as the obligatory force of reason does not diminish! To construct anew the laws of life and action—for this task our sciences of physiology, medicine, sociology, and solitude are not yet sufficiently sure of themselves: and it is from them that the foundation-stones of new ideals (if not the new ideals themselves) must come. So it is that, according to our taste and talent, we live an existence which is either a prelude or a postlude, and the best we can do in this interregnum is to be as far as possible our own reges and found little experimental states. We are experiments: let us also want to be them! (D 453)

Here Nietzsche constructs a connection between the intellectual and existential requirements imposed upon us by a correct recognition of our historical situation: the criticism of morality and the conditions of possibility for autonomous subjectivity. Firstly, Nietzsche argues that, in light of the criticism of morality already developed in *D*, morality is beyond repair. Secondly, whatever might come next must come in a form that is at least consistent with, if not actually grounded in, our naturalistic self understanding, i.e. the material conditions of subjectivity. That is, the naturalistic analysis of the material conditions of subjectivity will provide us with the "foundation-stones" of whatever new ideals, whatever new principles of evaluation, we construct. Thirdly, Nietzsche insists that, regardless of whatever new ideals we may invent for ourselves, we currently live in a period *between* different dominating modes of evaluation. Here Nietzsche takes "interregnum" with an etymological seriousness, as the interval between sovereigns; consequently we must be our own sovereigns and construct "little experimental states" in which we can attempt to live out different ideals as we experiment with different ways of realizing an autonomous

subjectivity. This is simply our historical situation; we must find a way to endorse and affirm our situation as experiments and experimenters.

But just what is this historical situation that must be endorsed and affirmed? It is a situation to which I have elsewhere referred as "the collapse of transcendence": the withdrawal of both cognitive and affective investment from all other-worldly interpretations of the sources of sense and value. Since MPS, or Christian-modern morality, critically depends on other-worldly interpretations, the discovery of its cognitive incoherence and its affective enervation should be understood as one expression of the collapse of transcendence in Nietzsche's text. It is in this respect that *D* assumes its full importance: because it is only with *D* that Nietzsche thematizes the material (e.g. historical and psychological) conditions of cognitive and affective investments, it is only here that Nietzsche can thematize the withdrawal of those investments as the culmination of modernity. If, as I have argued, part of Nietzsche's distinctive contribution is that he has given us the resources to reflect on the collapse of transcendence, then it is in *D* that Nietzsche first deploys those resources. This is why *D* should be interpreted, as Nietzsche himself said, as "the beginning of my beginning" (*EH*, "Why I Write Such Good Book," *Daybreak*).

As part of the thematization of the collapse of transcendence, *D* advances the project of critique in two respects. Firstly, Nietzsche can finally accept as a given historical accomplishment that metaphysics has lost all cognitive coherence; he now directs his energies towards undermining the affective adherence of traditional Christian-modern culture (one might say: withdrawing our libidinal investment in the

authority mediated by that culture).   Secondly, his project rests on the assumption that a withdrawal of affective investment would be, negatively, the culmination and fulfillment of "nihilism" *and*, positively, the prolegomenon to a form of subjectivity that does not require unconditional grounds for normative/evaluative claims—that is, for "the free spirit."

Above (see 2.4) I argued that the problem of nihilism requires a theory of agency that is not vulnerable to the collapse of transcendence, because nihilism is a consequence of the tight connection between agency and transcendence. Beginning in *Daybreak*, Nietzsche develops an analytic of subjectivity that does away with transcendence.   Instead, Nietzsche analyzes subjectivity as constructed through historically specific configurations of physiologically-grounded drives and affects and culturally-mediated symbolic practices.   Different configurations produce different forms of subjectivity; a society which emphasizes obedience to a hierarchy will produce heteronomous subjectivities, whereas a society which emphasizes freedom and maturity will produce autonomous subjectivities.[117]

In abandoning the Kantian and neo-Kantian philosophy of the subject, Nietzsche is no longer able to refer normative questions to rational adjudication, since rational adjudication presupposes a stable and fixed perspective—namely, that of reason

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[117] The clearly Kantian formulation here indicates that on this point Nietzsche and Kant are actually quite close.   The difference between them lies in the *content* of freedom and maturity, since on Nietzsche's naturalistic psychology, even the norms and values in light of which one evaluates one's projects and decisions are only expressions of the configuration of drives.   As such, they are contingent and revisable, and so not universal and necessary for all rational beings.

itself—from which such adjudications can be made.[118] The Nietzschean question is therefore not, "Why should we be autonomous rather than heteronomous subjectivities?" but rather, "What are the material conditions that need to be actualized so that autonomous rather than heteronomous subjectivities are produced?" One must note, however, that this question is also a question addressed to Nietzsche's own readers: "What are the material conditions that we must actualize so as to transform ourselves from heteronomous to autonomous subjectivities?" The "particular type of experience of thinking" (Magnus and Higgins 1996, 34) that is communicated in the aphorisms that comprise the bulk of *Daybreak* (esp. Books IV and V) are exercises in self-transformation: from the theoretical orientation of the first half, we move in the second half to a dramatization of the self-transformation called for in the first.

If nihilism is the name of the problem that Nietzsche finds himself confronting, then "revaluation of all values" is the name of the solution he proposes. Nietzsche asserts in *Ecce Homo* (*EH*, "Daybreak") that the revaluation of all values begins with *Daybreak*. One can render this claim more intelligible if one regards the revaluation of all values as the name for a transformation in the mode of evaluation, i.e. a transformation in the form of subjectivity. We saw above that Nietzsche's thought in

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[118] Insofar as the Nietzschean autonomous subject relies on criticism and reflection, she continues to engage in the practice of providing and criticizing reasons. Nietzschean autonomy requires what Brandom (2000, 157) calls "sapience" as distinct from "sentience." What Nietzsche would reject is the anti-naturalistic and anti-historicist story that Kant invokes in order to account for sapience. But, having embraced an understanding of sapience that is thoroughly naturalized and historicized, Nietzsche must regard the very idea that there is a single perspective, that of pure reason itself, as one more example of "rampant Platonism" (McDowell 1984, 77). I will grant, however, that interpreting Nietzsche as a forerunner of the naturalized platonism defended by McDowell and (though not under this name) Brandom might be overly charitable. Certainly there are passages where Nietzsche appears to assume that naturalizing and historicizing sapience requires reducing sapience to sentience. This is, as I understand it, Habermas' early (1971) criticism of Nietzsche.

Daybreak leads him to discover the idea of the material conditions of subjectivity. In re-conceiving subjectivity as materially grounded, and hence as a fluid and provisional rather than a formal and static structure, Nietzsche works his way towards a problematic of forces and their organization. Since subjectivity is always multiple, fluid, and provisional, evaluations are also perspectival and open-ended. Whether, in fleeing from dogmatism and absolutism, one can entirely avoid the specter of relativism is another question—and in answering it, we would do well to consider just why the specter of relativism arouses such strong feelings of anxiety and discomfort.

Given this new conception of forms of subjectivity, one can see that the unconditional was always an illusion (even if, for at least a while, one that served as a condition for the development of Christianity and modernity). Perspectivalism, in the limited sense that one always evaluates or judges from some perspective or another, and that all perspectives are conditioned (i.e. have material conditions of possibility), implies that the desire for the unconditioned can never be satisfied. In Chapter 2, the confrontation staged in *HAH* between methodological naturalism and traditional hermeneutical self-understandings culminated in the problem of nihilism. In *Daybreak*, the shift towards the material conditions of subjectivity enables us to see what might be needed in order to form a coherent self-interpretation under the constraints of methodological naturalism, and thereby avoid the slide into nihilism. Once an alternative resource for constructing viable and coherent self-interpretations is available, the collapse of transcendence may come to seem less like a threat and

more like an "awakening," that is, a contribution to the project of the liberation of humanity.

If it is liberation, however, we still may not be prepared for the consequences of this liberation. In "How the 'True World' Became a Fable" (*TI*), Nietzsche writes, "The "true world"—an idea with no use anymore, no longer even obligating—an idea become useless, superfluous, *hence* a refuted idea: let's do away with it! (Bright day; breakfast; return of *bons sens* and cheerfulness; Plato blushes; pandemonium of all free spirits)." The idea of the "true world," the idea of an unconditioned that transcends all conditions, has no use for us anymore, "not even obligating"—not even, that is, as a way of explaining the nature of moral obligations. For Kant, the unconditioned was necessary, reduced as it was to the status of a mere concept without any intuition, in order to explain how we could act freely, and hence how we could find ourselves under obligations. The Nietzschean subject, on the other hand, actualizes his freedom through an on-going process of self-creation and self-transformation which is entirely immanent with respect to the world of experience. The idea of the unconditioned no longer performs any epistemological or moral function; it has become a cog that plays no role in the mechanism. But the "pandemonium of all free spirits"—including, presumably, Nietzsche himself and his ostensible (if fictional) audience—is not without its darker aspect.

In his discussion of Nietzsche's radicalization of Kant, Warren (1988) argues that Nietzschean critique is superior to Kantian critique because Nietzsche criticizes precisely what Kant must presuppose. Kantian critique inquires into how certain kinds

of activities might best be justified. In posing the question this way, Kant assumes that the self-critical subject, the subject who performs the critique, is a *knowing* subject and a *moral* subject. That is, Kant assumes that the subject engages in certain practices, namely "knowledge" and "morality," and that these practices are themselves coherent and unproblematic. He does not lack any confidence in Newtonian mechanics, Euclidean geometry, and Christian-modern morality, nor is their underlying intelligibility ever called into question. The entire architectonic of the critical philosophy only shows how they are compatible with each other by virtue of being grounded in nothing than the structure of subjectivity as such. For Nietzsche, on the other hand, the entire character of the critical project has changed; now it is a question of how to live—how to develop new forms of cognitive coherence and affective adherence—in ways that affirm groundlessness, the absence of the unconditioned, as free spirits.

In *D* Nietzsche begins to re-imagine subjectivity and autonomy without transcendence. Henceforth these categories, which are as pivotal for Nietzsche as for 'the transcendental tradition,' will be conceived of as immanent to "life, nature, and history" (*GS* 344).[119] But it is only as a result of having situated the sense and value of subjectivity and autonomy in this way that Nietzsche is able to recognize what it is that he has accomplished. In *D* Nietzsche is too deeply engaged in transforming these concepts for him to stand back and reflect on what he has done and what it means. As Nietzsche begins to reflect on his re-conceiving of these concepts,

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[119] For "the transcendental tradition," see Carr (1999) as well as Green (2002).

he becomes capable of making *explicit* what has been implicitly governing the entire

Free Spirit series: the history of modernity as the collapse of transcendence that is the

condition of possibility for free spirits.   This is the meaning behind the

announcement of the death of God and the struggle against the shadows of God which

figure so prominently in Nietzsche's next book, *The Gay Science*.

CHAPTER 4

'LA GAYA SCIENZA': STRUGGLE AGAINST THE SHADOWS OF GOD[120]

In the same year that *The Gay Science* was completed and published, 1882, both

Ralph Waldo Emerson and Charles Darwin died. In light of their considerable

influence on Nietzsche, and on *GS* itself, it is very tempting to approach *GS* as

something like Nietzsche's eulogy, by way of commemoration and celebration, of the

two great figures of nineteenth-century naturalism.[121] In Emerson's perfectionist

transcendentalism and Darwin's scientific materialism one can detect the perspectives

and themes that occupy Nietzsche in *GS*, even in the very idea of a "gay science" that

would somehow synthesize and reconcile transcendentalism and materialism in a

single vision of liberated humanity and historicized nature that is capable of replacing

the Christian-modern conception.

In the first edition of *The Gay Science* (1882), Nietzsche wrote by way of

preface that "This book marks the conclusion of a series of writings by FRIEDRICH

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[120] "La gaya scienza" was used as the subtitle for the second edition of *GS* (1886). I use it here to underscore Nietzsche's ambition to invent a discourse that is simultaneously scientific and poetic. For the continuity between Nietzsche's gay science and "la gaya scienza" of the medieval troubadours, see Higgins (2000).

[121] The first edition of *GS* used on the title page an epigram attributed to Emerson: "To the poet and sage are all things friendly and hallowed, all experiences useful, all days holy, all men divine" (my translation). In his "Translator's Introduction" (8) to *GS* 丅 쯹ά 긣 mann notes that Nietzsche is probably referring to Emerson's essay "History." Emerson's own wording is slightly different. However, Emerson is only mentioned once (at *GS* 92) and Darwin is not mentioned at all. Despite this, both Emersonian and Darwinian themes echo throughout Nietzsche's work, from *Untimely Meditations* to *Twilight of the Idols*. For Emerson and Nietzsche, see Stack (1992) but especially Cavell (1990; 2003), who emphasizes a "moral perfectionism" located in both Emerson and Nietzsche. For Darwin and Nietzsche, see Poellner (1995), Ansell-Pearson (1997), Richardson (2002; 2004), and Grosz (2004). Cf. Chapter 1, n9.

NIETZSCHE whose common goal is to erect a new image and ideal of the free spirit." It is on account of this presumably shared "new image and ideal" that these works together have become known as "The Free Spirit Series." In some sense, Nietzsche tells us, GS concludes this series. But whereas in *HAH* Nietzsche's philosophical position was deadlocked between his commitment to methodological naturalism and the Christian-modern conception of subjectivity, thereby leading to a "logic of nihilism" (see 2.4), *GS* develops a more pluralistic and poetic (one almost wants to say: a more *Emersonian*) conception of nature and a new conception of humanity that is consistent with the new conception of nature.[122] The new conception of humanity takes up the rethinking of subjectivity and autonomy that Nietzsche developed in *D*, but places it in a broader and more nuanced historical context. In *GS* Nietzsche attempts to bring to completion his vision of a historicized and naturalized conception of humanity that is no longer dirempted from a historicized and naturalized conception of the world, but in which room remains for a sense of autonomy that owes much to Kant (see Chapter 3.4).

In order to flesh out this sketch, I will first examine the idea of a "gay science," with attention both to its epistemological and ontological commitments and to the position that "gay science" occupies within historicized naturalism, which is to say, the account that gay science gives of itself (4.1). I will then turn to the "struggle against the shadows of God" announced at the beginning of Book III and show how what is at stake here is the development of a post-theological interpretation of nature

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[122] In the former, one finds the genesis of the metaphysics of the will to power; in the latter, one finds the genesis of the eternal recurrence.

("the de-deification of nature") and what I will call, however clumsily, *the de-anthropologization of humanity* (4.2).   Finally, I will analyze Nietzsche's attempt to show how the de-deification of nature and de-anthropologization of humanity make possible a new conception of normativity that both avoids the logic of nihilism and opens the way for autonomous subjectivity as self-overcoming (4.3).

4.1 *Warum unsere Wissenschaft fröhlich werden mussen*

With its complicated array of aphorisms, short essays, poems, observations, and reflections, *GS* poses many of the interpretative problems that have come to be associated with Nietzsche's mature philosophy as a whole. As David Allison observes, "Each statement, then, occupies a position with regard to other statements, to a particular set of references and concerns, to the author's stated or implied intentions, to the nature of their rhetorical formulation, and to the specific place, time, history, and culture that subtends them—all this multiplied and factored by the respective context of the reader who interprets them … " (Allison 2001, 81).   In light of this, it is difficult to strike a balance between disentangling a continuous line of thought and mutilating the real tensions of the text to manufacture an argument.   One way to strike the required balance, or at least begin to do so, is to consider how Nietzsche regards himself as entitled to the very conception of a "gay science," i.e. a project that is at once systematic and rigorous (*wissenschaftlich*) *and* light-hearted and graceful (*fröhlich*). As a first approximation, one might say that "gay science" is scientific in

that it attempts to do justice to the ways in which things are, without seeking refuge in illusions or superstitions. What we quickly discover with Nietzsche, however, is that among these superstitions is the very idea that there is any single, static, and fully determined way in which things are.[123] The very idea of a total system in which every term or element has a definite place presupposes some fixed position, whether external or internal to the system, which grounds and unifies the system. For this reason, any version of foundationalism, no matter how modest, fallibilistic or deflationary, would be regarded by Nietzsche as an echo (however distant) of Platonic-Christian supernaturalism. All foundationalism, in other words, retains the desire for transcendence.

If gay science poses a genuine alternative to transcendent foundationalist projects, it is by virtue of being truly *wisssenschaftlich* in that it is honest (*redlich*) about existence: existence is *vieldeutig*, multiple interpretations are possible, and the gay scientist must know how to play with multiplicity. Gay science must maintain itself in a condition of "honesty" (*Redlichkeit*) with respect to "the uncertainty and ambiguity of existence" (*Ungewissheit und Vieldeutigkeit des Dasein*) (*GS* 2) in order to maintain a stance of "questioning" towards existence. There is no questioning without honesty because honesty requires that we constantly ask ourselves what it is that we have experienced, what is it that we believe, why we hold those beliefs and not others. In order to see just what Nietzsche might mean by a "gay science"—that is, what would be required for a discourse to be both "gay" (*fröhlich*) and "scientific"

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[123] This thought is echoed in a late note: "'In so far as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings.—'Perspectivism'" (*WP* 481).

(*wissenschaftlich*)—I shall consider what Nietzsche means by ambiguity

(*Vieldeutigkeit*) and honesty (*Redlichkeit*).

The importance of honesty (*Redlichkeit*) for gay science deserves careful

elucidation. To be *redlich*, White (2001) argues, means more than just truth-telling or

rhetorical eloquence (as would be suggested by the connection with *reden*, "to

speak"); it means to be honest towards the rich ambiguity of existence.[124]   The claim

that "existence is ambiguous" should be interpreted as the announcement of a

Heraclitean epistemology. Taken in this sense, Nietzsche claims that nothing that we

can say about existence can be regarded as definitive. This claim, however, must be

considered carefully with respect to the appropriate level of generality. If the claim is

simply that there is no Ultimate Theory of Everything, and hence that all theories are

subject to revision and replacement, then Nietzsche might be thought to be

anticipating the development of contemporary fallibilism.   On the other hand, if one

regards Nietzsche as denying even simple determinate judgments (e.g. "This stone is

heavy") or singular existential judgment ("This is a stone"), then one might well think

Nietzsche has gone too far. But underlying Nietzsche's skepticism about definitive

judgments is the thought that our conceptually-mediated judgments distort experience

precisely in taking on a determinative form; none of our judgments can possibly be

definitive, and so there is no guarantee that our judgments will not conflict with each

other.

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[124] The parallel with Foucault's use of the concept of *parrhesia* is very suggestive; see Foucault (2001).

Here we can see the beginnings of Nietzsche's mature perspectivalist epistemology, according to which the more "perspectives" (possible determinations) through which we comprehend an object, the more "comprehensive our knowledge of that object will be" (*GM* III:12). However, since there is an infinity of such perspectives, and our cognitive capacities are finite, total knowledge (what Leibniz would call the "complete concept") is impossible. Determinative judgments capture *something* of the object, but not *everything*. The indeterminacy of the object of experience corresponds to the infinity of determinative judgments of the object. In that sense, however, Nietzsche is justified in thinking that, given infinitely many different possible determinations, even apparently determinate judgments are, at best, partial and tentative—even if they prove to be, for all that, reliable guides for human action in specifiable contexts for the satisfaction of particular practical interests.

Nietzsche's "Heracliteanism," the principle of the priority of flux, shows why the commitment to honesty implies a commitment to gaiety (*Fröhlichkeit*). The importance of this claim can be illustrated by comparison with more traditional metaphysical views. As the science of beings in general, metaphysics is guided by the question, "What is … ?" In this respect we can see that any response to this question must present an assertion about the object. Prior to the development of twentieth-century logic, the form of these judgments was determined through the Aristotelian table of categories (existence, essence, quality, mode, etc.). The categories determine the form any judgment must take in order to count as a response to the metaphysical question. Underlying this methodology, however, is the unspoken

conviction that reality itself is stable and fixed; if it were not, then this method could never yield any comprehension of reality.   There must be an underlying correspondence between the order of thought and the order of being if the former is to reveal the latter.

In contrast to the ousiological tradition—where being is posited as an underlying substance or hierarchy of substances—Nietzsche continues the tradition of "metabological" ontology that understands being as becoming.[125] This commitment entails the rejection of "metaphysical realism": the position that the world has some essential and abiding structure.[126] This rejection licenses the inference that there is no one way that the world is; the world is, in this sense, *indeterminate.*   However, it is nevertheless the case that the world of everyday lived experience shows up for us as bearing possibilities of value and significance. Here we find ourselves in a close cousin of the Kantian problematic: how does the world acquire these affordances, or put otherwise, how does the world come to show up for us as having a specific structure?

Nietzsche should be read as proposing a broadly post-Kantian response: the world of everyday lived experience is determined by virtue of some determining

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[125] For the ontology of becoming, see Deleuze (1983); for a more "analytic" explication of a similar thesis, see Richardson (1996).   Richardson (1996) develops his reconstruction by reading Nietzsche as reading Heraclitus against Plato.   The thought that the Aristotelian tradition is an "ousiology" is indebted to de Beistegui (2004). "Metabology" is my own awkward coinage, from the Greek *metabole* (becoming).

[126] "Metaphysical realism," in the sense I use the term here, finds its clearest formulation in Putnam (1990; 1994; 1999). Metaphysical realism is the view that there exists a unique and correct description of the structure of the world in which every term used in the description determinately refers to an element in the structure.   See also Moran (2000) for a reconstruction of Putnam's internal realism and contrast with Kant.

structure. (The *virtus dormativa* character of this claim is due to the extremely abstract presentation.)   Continuing the lines of thought opened up by German Materialism and by neo-Kantianism (see Chapter 2.1), Nietzsche departs from the transcendental tradition in two important respects.   Firstly, the determining structure, by virtue of which the everyday world shows up as containing possibilities for meaning and value, is not itself immediately available to reflective consciousness.   Because the structure is conceived in thoroughly naturalistic and historical terms, it can only be known through empirical inquiry (e.g. biology, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, etc.).   In addition, there is no single version of 'the world of everyday life': consequently, there is no single correct determining structure, nor a single correct account of that structure. (Nor, it should be added, is it possible to step outside of *all* determining structures in order to give a purely general account of them.) Determining structures should be regarded as local rather than universal, and contingent rather than necessary.   These two claims, combined with a commitment to methodological naturalism, open a rich vein for empirical inquiry, both psychological and historical, into the conditions of finding the world to be a meaningful place in which one can live a life that one reflexively affirms as worth living. The strength of this interpretation is that it enables us to better understand Nietzsche's defense of the historically distinctive features of modernity as providing the conditions for the cultivation of autonomous subjectivity.

If we are to be honest—*redlich*–about our openness to flux and change, and by means of that honesty resist or overcome various reifications or hypostatizations that have sedimented in the tradition that we have inherited, then we must reject an epistemic methodology which insists that thought proceeds solely in terms of formal and material inferences between determinate judgments.   Rather, our thought must be, as far as we can make it, not only precise (*wissenschaftlich*) but also free-spirited (*fröhlich*). Gay science is an attempt to recognize and do justice to the flux of becoming within thought and language.

This formal account of why we need gay science, based on general considerations about the nature of knowledge (cf. *GS* 2), is supplemented in *GS* by a historical-natural account of how we have come to a place in our cultural evolution where gay science is required.   In *GS* 110 Nietzsche presents an "*Ursprung der Erkenntnis*," an origin of cognition.[127]   Here, Nietzsche takes as a premise a claim that he developed in *HAH* and *Daybreak*: that "through immense periods of time, the intellect produced nothing but errors."   As examples of such 'errors' Nietzsche refers to the concepts of duration, identity, the existence of matter and bodies, the freedom of the will, and the belief in absolute (i.e. non-contextual and non-relational) value. These are strikingly similar to the errors that Nietzsche previously identified in *HAH* 16-19: identity, substance, causality and the will. It is no coincidence that these also bear a striking similarity to the Kantian/neo-Kantian table of categories; Nietzsche's

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[127] Following Foucault (1998), Nietzsche's use of *Ursprung* here could indicate a distinction from the *Entstehung* that Nietzsche develops in *HAH* 16 ("*Entstehungsgeschichte des Denkens*"; cf. 2.2 above). However, I see no methodological difference between *HAH* 16 and *GS* 110. It is conceivable that Nietzsche intends *Ursprung* ironically, but I do not see any evidence for thinking so.

project is, in part, a critique of the dogmatic-metaphysical residue at the heart of Kantian critique.

However, Nietzsche needs a genealogy in order to establish his right to make this claim.   If Nietzsche were concerned only with genesis, then history alone would be enough. If, on the other hand, Nietzsche conflated questions of genesis with questions of validity, he would be guilty of a genetic fallacy.   What Nietzsche needs to do is distinguish between validity and genesis while showing that conditions of validity cannot be separated from conditions of genesis.[128]   A genealogy is required because Nietzsche is not only presenting a claim *about* the historicity of knowledge, but also showing that even assertions about the historicity of knowledge are themselves subject to that very historicity.   For him to fail to show this would amount to presupposing that assertions could be made from a perspective outside of history, and so reinstate transcendence.

Nietzsche works through the implications of history for knowledge through a genealogy of cognition that both dislodges our self-confidence in inherited epistemological categories and creates the conceptual space for an alternative epistemology (or counter-epistemology). The dialectic of cognition consists of several discrete but connected stages. In the first stage, the "ancient drives and fundamental errors of all sentient existence" (*GS* 110), the will to *life*, demand that one falsify one's experience, that one classify the world in terms of identical objects, causality, and free will (ultimately a form of causality). As in *HAH*, and even the early essay "Truth and

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[128] For this way of thinking about what genealogy is and how it works, I am indebted to Geuss (1994) as well as to Abbey (2000) and to Whiteboook (2004).

Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense," Nietzsche relies heavily on Lange's Darwinized

Kantianism: since we exist, we must have successful adaptations, since organisms

whose adaptations are inadequate are extinct.[129] We perceive and conceptualize the

world in ways that contributed to the adaptive fitness of our species.

Following White's (2001, 66) detailed analysis of this passage, I will call this

"successful acquaintance": the common-sense, everyday assumptions about the world

without which life would be impossible—that is, our life, as we know of it, would be

impossible.   These assumptions are transcendental in the weak sense that they

comprise the *a priori* of our form of life, that is, the "conditions of possibility of

experience"—experience *as* the experience that we do, in fact, have. What Nietzsche

would deny is that these conditions are transcendental in the stronger sense that they

are necessary or universal conditions for any possible experience; there is no reason

why we could not experience the world in fundamentally different ways if our "a

priori," or what I have called determining structures, were different.

In contrast to—and reaction against—this form of cognition with its common-

sense, everyday assumptions about medium-sized dry goods, skepticism emerged

which dared to question just those assumptions that were necessary for life: "only very

late did the deniers and doubters of such propositions emerge; only very late did truth

emerge as the weakest form of knowledge" (*GS* 110).   The practitioners of "precise

knowledge" (White 2001, 67) at first had to position themselves in absolute opposition

to all everyday common-sense, and Nietzsche refers to the Eleatics as among the first

[129] More precisely, species with maladaptive phenotypic features will tend to become extinct *in the long run*. The mere fact that a species exists does not license the conclusion that it is well-adapted for its environment, only that it has not yet become extinct.

philosophers to insist on precise cognition. Nietzsche's seemingly casual reference to

the Eleatics here should not go unnoticed (nor should Nietzsche's also seemingly

casual mention of them at the conclusion of *GS* 109). The Eleatics, and the tradition

of Western philosophy which proceeds from Parmenides via Plato, argue that the

senses deceive us by making us think that there is plurality and change when there is

only a single unchanging entity, a reality that underlies all appearances.

Nietzsche agrees with the Eleatic-Platonic tradition that successful acquaintance

involves falsification, and his criticism of them should by no means diminish his

admiration for their intellectual audacity.[130] Nietzsche endorses the criticism that

precise cognition makes of successful acquaintance when he writes, "We have

arranged for ourselves a world in which we are able to live … Life is not an argument;

the conditions of life might include error" (*GS* 121). But Nietzsche also accepts the

inversion of the Eleatic position accomplished by Kant. For the Eleatics and the

Platonic (and Christian) traditions, it is sensual experience which falsifies reality, since

the senses fail to reveal the unity of being. Following neo-Kantians such as Lange

and Spir, however, Nietzsche maintains that it is concepts which falsify sensual

experience, not the other way around. While Nietzsche concurs with the Eleatic

tradition that successful acquaintance is falsifying, it is because of the *concepts* by

virtue of which the world known by successful acquaintance contains medium-sized

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[130] Note, however, that for the Eleatics, successful acquaintance falsifies reality by presenting us with multiplicity instead of with unity. Nietzsche, by contrast, regards successful acquaintance as distorting reality by making it more easily categorized. For Nietzsche, successful acquaintance distorts through simplification; for Parmenides and Plato, successful acquaintance distorts through "complexification."

dry goods which show up as having properties such as synchronic and diachronic

identity, duration over time, position in space, casual relations with other objects, etc.

White situates Nietzschean *Redlichkeit* within the genealogy of knowledge,

which he regards as an entwining of "successful acquaintance" (which masks

differences in order to promote survival) and "precise cognition" (which unmasks

differences in order to attain better knowledge of the world) (White 2001, 66-68).

Successful acquaintance promotes the development of "error without which a

certain species of life could not live" (*WP* 493) —those errors being nothing other

than the Kantian concepts of the understanding, such as number, substance, and

cause.[131] (Although number properly belongs to the formal intuition of time, not

to the categories of the understanding, this distinction was most likely lost on

Nietzsche, as it was lost on Schopenhauer and other neo-Kantians.) The

culmination of precise cognition undermines those concepts by showing that all

judgments falsify the flux of becoming.   Contemporary debates among Nietzsche

scholars about "the falsification thesis" take this moment as their point of

departure.[132]

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[131] One should note, nevertheless, the considerable irony at work in regarding the foundations of our form of life as "errors." In order to evaluate them as errors, one would require access to a perspective external to our form of life from which it could be evaluated—and this is precisely what is no longer cognitively or affectively available to us post-metaphysical moderns. For this reason, Clark (1990; 1998) has argued that Nietzsche's continued use of "falsificationist" language is simply the residue of metaphysical interpretations that Nietzsche wrestled to overcome in himself. I would add only that one should also consider how Nietzsche ironically uses metaphysical and epistemological concepts he has already rejected in order to show how such categories turn against themselves.

[132] See Clark (1990; 1998); for responses, see Anderson (1996), Green (2000), Hussain (2004); for a modification and restatement, Clark and Dudrick (2004).

The dialectic of cognition achieves its present stage—the stage occupied by Nietzsche's own epistemology—only when (a) successful acquaintance has been recognized as requiring falsification (i.e. common-sense realism is false) and (b) precise knowledge has become a "power" (i.e. when methodological naturalism has acquired institutionalized hermeneutic authority).   At this stage,

> … finally knowledge and the ancient basic errors struck against each other, both as life, both as power, both in the same person. The thinker— that is now the being in whom the drive to truth and those life-preserving errors are fighting their first battle, after the drive to truth has *proven* itself to be a life-preserving power, too. In relation to the significance of this battle, everything else is a matter of indifference: the last question about the condition of life is posed here, and the first attempt is made here to answer the question through experiment. To what extent can truth stand to be embodied [*Einverleibung*]?—that is the question, that is the experiment. (*GS* 110)

The question of the *Aufhebung* of life and truth is posed as a question which can only be resolved experimentally, i.e. by attempting to embody truth. One must attempt to live—that is, to reflectively endorse life as worth living—with the knowledge that there is no identity, no duration, no causality and no will.   There is no way to determine a priori whether or not this can be done.

On the other hand, if the most basic concepts structuring our conceptual framework are, in some sense, distortions of the flux of lived experience, it remains unclear just how Nietzsche can justify this position.   One approach lies in recognizing that, if all of our judgments involve distortion and falsification, then the distinction between science and metaphysics is a not a distinction between the true and the false (for this distinction itself must ultimately also partake of metaphysics), but between the honest and the dishonest. If metaphysics treats the fundamental errors of humanity

as if they were fundamental truths (*HAH* 19), then science treats the fundamental

errors as just that: errors.   As Nietzsche tells us at *GS* 112, science is nothing other

than an honest anthropomorphizing:

> It is enough to view science as an attempt to humanize things as
> faithfully as possible; we learn to describe ourselves more and more
> precisely as we describe things more and their succession. Cause and
> effect: there is probably never such a duality; in truth a continuum faces
> us, from which we isolate a few pieces, just as we always perceive a
> movement only as isolated points, thus we do not really see, but rather
> infer. The suddenness with which many effects stand out misleads us; it
> is suddenness only for us. There are an infinite number of processes that
> elude us in this second of suddenness. An intellect which would see
> cause and effect as continuum, and not according to our type of arbitrary
> division and dismemberment, would see the flow of occurrences—and
> would reject the concept of cause and effect and deny all conditionality
> [*Bedingtheit*].

Here we see the distinction between the indeterminacy of the real and the determining

conditions whereby we regard the world as possessing a conceptual structure (e.g.

"cause and effect").   Science, in these terms, consists of describing more and more

precisely the determining conditions and the way in which things show up for us as

conditioned in these ways.

There is, however, a conundrum posed by Nietzsche in this passage which can

be phrased as follows: if all our judgments are judgments mediated by our conceptual

capacities, such that concepts are always involved in our thinking and evaluating, then

how is Nietzsche entitled to claim that "in truth" there is only a "flow of occurrences"?

Put another way, why is Nietzsche entitled even to imagine that there could be an

intellect which only saw the continuum, much less that there is such an intellect?

Nietzsche's assertion here should be interpreted as a transcendental claim along the lines of Kant's claims regarding an intuitive intellect (*intellectus archetypus*) (*CPJ* 5:407-8). As such, it is not a claim about some possible object of knowledge, but a claim about the limitations of our cognitive capacities as currently constituted.   An intuitive intellect would be able to perceive the flow of occurrences without falsification or distortion.   Although Nietzsche gives no reasons for thinking that we are this kind of intellect or could become such, he is entitled to imagine such an intellect for the same reason that Kant is: because transcendental reflection licenses the inference that experience is constituted by the flow of occurrences, we can think about what it would be like to have an immediate (but conceptual) awareness of the flow of events, i.e. for one's concepts to be wholly adequate to how things are.   (It must be borne in mind, however, that for Nietzsche the work of transcendental reflection is performed by empirical inquiries into the dynamics of culture and nature.)

Nietzsche retains this aspect of transcendental reflection on the structure of conceptualization in order to show that there is a non-conceptual dimension or stratum of experience, "the stream of the event" (*GS* 112). One respect in which Nietzsche differs from Kant in thinking that, far from it being the case that the intuitions go into concepts without remainder, there is in fact always a non-conceptual remainder, and though we cannot exhaustively conceptualize this remainder, it nevertheless makes itself felt in our judgments by way of our sense of the inadequacies of those judgments; this is why no judgment can be completely adequate to felt experience (cf. the "unknown but felt text" of the world at *D* 119).   Nietzsche's criticism of modern

epistemic practices is that we fail to heed and honor the felt remainders within thought; an epistemic practice that did so would be a gay science because it would be guided by the methodological principle that one can always judge otherwise, that objects can always be seen otherwise, and therefore thought cannot permit itself to rest content with any pretensions to definitive judgment, thinking that here at last it has discovered definitive objective validity.   Thought, to be thought properly, must know how to dance.

The genealogy of cognition culminates in "gay science," even as the genealogy of cognition can only be thought from the perspective of "gay science."   The apparent circularity at work here is, far from being vicious, a consequence of having embraced the consequences of anti-foundationalism: it is through the genealogy of cognition made possible by gay science that gay science justifies itself.   However a deflationary this justification may seem, it is not only the only form of justification available to us after the collapse of transcendence: it is all the justification that is worth having.

At this point it is important to show why Nietzsche is not, as a consequence of the foregoing commitment to gay science, implicitly committed to irrationalism or nihilism.   The revaluation of all values, which is already implicitly underway throughout the Free Spirit series, has resulted in a frequent portrayal of him as an anti-rationalist, an anti-humanist, a skeptic, and a nihilist. While there is some truth to the representation of Nietzsche as an opponent of the Enlightenment, it is true only insofar as "all criticism of the Enlightenment now proceeds via this romantic mirror image to

the Enlightenment" (Gadamer 1997, 273-74); the romantic opposition to the

Enlightenment is the form adopted by criticism of the Enlightenment. But the conflict

between Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment is not necessarily static; the

possibility remains that we can become enlightened about the Enlightenment, and

even to continue the Enlightenment by way of the counter-Enlightenment (cf. *D* 197).

The question that confronts us in the present, in our world-historical situation

as the children of both the Enlightenment and Romanticism, is whether we are

required to choose between life-denying truth and life based on illusions.

Regardless of whether we choose cognitive coherence without affective adherence

(life-denying truth) or affective adherence without cognitive coherence (life based

on illusions), either divergence between cognitive and affective investments

characterizes the condition of nihilism. More importantly, if our understanding of

the world were to change with no corresponding shift in our desires and values, we

would come to see it as lacking the very qualities that we regard as making it

trustworthy: stability, purpose, and order. We could only affirm life as worthwhile

by consciously embracing illusions.[133] Although one might wonder how

adequately Nietzsche himself overcame his own longing for the illusion of

Parmenidean stability (albeit one that is known to be an illusion), it is true that

much of Nietzsche's thought concerns whether or not one can love a life that is

lived "dangerously," experimentally, without ultimate purpose or meaning ("To

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[133] Nietzsche recommends precisely this at *GS* 107. In light of the position of this passage in *GS*, I do not regard this appeal to art as "the *good* will to appearance," i.e. to illusion, to be Nietzsche's considered view. The good will to appearance is required *only* if we are unable to transform our affective investments so as find the world of becoming worth loving and our lives worth living.

what extent can truth be incorporated? — that is the question; that is the experiment!" *GS* 110).   As White himself puts it, "[w]hat distinguishes Nietzsche's joyous scientific project from its grim or gloomy predecessors, however, is its insistence that we *only* see and name things *differently*, that we can *never* see or name them *definitively*" (White 2001, 74).   The impossibility of definitive assessment and assertion is guaranteed by the *Redlichkeit* that no determining structure can conclusively bring our questioning to an end.[134]

Consequently, even if the Enlightenment is itself a late version of what Nietzsche will come to call "the ascetic ideal," it is nevertheless possible—and desirable—for us to become enlightened about the Enlightenment.   It is desirable that we become enlightened about the Enlightenment because there is something noble and important about the insistence on the value of freedom as self-determination, as taking responsibility for one's beliefs and actions.   Doing so requires that we overcome the residue of metaphysics that still clings to the Enlightenment, and it is to this end that Nietzsche demands that we develop post-metaphysical, or post-*theological*, interpretations of humanity, nature, and freedom.

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[134] The rejection of metaphysical realism and the affirmation of the open-endedness of determination is echoed in some recent Anglophone philosophy.   Nietzsche can be joined to a growing tradition among "analytic" philosophers such as Quine, Goodman, Sellars, Davidson, Putnam, and Rorty. See West (1988) for an assessment of Nietzsche in relation to Selllars, Goodman, and Quine. Clark (1990) considers Nietzsche as a "minimal realist," along the lines defended by Putnam.   Nevertheless I think that Babich (1994) is correct when she writes that "where the logical reticence of the thinking of Davidson and perhaps even more (because of its rhetorical effect apart from all the ironic niceties) the writings of Wittgenstein invariably *end*, Nietzsche *begins*" (124n45).   This is because Nietzsche goes beyond epistemology in order to theorize the connection between the rejection of metaphysical realism, the danger of nihilism, and the possibility of a post-nihilistic culture.

4.2 The Death of God and the Death of Man

If "gay science" requires that we be honest (*redlich*) as to the indeterminacy of

existence, such that no single determination can be exhaustive, then Nietzsche's

thought cannot but pose a direct conflict with traditional versions of metaphysical

realism. But part of what makes Nietzsche's attack on metaphysical realism distinct

from that of more recent pragmatists and pluralists is Nietzsche's emphasis on how

metaphysical realism is not merely an abstract philosophical doctrine but also a deeply

intractable component of the self-understandings of Western culture in both its

traditional and modern forms.[135] For this reason, Nietzsche focuses on the practical

consequences of affective disengagement from the assumption that the world has some

determinate and knowable structure. Nietzsche's label for this disengagement is "the

death of God," and it is here that Nietzsche first explicitly thematizes what I have been

calling the collapse of transcendence.

Although Nietzsche's most well-known formulation of "the death of God" does

not occur until the fable of the madman (*GS* 125), Book Three begins with a statement

that the death of God is not as important as its consequences: "we must still defeat his

shadow as well!" (*GS* 108).   The task that conditions the self-consciousness

appropriate to modern culture—and hence the self-consciousness that we require in

order to acknowledge our socio-historical situation as moderns—does not consist in

realizing or even accepting the "death of God."   That is, given that modernity can be

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[135] Cf. Anderson's argument that Nietzsche recognizes that our "ordinary concept of a thing" is not a
metaphysically innocent notion (1999, 56-7).

characterized in terms of the collapse of traditional sources of hermeneutic authority, merely realizing and accepting this fact is insufficient; rather, we moderns must "defeat his shadow as well." What is at stake is the question as to whether or not a *wholly secular form of life* can nevertheless provide the extent and degree of cognitive and affective engagements that were previously supported by a religious (more specifically, a Christian-modern) interpretation of human existence.[136]

In order to determine whether a wholly secular life could be found to be worth living however, morality, art, science, and philosophy all need to be re-imagined and re-conceptualized in post-theological terms; this is what it means to defeat the shadows of God. In order to do so, Nietzsche claims, those concepts and valuations that are only intelligible within a theocentric world-interpretation must be exposed and expunged. This, of course, is only part of Nietzsche's critique. One of the most important tools in Nietzsche's critical arsenal is his naturalistic drive-psychology. Nietzsche does not merely show that certain concepts and valuations (such as "rationality" or "progress" or "equality") that figure prominently in modern liberal societies *originated* in theocentric world-interpretations (for if that were the case, Nietzsche's philosophy collapses into a monumental genetic fallacy), but that these concepts and valuations *continue to express* the same unconscious affective comportments that were also expressed in Christianity. Hence the significance of psychological concepts such as *ressentiment*, guilt, bad conscience, and "the ascetic ideal" in Nietzsche's critical project. Although the critical project does not reach

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[136] I owe the term a "wholly secular form of life" to Bernstein (2001, 18).

fruition until *BGE* (1885) and *GM* (1887), one can see in Nietzsche's earlier works, including *Daybreak* and *The Gay Science*, a concern with the drives and impulses that underlie our conceptual and affective organizations. Consequently, Nietzsche must implicitly deny that one can insouciantly abandon one element of the Christian-modern interpretation and continue to rely on the others. Instead, through the critique of modernity we learn how "to think differently and to feel differently" (*D* 103).

After this opening move in his critique of modernity, Nietzsche proposes that the formation of a post-theocentric consciousness will require a very different understanding of nature and how we are supposed to think about nature:

> Let us beware of thinking that the world is [*sei*] a living being. … are we supposed to reinterpret what is inexpressibly derivative, late, rare, accidental, which we perceive only on the crust of the earth, as something essential, universal, and eternal, as do those who call the universe an organism? This nauseates me. Let us beware even of believing that the universe is a machine; it is certainly not constructed for one goal, and we do it much too high an honor with the word "machine." … The astral order in which we live is an exception; this order and the considerable duration that is conditioned by it, have again made possible the exception of exceptions: the formation [*Bildung*] of the organic. The total character of the world, by contrast, is for all eternity chaos, not in the sense of lacking necessity, but rather lacking order, organization, form, beauty, wisdom, and however else our aesthetic humanizations [*Menschlichkeiten*] are called. (*GS* 109)

If the process of enlightenment is the critique of myths, or "de-mythologization," then Nietzsche's ambition in this dense passage is to advance enlightenment as de-mythologization. Nietzsche begins by warning us against uncritically committing ourselves to one of two different kinds of myth.   The first myth is the myth that the world (taken, here, in the broadest cosmological sense) is an "organic being"; the second is the myth that the world is a machine.

The first myth corresponds, loosely, to Romanticism and the cult of the organic; the second myth corresponds, loosely, to Enlightenment philosophy (in both its atheistic and deistic forms). The error underlying the first myth consists of mistaking a part (life) for a whole (the universe). This mistake is both spatial and temporal: it is spatial in that a minor phenomenon located at the crust of a minor planet is regarded as central to our conception of the universe as a whole. The mistake is also temporal in that organic life is, considered cosmologically, a very late and derivative phenomenon.

The second myth, the myth of mechanism, goes awry in supposing the universe has a single goal, i.e., affirmation of teleology, and is ordered according to that goal. Although mechanism is often contrasted with teleological models in contemporary discussions, Nietzsche implies that machines must also be regarded teleologically, since they are designed and constructed in order to fulfill a specific purpose. Mechanism and teleology are clearly conjoined in the Argument from Design. One way of interpreting this entire passage is that Nietzsche is simply endorsing the idea that Darwin's theory makes it possible to rule out completely any appeals to design, such as natural theology. But it would be more precise to say that Nietzsche perceives the challenge that "Darwinism" must pose to the self-satisfactions of liberal, bourgeois culture, which relied on the tradition of natural theology or other teleological accounts as part of its self-understanding and self-justification.[137]

It is not Paley who is Nietzsche's principal target in this passage, however, but Kant. Nietzsche's rhetoric in this passage, and in particular the reference to "aesthetic

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[137] For an excellent overview of European culture during Nietzsche's period, but especially the reception of Darwin, see Burrow (2000, 42-52).

anthropomorphisms" and "our aesthetic and moral judgments" suggest that Nietzsche is presenting a subtle but sophisticated response to Kant's attempt to reconcile scientific knowledge with our morality and aesthetic judgments. In particular, *GS* 109 is illuminated when read against the "Critique of Teleological Judgment" (in the *CPJ*), which permits us to make claims about the organic character of the universe so long as such claims were regarded as reflective rather than determinative.[138] But with the turn away from the metaphysical speculation of *BT*, Nietzsche finds that we cannot remain content with edifying reflective judgments; what we need is not edification, but transformation. As one component of that transformation, Nietzsche's de-mythologization firmly commits him to criticizing all anthropocentric projections. Even more radically, however, Nietzsche regards mechanistic interpretations as just as anthropomorphic as organic interpretations.

De-mythologization consists of recognizing both that "It [the total character of existence] is met throughout by none of our aesthetic and moral judgments" and that "There is only necessity … the entire automaton [*Spielwerk*] repeats eternally its ways, which may not even be called a melody" (ibid.). [139] Taking these two claims together, it may seem as though Nietzsche endorses this process of de-mythologization, which is also and simultaneously a process of dis-enchanting nature. If one can permit oneself to acknowledge that there is no encounter between the world and our aesthetic

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[138] For this way of thinking about Kant's account of teleology, as well as the importance of the Third Critique for Nietzsche, I am deeply indebted to Hill (2003).

[139] Trans. modified from Nauckhoff. In this passage Nietzsche also insists that the whole, the "total character of existence" is not only *eternal* but also *repeats itself eternally*. This passage is the earliest assertion I have found of the cosmological version of the doctrine of the eternal recurrence.

or moral judgments—that is, that our judgments cannot find purchase on the world—then we will have no choice but to accept that the structure of the world is neither orderly and beautiful nor good and wise. The "total character of the world" is, accordingly, „*Chaos*." A wholly chaotic world is a world without purpose, without moral or aesthetic significance, and a world in which we would seem to be utterly lost and out of place. It would therefore appear to be the culmination of what has come to be called, after Weber, "the disenchantment of the world."

However, Nietzsche makes a sharp twist towards the end of this announcement: "But when will we be at an end with our caution and care?" The "caution and care" here refers to the process of de-mythologization itself, since it was just the "myths" (Romanticism and Enlightenment) that demanded caution and care from those who want to defeat the "shadows of God." Nietzsche suggests that we will cease to feel the need to "de-mythologize" nature once the "shadows of God have ceased to darken us"; it is the shadows of God that we detect in nature which impel our critical efforts. "When will these shadows of God no longer darken us? When we have completely de-deified nature! When we are permitted to *naturalize* humanity with a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature!" (*GS* 109). The shadows of God—that is, the hidden residue of onto-theological thought and culture—will only be dissipated when we have the "permission" to naturalize humanity. By "naturalizing humanity," Nietzsche cannot refer merely to reading humanity into a valueless, meaningless nature—a nature of mere causal mechanism—because the very idea of "nature as mere causal mechanism" is itself an idea that is only intelligible in relation to the idea of a

God who has created and ordered this machine. The project of 'naturalizing humanity' therefore cannot mean that one would simply endorse a deflationary ontology that, in either its reductionistic or eliminativist versions, shows that intentions have no place in the causal order; a struggle against the shadows of God also means a struggle against the very notion of a disenchanted concept of nature which was defined in contrast with a transcendent deity. This leaves Nietzsche in a precarious and ill-defined place, a place that Nietzsche gestures towards us with the unanswered question: "When will these shadows of God no longer darken us?"

The direction of thought indicated by those unanswered questions implies that Nietzsche does not think that we can "de-deify" nature—that is, construct a post-theological conception of just what it means to be "natural"—and yet keep our self-conceptions intact. It is just those self-conceptions, as anchored in the Christian-modern interpretation, which we moderns must attempt to overcome in order for us to become what we are. In 2.4 above, I showed how the problem of nihilism is animated by a seemingly irresolvable conflict between the demands of naturalism and the requirements of agency. In contemporary terms, the conflict is posed as the question whether merely causal relations (as investigated by means of methodological naturalism) can exhaustively account for intentionality (as a requirement of agency).[140] Nietzsche, however, thinks that it is just this conception of nature (nature as causally saturated) that will have to be discarded along with the rest of "our aesthetic

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[140] In 2.4 I framed the problem in terms of conditionality vs. the unconditioned, not in terms of causation and intention. Nevertheless the two formulations of the problem are interconnected. For if one thinks that conditionality can only be conceptualized as causation, and also thinks that intentionality cannot be reduced to causation (or at least not without threatening our sense of agency in the process), then one will be tempted to account for intentionality in terms of the unconditioned, i.e. as spontaneity.

anthropomorphisms." The nature into which humanity is re-naturalized will not be a nomologically-structured system of causal mechanisms. *GS* 109 does not conclude, however, with any substantive claim as to the picture of nature that Nietzsche advocates. Instead, we are given a purely formal indication that any concept of nature that will satisfy the demands of modernity will be a conception of nature that is neither mechanistic nor teleological, and that it will not provide any room for a sharp demarcation between "humanity" on the one hand and "nature" on the other.

No analysis of the death of God can afford to completely ignore the famous pronouncement regarding that event that Nietzsche stages in *GS* 125. The death of God, presented as a simple *fait accompli* in GS 108, is here announced as a calamity that demands the attention of the atheists and *soi-disant* realists. Although there can be little doubt that Nietzsche uses the figure of the madman as a criticism of bourgeois complacency, one must be careful not to identify the madman too closely with the free spirits. The free spirits, Nietzsche suggests, have the responsibility of fighting against the shadows of God in order to someday make possible a different kind of culture, one that fully realizes the emancipatory potential of modernity.

On the other hand, the "madman" cannot take part in the struggles against the shadows of God (philosophical and cultural forms of both nihilism and fundamentalism) because he is too obsessed with the *death* of God. His hysterical obsession is really a symptom of his failure to engage in the experimentation that the death of the God requires. He cannot ask himself the question as to whether a wholly secular form of life could be worth affirming because he is too caught up in his own

"theonecrophilia."[141]   In this respect the madman is himself in the grip of nihilism.

Hence, I regard *GS* 125 as Nietzsche's *parody* of a certain kind of *reaction to GS* 108-

112.   The madman is like someone who is aware of the collapse of transcendence, but

instead of experimenting with "the extent to which truth can stand to be incorporated"

(*GS* 110) by exploring new possibilities of human subjectivity, the madman obsesses

over the death of God. Instead of experimenting on himself, he sings his "*requiem*

aeternam deo" (*GS* 125) in the churches.

Nietzsche shows that the madman is in a superior cognitive situation relative to

the complacent atheists who mock him. His cognitive superiority consists of his

awareness of the collapse of transcendence, whereas the atheists don't even realize

what has happened.   At the same time, the madman's obsession with the meaning of

this event shows that he is unable to affirm this collapse and do what is required to

move on by experimentally transforming his affective investments. It is this inability

which distinguishes the madman from the free spirits who must learn how to practice

gay science.[142]

Thus far I have argued only that "gay science" is the sort of anti-foundationalist

epistemological and metaphysical project that we require following "the death of

God." But this way of framing Nietzsche's agenda falls short if it fails to take into

consideration how gay science also requires alternative conceptions of what it means

to be a human being.   This aspect of Nietzsche's project can be approached by way of

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[141] I owe the term "theonecrophilia" to W. Arctander O'Brien, pers. comm.

[142] For a similar reading of *GS* 125 as developed through Freud's distinction between "mourning" and "melancholy," see Pippin (1999).

what I will call "the de-anthropologization of humanity." By this I mean that we have constructed a certain picture, the anthropological picture, of what it means to be a human being, but we have forgotten that this is only a picture that we have (however unconsciously) constructed and for which we can become responsible. We take it as a representation of what we really are even as we unconsciously project this representation into metaphysics (as God) and interpret the natural world accordingly (as the result of design). The naturalist project that Nietzsche demands of himself (and of us) not only rejects all theocentric interpretations of nature, but also the covert anthropomorphization of nature upon which these interpretations rest. The de-theologization of nature is therefore also a de-anthropomorphization of nature.

If, however, we also come to understand ourselves naturalistically, then it can only be in terms of a non-theocentric, i.e. non-anthropomorphized nature that we so come to understand ourselves. If one considers how modern Western culture has defined "humanity" with respect to "God" on the one hand and "nature" on the other, it will be readily apparent that the withdrawal of cognitive consent from these other terms—"the death of God" and the "struggle against the shadows of God"—cannot leave the concept of "humanity" unscathed.

The announcement of the death of God therefore amounts to nothing other than a sustained criticism of the humanist project. Nietzsche makes this connection clear as he discusses the fundamental distinction between polytheism and monotheism (*GS* 143):

> The wonderful art and power of creating gods — polytheism — was that
> through which this drive could discharge itself, purify, perfect, and

> ennoble itself … above and outside of oneself, in a distant overworld, one got to see a *plurality of norms*: one god was not the denial of or anathema of another god! … Monotheism, in contrast, this rigid consequence of the teachings of a normal human type—that is, the belief in a normal god next to whom there are only false pseudo-gods—was perhaps the greatest danger to humanity so far. … In polytheism the free-spiritedness and many-spiritedness of humanity received preliminary form—the power to create for ourselves our own new eyes and ever again new eyes that are ever more our own—so that for humans alone among the animals there are no eternal horizons and perspectives.

Monotheism, the belief in a *single* god ("God"), both presupposes and reinforces the idea that there is only one correct way of being a moral and rational subject. One can better appreciate the force of Nietzsche's criticism by appealing to Foucaultian terminology: monotheism is a technique of normalization, a practice whereby a people (a "population") is socialized to classify itself in accord with a rigid schema. This norm is then regarded as what it truly means to be human, and all deviations from this norm are subject to sanction and punishment. Polytheism, by contrast, permits a "plurality of norms," which at least provides the raw materials for the creation of individuality (to every person, her own law). The "death of God" is also, accordingly, the "death" of a certain technique of normalization, and so opens up the possibility of recovering, within modernity, the "free-spiritedness and many-spiritedness" that once characterized polytheistic religion—and so a new way of being human.

Nietzsche nevertheless maintains a distinctive humanism in his assertion that humanity alone is not "finished" or "complete." For Nietzsche, it would seem, it was obvious that biological evolution is strictly a feature of the *past*. The future is open to humanity alone because only humanity has the capacity for further development by way of *cultural* evolution. What requires interpretation is not that Nietzsche held

this dubious view, but twhether or not it stands in tension with his insistence on naturalizing humanity. For if humanity is naturalized, then one will come to understand humanity—and oneself—in terms that are continuous with the concepts through which one understands a (de-divinized) nature, bearing in mind that a de-divinized nature will also be a "de-disenchanted" nature.   Nietzsche's criticisms of "the shadows of God" announce a break with the criteria of modern science which resulted in the concept of a "disenchanted nature": the view that nature is mechanistic, nomologically-governed, mathematizable, and homogeneous (Funkenstein 1986). Funkenstein shows that the modern scientific concept of nature is both historically and conceptually interdependent with the specifically modern concept of God.[143]

   In terms of the history of concepts, we can see how Nietzsche might think that the disenchanted concept of nature is itself one of the "shadows of God" that remain to be defeated.[144]   But the disenchanted concept of nature stands in a complex relation to the anthropological project in terms of which "humanity" is understood as both part of the natural world and, simultaneously, as standing outside of the natural world. (It is not due solely to the whims of university bureaucracy that anthropology has a separate department from biology.)   For this reason, the de-deification of nature must go hand-in-hand with the de-anthropologization of humanity.

   The argument here can be summarized as follows:

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[143] See Placher (1996) on the differences between the modern and medieval concepts of God.

[144] However, it remains unclear whether Nietzsche would approve of anything resembling a "re-enchantment of nature."   For one version of "re-enchanting nature" that might be consistent with Nietzsche see Bernstein (2002).   Bernstein explicitly opposes Nietzsche's project to that of Adorno, but he does so only by distinguishing between the thought that the world is indeterminate (Adorno) and the thought that the world is *essentially* indeterminate (Nietzsche).   It is not clear to me just what this distinction amounts to.

1. "God" is an anthropomorphic projection of a certain kind (*GS* 143);

2. This projection has been projected into our concept of "nature" (*GS* 109);

3. One of the consequences of the death of God is the "de-deification" of nature; humanity needs be re-conceptualized in terms of a "de-deified nature" (*GS* 109);

4. But, since *deified nature* was nothing other than an anthropomorphic projection in the first place, the philosophical project proposed in *GS* 109 requires that

5. Humanity must be re-conceptualized in non-anthropological terms, i.e. in terms that do not depend on the idea of a essential distinction between "humanity" and "nature."

Considered in light of this argument, Deleuze (1988) is correct in arguing that Nietzsche is not the thinker of "the death of God," but rather the thinker of "the death of Man."   As Deleuze notes, the death of God was already proclaimed by Feuerbach.[145] Certainly there are passages where Nietzsche appears to echo Feuerbach (e.g. "… perhaps man will rise ever higher when he no longer *flows off* into a god" *GS* 285), but even here there is a crucial difference. Although Feuerbach sharply criticized Christian metaphysics, he nevertheless affirmed the basic values that Nietzsche associates with Christian-modern culture. In the terms used here, Feuerbach effectively rejected the cognitive commitments of otherworldly metaphysics in favor of naturalism, but he was unable to reject affective investment in Christian-modern

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[145] I have been informed that the phrase also occurs in Hegel, but I have not yet been able to locate the passage.

morality.   Nietzsche goes beyond Feuerbach by arguing not only that gods are anthropomorphic projections, but that even our conception of nature is bound up with this anthropomorphic projection.   Treating humanity in naturalistic terms, as Feuerbach and Marx tried to do, means both developing new conceptions of a de-deified nature and therefore of a de-anthropologized humanity and transforming our desires and values so that a de-deified nature and de-anthropologized humanity could come to figure as objects of affirmation.

Nietzsche is nevertheless aware that our traditional self-understanding depended on this demarcation between humanity and nature, or as sometimes otherwise put, between humanity and animality. Without such a demarcation, there is a danger that we will not know how to understand some of the deepest and most central features of ourselves.   It is for just this reason that Nietzsche thinks the task of philosophy is to create "a new picture and ideal of the free spirit."   *GS* lays the groundwork for such a "picture and ideal" by showing what would need to be the case in order for the free spirit to be a live possibility for modernity.   Nietzsche does not merely assert that 'God is dead,' but rather affirms that, as a consequence of this event, we must now develop post-theological interpretations of rationality, humanity, and morality—in other words, we must engage in the creation of new interpretations of what it means to be human.   It is in this sense that Nietzsche is the thinker of the death of Man, that is, the death of a specific interpretation of what it means to be human.[146]

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[146] One might develop this line of thought through Agamben's (2004) analysis and criticism of "the anthropological machine," but elaborating on this suggestion would take me too far beyond the current project.

In the interpretation of *Daybreak* above, I emphasized the distinction between "heteronomous subjectivity" and "autonomous subjectivity" (see 3.3). One might anticipate that in *GS* the de-anthropologization of humanity plays a crucial role in the transition from heteronomous subjectivity to autonomous subjectivity. But here we confront a problem similar to that we confronted in *Daybreak* (see 3.2 and 3.3 above). There, the problem was one of how Nietzsche could consistently affirm the possibility and desirability of freedom while denying the existence of free will. Here, the problem is one of how Nietzsche can consistently affirm human freedom while denying the anthropological distinction between humanity and nature.

4.3 The Material Conditions of Freedom: Nature, Science and History

The solution to this problem—and, as I will show, the solution of the problem which runs, in various guises, throughout the Free Spirit series—lies in seeing how the de-deification of nature makes possible a new conception of normativity, and that it is in terms of this conception of normativity that Nietzsche articulates his theory of freedom as autonomous subjectivity. Together, call this the account of "free spirituality," i.e. the account of what is required to be a free spirit. The account of free spirituality contains the following components:

1. a theory of ungrounded normativity (hence *side-stepping* the logic of nihilism);

2. an account of freedom as self-overcoming that is consistent with (1);

3. being a free spirit consists of acknowledging and affirming both (1) and (2).

    a. (1) is acknowledged and affirmed through the practice of gay science (fighting the shadows of God, working towards the de-anthropologization of humanity);

    b. (2) is acknowledged and affirmed through the practice of constructing oneself as an autonomous subject

I will first present the theory of "ungrounded normativity," show why Nietzsche is committed to it, and how it is consistent with the de-deification of nature and the de-anthropologization of humanity. I will then turn to freedom as self-overcoming, and conclude with a brief discussion of the role of the free spirit in relation to science and to history.

What I call here "ungrounded normativity" is the thought that there is nothing other than our own beliefs and desires, as expressed in those social practices that make them meaningful both to ourselves and to others, which determines what is to count as normatively binding on us. Norms are "ungrounded" in the sense that there is no foundation outside of this-worldly human existence. In *HAH* (cf. 2.4) we saw that the assumption that normative commitments required a transcendent foundation outside of history and nature, together with the thought that no such foundation is available for us, resulted in tendency towards normative *eliminativism* in Nietzsche's "positivistic" naturalism. But, without intelligible normative constraints, there is no way for any conception of agency to find conceptual purchase. Consequently, the "positivism" of *HAH* leads towards a logic of nihilism.

By contrast, close to the end of *GS* III Nietzsche writes "*What do you believe in?* – In this: that the weight of all things must be determined anew" (*GS* 269). Not only is this passage among the earliest expressions of what Nietzsche will later come to call "the trans-valuation of all values," but it also gives a precise cast to this notion. Nietzsche presupposes that the weight, i.e. the significance, meaninfulness, and importance of things, is the consequence of some determination. In light of the decidedly Kantian cast to much of Nietzsche's thought (especially as that cast was reworked in pragmatized, naturalized, and historicized terms by early Neo-Kantianism), the determination referred to here can be plausibly interpreted as a consequence of the determining structures (see4.1) that, although themselves susceptible to empirical inquiry, nevertheless constrain our conceptual activity in ways analogous to the transcendental aesthetic and the transcendental analytic.

Since "the weight of all things must be determined anew," it must be the case that that there is some problem with the old determination and that a new determination is possible. What makes a new determination possible is what I referred to above as the indeterminacy of the world. Not only does Nietzsche's methodological naturalism imply that metaphysical realism is false, it also implies that different determinations are possible. The criteria for evaluating different determinations cannot consist, therefore, in how closely they approximate the deep and essential structure of reality—for there is none to speak of—but rather in how well they enable us to forge conceptual and affective commitments required for fashioning a sense of life that we can recognize as worth affirming. The difficulty with the old

determination is that it has ceased to *work* "God is dead," and in order to struggle against "the shadows of God," we require a new conception of "the weight of all things": we require a new conception of normativity that is *available* for us moderns after the collapse of transcendence.

The conception of normativity that I propose here, ungrounded normativity, hinges on the thought that nothing can count as a normative commitment for us without our implicitly acknowledging that commitment.[147] Implicit acknowledgment is expressed in the fact that those people who live out that normative commitment regard their lives as cognitively contentful and affectively rich; in other words, they find their lives, when they reflect on them, meaningful and valuable. Nothing can count as a reason for revising or rejecting a normative commitment except in light of some other normative commitment which can also be revised or rejected.

Only a theory of ungrounded normativity—ungrounded because there is no point at which reaches one a normative principle which is uncontestable—can work in light of the collapse of transcendence. The logic of nihilism (2.4) proved inescapable for the arguments of *HAH* because Nietzsche implicitly relied on a theory of grounded normativity. It is the tension between the demand for grounded normativity and the impossibility of satisfying that demand which generates the threat of nihilism (Strong 2000; Marmyz 2003). The theory of ungrounded normativity gives Nietzsche an

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[147] Here I am indebted to Guay (2002). Where this argument differs from Guay's is two-fold. Firstly, I want to emphasize how the collapse of transcendence imposes on us a certain obligation to thematize ungrounded normativity, if nihilism is to be avoided. Secondly, as will become clear, I do not think that ungrounded normativity is neutral with respect to substantive ethical ideals or principles.

"exit strategy" from the logic of nihilism by rejecting the demand for an unconditional ground or foundation for normative commitments.

The theory of ungrounded normativity does not directly determine any substantive ethical ideals; in that sense, it leaves open the question as to whether we should be committed to justice, freedom, happiness, equality, etc.   But it also does more than merely determine how we ought to regard those substantive ethical ideals we do have, whatever they may be.   For ungrounded normativity does imply that, whatever our substantive ethical ideals, we should hold a fallibilistic and pragmatic attitude towards those ideals, since any of them might be candidates for revision or rejection in light of other ideals. The "should" here is not a moral obligation, but a *prudential* one: to regard our ideals as anything other than potential candidates for rejection or revision is to give into the demand for unconditional normativity, and consequently, to court the dangers of nihilism.   So, if we want to evade nihilism, we should regard our normative commitments as ungrounded in the specified sense.

However, the theory of ungrounded normativity does constrain what sorts of substantive ethical ideals could count as motivating for us.   There are some substantive ethical ideals which are, so to speak, *unavailable* to us post-collapse moderns who want to become free spirits.   Their unavailability consists in their taking their meaning and value from a conception of the unconditioned.   Christian-modern ethics, with its commitment to substantive ethical ideals such as equality, freedom, and justice, derives its normative authority from a certain story it tells us about the source of that authority, and locates that authority in something uncontestable and unavailable

for revision or rejection.   The point of the "fact of reason" argument in *CPrR* (5:30)

is to show that we are "always already" committed to the moral law.   We have no

choice but to act out of respect for the moral law, even when we act "pathologically"

(i.e. on the basis of sensuous motives).   Utilitarianism posits pleasure as similarly

intrinsically motivating, and so not up for contention.   Both deontological and

utilitarian ethics commit a sort of ethico-pragmatic version of the Myth of the Given.

By contrast, an account of freedom as self-overcoming is consistent with

ungrounded normativity, because self-overcoming presupposes precisely that there is

nothing "given" in either nature or humanity with which we must conform.   Self-

overcoming should therefore be interpreted as "meta-perfectionism" (Guay 2002,

315), since there is no antecedently given origin (from which we have fallen and to

which we must return) or *telos* at the end of history.   Both cyclical and linear models

of moral development, individual and collective, are ruled out.

In order to see more clearly how the conception of ungrounded normativity and

the account of freedom as self-overcoming work together, I turn now to how

Nietzsche develops the contrast between science and morality towards the end of *GS*.

Here it is science, especially history, guided by its commitment to methodological

naturalism, which implies that there can be nothing "given" that might serve as a

conditionless condition for any of our epistemic or ethical practices.   Consequently,

morality as heteronomous subjectivity is deprived of its cognitive coherence, since

heteronomous subjectivity is characterized by its desire for the unconditioned.

Freedom as self-overcoming, the construction of autonomous subjectivity, is then

introduced as an ethical practice that is consistent with the conception of ungrounded normativity.

At *GS* 335, Nietzsche imagines someone (presumably someone who, much like Nietzsche's putative reader, naïvely expresses the prejudices of his or her culture) who insouciantly uses terms such as "moral" or "conscience." Nietzsche asks his imaginary interlocutor:

> But why do you *listen* to the words of your conscience? And what gives you the right to consider such a judgment true and infallible? For this belief—is there no conscience? Do you know nothing of an intellectual conscience? A conscience behind your 'conscience'? Your judgment, 'that it is right' has a prehistory in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences and non-experiences. … And, briefly, had you reflected more subtly, observed better, and studied more, you would never continue to call this 'duty' of yours and this 'conscience' of yours duty and conscience. Your insight into *how such things as moral judgments could ever have come into existence* would spoil these emotional words for you, as other emotional [*pathetische*] words, for example 'sin,' 'salvation of the soul,' and 'redemption' have been spoiled for you. (*GS* 335; emphasis in original)

The cognitive register relies on an implicit contrast between the lack of self-knowledge typical of someone who considers herself "moral" and the self-knowledge generated by psychologically-informed introspection, i.e. introspection informed by more subtle reflection, observation, and description. We can call this a contrast between "naïve introspection" and "sophisticated introspection." Naïve introspection is naïve because it relies on Christian-modern fictions that fail to connect up with the concepts and results arrived at by means of methodological naturalism; these fictions conceal and betray a desire for the unconditioned. As a consequence, naïve introspection has no choice but to take moral judgments as *prima facie* cognitively

coherent. Sophisticated introspection is sophisticated because it is informed by the sort of naturalistic psychology that Nietzsche begins to develop in *Daybreak* (cf 3.2 above). Consequently it can pose to itself questions about the genesis and history of the moral judgments, a history which is obscured from the perspective of naïve introspection.

What Nietzsche calls here "the intellectual conscience" consists of posing to oneself quasi-psychoanalytic questions as to how and why it is that one evaluates as one does; one refuses to take one's own moral judgments at face value.[148] Psychological and historical inquiry into how such things as moral judgments could ever have come into existence undermines the *prima facie* cognitive coherence of terms such as 'duty' and 'conscience,' just because they are seen, in psychological terms, as that which needs be explained and not, in themselves, as explaining anything (such as why one acts morally). Just as methodological naturalism has undermined the cognitive coherence of religious concepts such as 'sin,' 'salvation,' and 'redemption,' so too it undermines the cognitive coherence of moral concepts such as 'duty' and 'conscience.'   What remains to be seen is whether these terms can retain their emotional weight after their cognitive status has been brought into question.

As it was Kant, above all other thinkers, who attempted to reconcile traditional self-understanding (i.e. Christian-modern metaphysics and morality) with the methodological naturalism represented by Newton, it is appropriate that Nietzsche turn to Kant at this moment.   Nietzsche compares Kant to "a fox who strays back into

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[148] Nietzsche introduces "the intellectual conscience" at *GS* 2, thereby indicating its importance for his conception of *The Gay Science* as a whole.

his cage. Yet it had been *his* strength which had broken open the cage!" (*GS* 335).

The cage to which Nietzsche alludes—the metaphysical doctrines of the Christian-

modern tradition—was broken open when Kant showed that only an anthropocentric

epistemology was consistent with the critical project that modernity required; this is,

in effect, Kant's "Copernican Revolution."   In the light of the "death of Man" with

which Nietzsche's post-structuralist heirs have associated him, we can see Nietzsche

as playing the Bruno to Kant's Copernicus; where Kant merely substituted an

anthropocentric philosophy for traditional theocentrism, Nietzsche develops an

"acentric" epistemology, one without *any* privileged center of cognitive or affective

gravity.[149]   This is why Nietzsche both praises Kant for having broken open the cage

of theocentrism while also criticizing him for having re-conceptualized traditional

self-understandings as "postulates of pure practical reason," intrinsic to reason's self-

determination. Kant puts the old structure on a new foundation.

Against Kant, Nietzsche undertakes a psychological interpretation of the

categorical imperative which undermines its status as a universal and necessary

principle of pure practical reason:

> What?   You admire the categorical imperative within you? This
> 'firmness' of your so-called moral judgment? This 'unconditionedness'
> of feeling, 'here everyone must judge as I do'? Rather admire your
> *selfishness* here! And the blindness, pettiness, and simplicity of your
> selfishness!   For it is selfish to consider one's own judgment a universal
> law, and this selfishness is blind, petty, and simple because it shows that
> you haven't yet discovered yourself or created for yourself an ideal of
> your own—for this could never be someone else's, let alone everyone's,
> everyone's! (ibid., trans. modified from Naucke)

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[149] For an interpretation of Nietzsche as playing the Bruno to Kant's Copernicus, see Albert (2000, 2-5).

The categorical imperative is "selfish, blind, petty, and simple" for two reasons. Firstly, it is nothing other than the inflation of one's own personal standards of evaluation into something universal and necessary (much as God is a projection of one's own conception of humanity onto the cosmos; cf. *GS* 143). Secondly, it is a projection which is unable to acknowledge its own status as a projection; without the claims to universality and necessity, the categorical imperative could not be thought as Kant thinks of it. By means of this projection, the subject is able to avoid having to take responsibility for the ideal by which he acts; instead, he can take refuge in his conception of what pure practical reason demands of him. This is the hidden core of heteronomy in Kant's putative theory of autonomy. Genuine self-determination—autonomous subjectivity—requires that one "discover or create for oneself an ideal of one's own."

Implicit in this criticism is a thought that goes to the heart of Kant's moral theory. For Kant, a centrally important feature of morality is that it be impartial with respect to agents. The categorical imperative obliges one to treat all rational beings, including oneself, in the same way; hence the famous Formula of Humanity, "So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always at the same time as an end in itself, never merely as a means" (*GMM* 4:429) What Nietzsche considers objectionable here is the under-examined assumption that morality consists of impartiality. Nietzsche thinks that Kant is correct in identifying the importance of impartiality to morality; Nietzsche finds this objectionable because it requires that one elide differences between individuals, and so negate both the

uniqueness and particularity of the other, as well as one's own, in order to generate moral principles with the level of generality that impartiality demands.

Nietzsche's objection is grounded in his psychological insight that every act is absolutely unique. This counts against the categorical imperative because the categorical imperative rests on the premise that similar things should be treated in relevantly similar ways; all rational beings are similar by virtue of being rational, and so there are no grounds for discriminating between them, even between oneself and another. The impartiality of morality is grounded in the similarity of rational beings. But if, on the contrary, every act is absolutely unique, then there is no respect in which all persons can be treated in the same way: "No one who judges, 'in this case everyone would have to act like this' has yet taken five steps towards self-knowledge. For he would then know that there neither are nor can be actions that are all the same; that every act ever performed was done in an altogether unique and unrepeatable way, and this will be equally true of every future act … every act is unknowable" (ibid.).

Because every act is unknowable (repeating a theme from *D* 117), it is impossible that there could be action-guiding principles with the generality—much less the universality and necessity—that Kant imputes to the categorical imperative. This is the hidden premise behind Nietzsche's psychological attack on the categorical imperative as a piece of projection and dishonesty. Nietzsche is only able to criticize the categorical imperative as "selfish, blind, petty, and stupid" because he rejects the premise that it is possible to generalize across acts.

If every act is unique, unrepeatable, and unknowable, then any account that insists on generalizing across acts will be a species of dishonest projection on the part of the subject endorsing the generalization.[150]   Firstly, it will be a projection because the subject regards the principle as having some other source than his or her individual beliefs and desires.   Secondly, the projection will be dishonest because the element of projection must be disavowed in order for the agent to regard it as being general, universal, and necessary.   In order for the principle to be regarded as universally valid, its moment of genesis must be suppressed in order to avoid a conflict between the genesis and the validity of the principle.

The criticism of morality here, like that in *D*, therefore functions in both conceptual and affective terms.   Conceptually, Nietzsche contrasts the naïve introspection of the heteronomous subject with sophisticated introspection informed by a naturalistic psychology.   Methodological naturalism implies that there is no essential structure to either the world (de-deification) or to humanity (de-anthropologization).[151]   Affectively, Nietzsche contrasts the heteronomous subject, the one who is unwilling or incapable of discovering or creating his own ideal and

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[150] One might nevertheless suspect that the target of Nietzsche's criticisms is not the *universality* of the moral law, but the *generality* of the maxims submitted to the moral law.   Although the categorical imperative is formulated as a criterion of universalizability, it acquires its normative force only from the generality of the maxims submitted to it; if the maxims are too specific, then the categorical imperative loses its bite.   This criticism of Kant's insistence on universalizability was suggested to me by Luke Robinson (pers. comm.).   In conflating universality and generality, Nietzsche follows Kant.

[151] It can now be seen more clearly how monotheism, by elevating a single conception of humanity and projecting that standard onto the cosmos as a whole, fostered the illusions both that there has to be some unique and correct set of normative commitments and that such commitments were grounded in something other than the contingency of human life.   The rise of the Enlightenment, science and history disrupts the conceptual basis of this world-view; the transformation of science and history into "gay science" is required in order to complete the Enlightenment project and make possible the coming of free spirits.

who conceals this unwillingness or incapacity from himself—hence both cowardly and dishonest—with the honesty, courage, and creativity of the autonomous subject. Against morality, Nietzsche presents the ideal of a psychologically sophisticated autonomous subject: the free spirit.

This contrast is misleading, however, if it is understood in strictly formal terms. Rather, Nietzsche locates this contrast in the very core of what it means to be modern, as when he writes, "Let us leave such chatter [about moral judgments] and such bad taste to those who have nothing to do but drag the past a few steps further through time and who never live in the present—that is, to the many, the great majority! We, however, want to *become who we are*—human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves!" (ibid.). Those who 'drag the past a few steps further through time' are those whose self-understandings are oriented toward the past—toward past events, persons, and traditions. As such self-understandings are, at this socio-historical moment, mediated by large-scale (and typically hierarchical) institutions, past-oriented self-understandings depend upon one's position within one or more such institutions. For this reason, self-understandings are overwhelmingly heteronomous. In other words, subjects are heteronomous just because their self-understandings, whatever the particular content of such understandings, is *determined* by their relation to the past. Genuine self-determination requires not only that one act according to the law that one *gives to oneself*, but according to a law that one *creates for oneself* This distinction is important enough to merit further examination.

According to the Kantian model, in giving a law to oneself, the law itself is purely formal; it is abstracted from all empirical, sensuous ("pathological") content, which is what confers onto the moral law its universal validity. As the very concept of lawfulness, the moral law is shorn of all particularity; only in this way can the maxims of the moral agent be submitted for approval or rejection according to the categorical imperative. By contrast, in creating a law for oneself, the universality is, as it were, restricted to the individual who has created that law. The law that I create for myself is different from the law that you create for yourself; there is no universal law. At the same time, however, such laws must still be universal with respect to the individual, in that they govern all of one's acts. If the law does not govern all of one's acts, then it is unclear how it could be a law in any meaningful sense.

The relevant difference between the Kantian and Nietzschean versions of self-determination is that the Kantian version conceals an element of heteronomy within it, because the law that one gives to oneself is *also* imposed on oneself as a requirement of pure practical reason; the transcendental subject commands the empirical subject.[152] The Nietzschean version of self-determination is true autonomy because the law that one recognizes as binding on oneself is *also* one's self-expression, and therefore does not violate one's particularity by subordinating it to an objectively valid norm. It must be noted however that Nietzschean self-determination entails violation of the particularity of *acts*, since all acts are submitted to the law that one has created for oneself. However, since the law is nothing other than one's self-expression, and ones

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[152] Compare: "The philosophy of Kant: the civil servant as thing in itself established as a judge over the civil servant as appearance" (*TI* "Raids of an Untimely Man" 29).

is nothing other than the totality of one's acts, there is no sharp dichotomy between lawfulness and inclination as there is Kant.[153]

By posing the contrast between "the great majority" and "we who want to become who we are" in terms of "dragging the past a few steps further" and "living in the present," Nietzsche argues that in order to create a law for oneself, one must be liberated from the constraint of the past; one must know how to live in the present and regard oneself as living in the present. The distinction between heteronomy and autonomy therefore turns out to involve the mode of temporal reflection expressed in one's evaluative commitments and one's consciousness of that mode. Historical self-consciousness is therefore a material condition of possibility on genuine self-determination. The reason for this is that modernity culminates in the collapse of transcendent foundations for our cognitive and affective structures; awareness of oneself as modern is equivalent to the realization of the loss of transcendent foundations, and is a condition for the experience of this loss as liberation.

More specifically, modernity is distinguished by "the historical sense" [*die historiche Sinn*]:

> This is the beginning of something completely new and strange in
> history: if one gave this seed a few centuries and more, it might
> ultimately become a wonderful growth with an equally wonderful smell

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[153] The question remains as to how Nietzsche can maintain the distinction at all in light of his naturalized psychology. If there is no dichotomy between the intellect and the drives, then what distinguishes the intellect from the drives at all? In order to salvage claims about freedom or reason within the framework of a naturalistic psychology, one needs some account of what Freud called "sublimation." Whitebook (2004) argues that some account of sublimation is required in order to prevent validity from collapsing all the way into "Nietzschean geneticism" (53). On the one hand, this is not entirely fair; Nietzsche attempts to develop some account of sublimation with his concept of "spiritualization," which figures in the power ontology in the idea that power spiritualizes itself ("spirit is the life that itself cuts into life" *TSZ* 2:8 "On the Famous Wise Men"). On the other hand, however, Nietzsche did not elaborate on this concept as carefully his own thought required.

that could make our old earth more agreeable to inhabit. We present-day humans are just beginning to form the chain of a very powerful future feeling, link by link—we hardly know what we are doing. It seems to us almost as if we are dealing not with a new feeling but with a decrease in all old feelings: the historical sense is still something so poor and cold, and many are struck by it as by a frost and made even poorer and colder for it. (*GS* 337)

The historical sense undermines the idea of a transcendent foundation as posited either at the beginning or end of temporal continuity. With the advent of the historical sense, history becomes something other than revelation or eschatology: it becomes genealogy.[154]

At the same time, the historical sense is marked by "a decrease in all old feelings" and makes some people "even colder and poorer," because of their difficulty in regarding genealogy as an object of affective investment. For the time being—that is, as a constituent of our historical moment—genealogy seems to require a coldness towards one's affective investments as currently constituted, and as such, does not seem to be a promising candidate for affective investment. Genealogy requires such coldness, not because of the structure of affectivity itself, but because we have traditionally located the object of affective investment in transcendent foundations that we now know, thanks to naturalistic and genealogical inquiry, do not exist and hence cannot compel our cognitive or affective assent. To the extent that we continue to wish otherwise, we have not yet succeeded in affirming our historical situation as moderns; we have not yet become who we are.

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[154] The contrast between history as genealogy and history as eschatology figures prominently in Foucault's essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (Foucault 1998).

Nevertheless, Nietzsche promises, we are already on our way to becoming who we are insofar as we are able to affirm the genealogically-understood historical process whereby we came to be who we are, even though for now "we hardly know what we are doing." Those of us we are able to perform such an affirmation experience a new feeling as a consequence:

> he who is able to feel the history of man altogether as his own feels in a monstrous generalization … to bear and to be able to bear this monstrous sum of all kinds of grief and still be the hero who, on the second day of battle, greets dawn and his fortune as a person whose horizon stretches millennia before and behind him, as the dutiful heir to all the nobility of past spirit, as the most aristocratic of old nobles and at the same time the first of a new nobility the likes of which no age has seen or dreamt: to take this upon one's soul –the oldest, newest, losses, hopes, conquests, victories of humanity. (ibid.)

It may seem puzzling that Nietzsche insists on describing the affirmation of genealogical self-understanding as a kind of "nobility." The solution to this puzzle hinges on recalling what "nobility" means within Nietzsche's philosophical/poetic discourse. Throughout *GS* Nietzsche conceptualizes "nobility" (or "noblemindedness") in terms of a singular and over-riding passion, as opposed to the "common" who constantly think of their own advantage and rationally maximize it. The nobility are stupid and irrational, Nietzsche admits, but there is something about their stupidity and irrationality which deserves admiration: it is their way of subordinating all of their inner turmoil to the constraint of a single law, to "one taste" which "gives style to one's character" (*GS* 290). In other words, what is admirable about the nobility is that, by means of their overriding passion, an order and structure is imposed on their beliefs and desires.

Likewise, the "new nobility" that will be capable of affirming their genealogical development will, by virtue of that affirmation, also experience that genealogy as possessing an order and structure; such individuals will be capable of not only affirming this or that personal event, but the totality of human history as that which culminates in themselves. Because they *give* history a meaning and order, they do not *look to* history for meaning and order; they recognize and affirm a conception of normativity as ungrounded. In this respect they are not dependent on tradition for the criteria of meaning and value by which they find the world as affording cognitive coherence and affective adherence; they represent a form of autonomous subjectivity. As such, they also represent a new event in human history:

> To finally take all this [all of history] in one soul and compress it into one feeling—this would surely have to produce a happiness unknown to humanity so far: a divine happiness full of power and love, full of tears and laughter, a happiness which, like the sun in the evening, continually draws on inexhaustible riches, giving them away and pouring them into the sea, a happiness which, like the evening sun, feels richest when even the poorest fisherman is rowing with a golden oar! This divine feeling would then be called—humanity! (*GS* 337)

This "divine feeling" is properly called "humanity" because it is produced through by acknowledging and affirming all that has happened to humanity over the course of its history, an affirmation that is conditioned by the "translation of man into a de-deified nature" and the psychologically and historically informed self-understanding caused by such a "translation."

Those who are capable of overcoming the "coldness" currently associated with psychological and historical suspicion will feel a kind of happiness that Nietzsche calls "humanity" because it is a new feeling of what it means to be human after the "de-

anthropologization of humanity" is complete. For us moderns who are not yet capable

of such a divine feeling, understanding how we came to be who we are, and affirming

that process, is nevertheless partially constitutive of affirming ourselves and so

becoming who we are: free spirits who, having passed, with laughter, beyond the death

of God and of Man, will some day know a new sense of what it means to be human.

In relation to the creation of "free spirits," Nietzsche's critique—above all, in *GS*—is

something like a 'prolegomenon to any free spirits.'

WHAT IS THE FREE SPIRIT?

For much of the twentieth century, historical and philosophical scholarship on Nietzsche tended to concentrate on the various traditions on which he proved to be a crucial influence: existentialism, critical theory, and post-structuralism, just to name a few. More recently, however, scholars have turned their attention to the traditions which influenced Nietzsche—the assumption being that we might learn more about Nietzsche from situating him in the intellectual and cultural contexts which actually influenced him rather than from the various uses to which to his work has subsequently been put. As a result of framing the discussion of Nietzsche this way, Leiter implies that the 'naturalistic' interpretation of Nietzsche is at odds with a more 'postmodern' interpretation: "Nietzsche belongs not in the company of postmodernists like Foucault and Derrida, but rather in the company of naturalists like Hume and Freud" (2002, 2).

Though I find much to admire in this turn in historical-philosophical methodology, as is clear from my indebtedness to some recent excellent work along these lines, I am nevertheless concerned that we will come to think of 'naturalistic' and 'postmodern' interpretations as antagonists. [155] This opposition is no better than the oppositions between analytic and Continental interpretations or between

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[155] It is also my conviction that seeing Nietzsche as a predecessor of both philosophical naturalism and of postmodernism can contribute to improved communication between members of contemporary North American philosophy departments and members of other departments in the humanities and social sciences. But further discussion of this point is impossible without a dissection of the various different movements and figures that have been crammed together under the umbrella term "postmodernism."

epistemological and ontological interpretations (cf. 1.1); it amounts to nothing more than a choice between two different ways of missing the forest for the trees.

What I have attempted to show here is how Nietzsche's problematization of nihilism, which had decisive influence on much of twentieth-century Continental thought, can be traced to the conflict that Nietzsche presents between naturalistic, empirical knowledge and Christian-modern culture. To have to choose between a perspective informed by Kant and Darwin on the one hand, or by Adorno and Foucault on the other, is a false dichotomy. In what follows I would like to conclude the present study by showing how both 'naturalistic' and 'postmodern' concepts have structured the analyses of the problems and themes of the Free Spirit series. I will do so first by re-tracing the trajectory of the Free Spirit series (5.1) and then by answering the question, "What is the free spirit?" (5.2).

5.1 Nietzsche's Line of Flight

Nietzsche's critique of Kant is an *immanent critique* (or "metacritique").[156]

Immanent critique is critique without a privileged term or concept that stands apart

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[156] The idea of a metacritique originated with Herder. In recent years the work of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud have all been labeled "metacritiques" insofar as they criticize the presuppositions of the act of critique itself. The idea of an immanent critique, one that refuses all transcendent positions *or* transcendental reflections, is important for Deleuze's (1983) interpretation of Nietzsche. Rosen (1978, 18-26) argues that Nietzsche should be considered an important influence on Adorno's immanent critique; cf. Bauer (1999). The question as to whether a purely immanent critique is possible, or whether the very practice of critique presupposes a transcendental perspective, is the main issue at stake in recent encounters between post-structuralism and critical theory; see Kelly (1994). The essays collected in Babich (2004) also explore these issues through analyses of the relation between Nietzsche, Habermas, and other figures in the tradition of critical theory.

from the terrain on which critique operates; hence, immanent critique is critique without rest or respite, a movement or activity that constantly calls itself into question. Building on the discussion of Kantian critique above (1.2), one can see that the Kantian critical project is marked by a serious tension. By showing that the categories have a merely immanent, never a transcendent, use, Kantian critique demonstrates that transcendence no longer has the cognitive force it once did. (This is also clear from the very demand for a critique of pure reason by pure reason.) At the same time, however, the concepts of reason (the Ideas) retain an affective grip on the critical philosophy.[157] Thus, the affective retention of transcendence in the desire for the unconditioned, although incapable of *theoretical* fulfillment, can nevertheless be satisfied in reason's *practical* employment.

Nietzsche's antagonism towards the residual transcendence in Kantian critique underpins his critique of the transcendental reflection of *CPR* in favor of a genealogical epistemology as well his critique of the moral law of *CPrR* in favor of an ethics of self-fashioning and self-transformation. In doing so Nietzsche pursued a "line of flight" out of the conceptual problem-space inaugurated by Kant and into a problem-space of his own.[158] In the course of pursuing this line of flight Nietzsche begins to conceptualize what I have called *the collapse of transcendence* (1.2).

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[157] The tension at work here finds an especially revealing expression when Kant writes that the categories, although having no transcendental use, nevertheless have a transcendental significance (*CPR* A 248/ B305). What precisely significance is, and how it differs from use, is not made clear.

[158] The concept of a "line of flight" is indebted to Deleuze and Guattari (1987).

Nietzsche's first attempt to thematize the collapse of transcendence can be reconstructed on the basis of *Human, All-too-Human* (1878). In Chapter 2, I argued that in *HAH* Nietzsche poses a confrontation, rather than a reconciliation or pacification, between methodological naturalism and Christian-modern conceptions of agency. This confrontation took as a point of departure both German Materialism, as Nietzsche interpreted it through the lens of naturalistic neo-Kantianism (especially Lange, but also Spir, Teichmüller, Kuno Fischer), and the secularized Christian-modern understanding of subjectivity that Nietzsche found conceptualized in Kant and in Schopenhauer (2.1). On the basis of this confrontation Nietzsche develops a roughly "positivist" critique of metaphysics in terms of which both idealism (Schopenhauer), materialism, and neo-Kantianism are criticized. Nietzsche's commitment to a historicized naturalism, which is also a naturalized historicism, undermines any conception of either world-independent minds or mind-independent world as static and fixed (2.2).

This same commitment also undermines the secularized Christian-modern morality that was central to both Kant and Schopenhauer (2.3). The critique of morality in *HAH* is made possible by Nietzsche's tacit commitment to a broadly Kantian-Schopenhauerian account of what morality is. It is only because Nietzsche has taken on board that specific account of morality (e.g. as impartial, as unconditioned by anything empirical or "pathological") that he must reject morality in the name of knowledge. This rejection, however, ricochets onto the ethical and political perfectionism that Nietzsche recommends in favor of Christian-modern

morality.   The problem here is that methodological naturalism rules out *any* appeal to normative standards as long as normativity is conceived of as unconditional.   The argumentative structure of *HAH* culminates, perhaps *malgré lui*, in a condition of nihilism (2.4).   Without an alternative conception of normativity and of agency, there is no way out of the structural conflict between the requirements of empirical knowledge and the requirements of Christian-modern agency.   We would be frozen between being unable to "esteem what we know" and not being "*allowed* any longer to esteem the lies that we should like to tell ourselves" (*WP* 5).

Nietzsche begins to find a way out of this impasse in *Daybreak* (1880).   In Chapter 3, I argued that *D* deepens Nietzsche's criticism of Kantian critique by calling into question one of the most central of Kantian premises: the abstract and unified subject characterized in terms of its formal (transcendental) conditions. Here Nietzsche begins by assuming that morality itself must be thoroughly historicized and naturalized.   In doing so he also shows that morality has both cognitive and affective dimensions, and that a critique of morality must therefore take into account both dimensions (3.1).   The critique of morality on affective grounds in turn raises the question of an analysis of subjectivity as multiplicity, both with respect to the individual (the pluralism of drives and affects) and with respect to culture (the pluralism of "forms of life," of ways of being a subject) (3.2).

In both respects Nietzsche rejects the Kantian premise that formal conditions can be given which define the subject as such; instead, subjectivities must be defined in terms of the material conditions (biological and cultural). In doing so, Nietzsche

develops a account that characterizes autonomy in terms of material conditions rather than in terms of formal conditions (3.3). The account of the material conditions of autonomy works both in terms of the history of modernity and in terms of the self-fashioning of the individual's care of him (or her) self. An account of historicized-naturalized autonomy is required if we are to make sense of the norm of freedom in light of our commitment, as moderns, to a thoroughly historicized and naturalized—i.e. a thoroughly modern—world-view (3.4).

The conceptualization of modernity as the collapse of transcendence reaches fruition in *The Gay Science* (1882). Here Nietzsche is now able to reflect on the full implications of historicism and naturalism for culture, including the possibility of a critique of that culture. Henceforth *critique itself* must be historicized and naturalized. Nietzsche attempts to draw out the implications of this reworked notion of immanent critique in the idea of a genealogy of cognition which culminates in the idea of a gay science (4.1). On the basis of a fully naturalized and historicized conception of critique, Nietzsche is now able to thematize the collapse of transcendence as "the death of God" (4.2). The death of God should be interpreted in terms of both the rise of the natural and social sciences which eroded the hermeneutic authority of the Christian-modern self-understanding and in terms of the rise of the historical consciousness from which this erosion has become conceivable for us as "the death of God." But Nietzsche is more concerned with what new forms of self-understanding have become possible for us in the wake of this event than he is in the event itself. This is why Nietzsche claims that we must struggle against "the shadows of God,"

including our own nostalgia for transcendence and our hesitation to translate humanity back into nature, before presenting the figure of the madman who is unable to stop obsessing over the death of God.

The death of God is pursued along two different lines. Firstly, it makes possible a de-deified understanding of nature. Secondly, it makes possible a de-anthropologized understanding of humanity. This means that our self-understanding is no longer imprisoned by a specific conception of what it means to be human, one which had been projected onto the universe. Consequently Nietzsche is now in a position to show how the collapse of transcendence, as conceptualized by means of a fully historicized and naturalized self-consciousness, is the material condition of possibility for the exercise of a historicized and naturalized practice of freedom (4.3). In other words, the death of God is the material condition of possibility for free spirits.

5.2   What is a Free Spirit?

If the texts of the Middle Period are intended to present a "new image and ideal of humanity, *the free spirit*," one wants to know how they do so. What, after all, is a free spirit? The preceding summary shows that the Free Spirit series—Nietzsche's own line of flight from neo-Kantianism, German Materialism, and Schopenhauerian romanticism—also contains the beginnings of new conception of humanity. The old conception of humanity answered the question of what it means to be human in terms

of the desire for transcendence.[159] This conception, and the social institutions which embodied it, was for a long time both cognitively and affectively satisfying.   The collapse of transcendence means that it is impossible for the old narratives to provide us with the cognitive and affective satisfaction that they provided to our pre-modern predecessors.   Henceforth we must develop, as far as we are able, the cognitive and affective investments required to affirm a wholly immanent, wholly secular form of life.

On what basis, however, could such investments be made?   The collapse of transcendence was itself caused by the rise of a historicized naturalism which is incompatible with the self-understanding expressed through the concepts, metaphors, and symbols of Christian-modern culture. It is for this reason that the old cognitive and affective investments cannot be sustained in the wake of a thoroughly naturalized and historicized self-consciousness.   Yet without the practices that sustain cognitive interests and affective passions, the condition of nihilism threatens.   There is an alternative to nihilism only if the new self consciousness could itself be the horizon of our interests and passions.   In other words, if there is an alternative to nihilism, it would be because the object of our cognitive and affective investments could be the historicized and naturalized self-consciousness itself.

From the perspective of this form of self-consciousness, the collapse of transcendence is a material condition of possibility for its emergence.   Nietzsche first begins to hint at this possibility at *HAH* 16, where he alludes to a "developmental

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[159] Compare Augustine's famous beginning of the *Confessions*: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

history of thinking" that will transform our attitudes towards science and towards history itself.   This line of thought culminates, within the Free Spirit series, at *GS* 337, where it is the sense for historicity which makes possible a new experience of what it means to be human.   We can see, therefore, that in order for a wholly secular form of life to sustain our cognitive and affective investments, those investments must be satisfied by the event that opened up the possibility of a wholly secular form of life—the collapse of transcendence itself. Those who are able to acknowledge (in the cognitive dimension) and affirm (in the affective dimension) both the collapse of transcendence and the resulting possibilities—those who experience the death of God as a moment of liberation—are what Nietzsche calls "the free spirits."

Only such a form of life, Nietzsche implicitly argues, presents us with an alternative to nihilism, because it presents us with an alternative conception of normativity to the one that modern Western culture has inherited from the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Nietzschean response to the threat of nihilism is: why do you want *unconditional* normativity? Why must normativity be unconditional and transcendent in order to count as normativity at all? Why desire anything other than the partial and limited evaluations that always and already make up the texture of lived experience? Why give in to the hatred of everything conditioned—"life, nature, and history" (*HAH* P)—that lies at the root of the demand for the unconditioned?   Life may no longer offer the same assurances and stability that it appeared to offer to our predecessors, but it is, for all that, still worth living and worth loving.

Finally, we can see how one can be a free spirit, how one can *become* free. Firstly, through the practice of gay science one comes to reflect upon and affirm the collapse of transcendence and so comes to affirm an ungrounded conception of normativity which is the only conception available in the wake of the death of God. It would be ungrounded because it would not be firmly anchored—it would not derive its value and meaning—from anything that transcends the everyday life-world.[160] Such self-conscious affirmation is made possible not only by acknowledging the death of God—since even the madman does that (*GS* 125)—but by taking the death of God as an opportunity for experimentally transforming one's affective registers. The translation of humanity back into a de-deified, newly redeemed nature is part of this process. Secondly, one comes to acknowledge one's status as an autonomous subject through "the care of the self as the practice of freedom" (cf. Foucault). Since the care of the self is a substantive ethical ideal that is consistent with ungrounded normativity, it can compel our cognitive interests and affective passions. Becoming free means that one becomes capable of affirming the world-historical process that has led up to us and of desiring one's own transformation into something else. If it is possible for us to draw upon science and history in order to construct a form of life which is worth having and loving after the death of God, then nihilism, even if it is in some sense part of our destiny, it is not our destination.

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[160] In calling this conception of normativity "ungrounded" I recognize that I might be trapped within the assumption that only a transcendent foundation of normativity could count as a "ground" at all. To evaluate normativity as "ungrounded" or "groundless" therefore concedes too much to that very conception of normativity which the collapse of transcendence has forced us to call into question. Clearly, further exploration of this aspect of the problem is required.

By the time that Nietzsche concludes the Free Spirit series, with the announcement of the beginning of Zarathustra's "going under" at the end of *GS* 342, Nietzsche has arrived at a problematic markedly different from the Kantian one with which he began in *HAH*. He has not, to be sure, developed the *language* of his own for the things that were his own (*GM* P 4), but there can be no doubt that he has "things of his own": the need for a revaluation of all values in the wake of the death of God, or what I have called here the collapse of transcendence. In the years following Nietzsche would develop a language of his own, but his thinking would also, as Abbey (2000) has noted, become in some respects less flexible, more dogmatic, and towards the end of his intellectual career, more shrill. But for those who still find something both noble and intoxicating in Nietzsche—even those who remain, for all that, partisans of the *Aufklärung*—the "idea and image of the free spirit" continues to challenge, to invite, and to inspire.[161]

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[161] "What I should like to show here is that Nietzsche at that time [i.e. in the Free Spirit series--CBS] invented an exemplary 'strategy' and, above all, that it is possible and legitimate to make of it the model for a reappropriation of his thought: if Nietzsche can make of the *Aufklärung* an instrument for his critique of Reason, then we in turn can make of his 'irrationalim' the means to continue the liberation that began with the Enlightenment" (Raynaud 1997, 145). Raynaud argues that one way to use Nietzsche, but especially the texts of the Free Spirit series, in the service of the Enlightenment can be found in the work of Max Weber. The connection between Nietzsche and Weber is also emphasized by Owen (1994), who traces a lineage from Nietzsche through Weber to Foucault, and by Bernstein (2001), who traces the Nietzsche-Weber connection to Adorno. Strong (2002) also shows the convergences between Nietzsche and Weber on essential points. The texts of the Free Spirit series should therefore be framed with respect to Kant and Darwin *and* Adorno and Foucault.

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