

Who is Zarathustra's Nietzsche?

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I would like to begin with a few remarks as to why I did this book, *Reading the New Nietzsche*,¹ and how in the course of following out some issues I tried to arrive at some sense of Nietzsche the person, especially as this emerges in *Zarathustra* and the work immediately following that—particularly in Book Five of *The Gay Science* and in the 1886 Prefaces to the second edition of his works. With these writings of 1886, there emerges a remarkably transformed sense of Nietzsche's own self-awareness, a turn, based on his own autocritique—that basically works as a form of self-therapy—enabling him to grasp the really binding purchase the social symbolic has on the individual. In submitting himself to this autocritique, he first raises the question as to its possibility, and then proceeds to effectuate it in a rather complex way. Ultimately, this opens the way for his finely detailed metacritical works of the later period, especially *Beyond Good and Evil* and the *Genealogy*.

My reasons for writing the work were first of all practical. I found it increasingly difficult to recommend specific secondary material to students concerning individual texts of Nietzsche. Most of the secondary literature concerns overall interpretations of Nietzsche's collected writings, or is concerned with specific themes running throughout Nietzsche's works. When a work of secondary scholarship or commentary was devoted to a single text of Nietzsche's, it was oftentimes overwhelming in length and scope—for the concerns, especially, of an undergraduate; the most egregious example is surely Carl Jung's 1578-page analysis of *Zarathustra*.² Second, as anyone who has ventured into the virtually mud-spattered field of Nietzsche scholarship knows, the range and variety of interpretations are legion. The reasons for this are, of course, equally well known. His differing styles of composition, together with his remarkably complex rhetorical strategies, oftentimes result in works that appear equivocal, inconsistent, and overly dramatic. Also, his range of subject matter is enormous and, not unusually, provocative. Hence, the set of responses taken by the readers of his work is practically guaranteed to verge on the boundless. Such provocations and responses result in a kaleidoscopic Nietzsche, fractured at the very point of understanding *who* he is as a thinker, *what* he is alleged to have advanced philosophically, intellectually. Unlike the young Descartes of the "Preliminaries," who was about to mount the stage and come forth masked—*of his own accord*—the Nietzsche of the secondary scholarship has *inherited* a tropical profusion of masks, from without, i.e., from his critics and commentators: Nietzsche "the madman," the fascist, the Antichrist, the elitist, aristocrat, postmodernist, theologian, free thinker, proto-freudian, metaphysician, anti-metaphysician, depressive, enthusiast, populist, democrat, aesthete, antisemite, misogynist, liberationist, anarchist, proto-marxist, antiquarian, neoliberal, poet, even the

analytic philosopher, of all things.

Again, given this doubly masked figure of the subjective and objective genitive, I found it hard to commend much of the secondary literature to my students, especially to an audience who might read just one of Nietzsche's principal works. What further compounds the approach to Nietzsche is the fact that so much of his writing is self-reflective, self-referential; unlike the great majority of traditional philosophers, Nietzsche continually writes about himself, about his self-understanding, and also about his lack thereof. He repeatedly discusses his personal tastes, judgments, feelings, apprehensions, aversions, likes and dislikes. In 1874, e.g., he writes to Rhode: "I'm 30 years old, and I realize that the problem I suffer from is an excess of egoism. I never stop thinking about myself and suffering for it. Things have to change."³ (Of course, they never would.) In one of the fragments to *Dawn*, just a few years later, he writes: "What is lacking in me [is] a profound interest in myself. I've never reflected on myself profoundly."⁴ In the well-known preface to the *Genealogy*, he begins the very first paragraph with the question, "Who are we, really?" He concludes the paragraph by stating: "We are necessarily strangers to ourselves, we do not comprehend ourselves ... we are not 'men of knowledge' with respect to ourselves" (*GM*, Preface, sec. 1, p. 15).

If he does not know, how could the reader possibly know? I always thought that Heidegger was right to exclude the person of Aristotle from any consideration of Aristotle's work. "Aristotle was born, lived, and died"—and now let us get on with his texts. Back to the texts themselves! But to say that there is no outside to the text does not mean that the person of the author is not textually sublimated—insistent in the text, as it were. Like the celebrated "inner child," he longs to break out—he sometimes even wants to fly first class. Such is the *cri de coeur* of *Ecce Homo*. Even more so, the decathected rantings of his final correspondence.

In large part, due to the self-consciously rhetorical import of his work, the reader of Nietzsche is acutely aware that he is really attending to the witness, the testimony, of a particular author, a particular thinker. This, of course, complicates matters of interpretation. Certainly, Nietzsche is the last philosopher to hide behind the cloak of anonymity or the authority of tradition. While an author may well introduce himself and his concerns in the prefaces to his works, this takes on a rather roundabout itinerary in Nietzsche's case—essentially, his explicit self-disclosure takes place in *Zarathustra*, and the articulation of this revelation really occurs in the 1886 prefaces. As he wrote to Malwida von Meysenbug:

The long prefaces which I have found necessary for the new edition of my complete works tell with a ruthless honesty some curious things about myself. With these I'll ward off 'the many' once and for all.... I've thrown out my hook to 'the few' instead, and even with them I'm

prepared to be patient.⁵

I would like to follow out this implicit, then explicit, role of the person of Nietzsche in his texts, in the form of an itinerary of self-disclosure, so as, ideally, to stave off the possibility of a philosophical "identity theft." Thereby, to the best of my intentions, to permit the figure of Nietzsche to emerge in what I hope will be a generous fashion. At least, this was my intention in writing the book.

By the same token, this is the other, problematic, side of any approach to Nietzsche—namely, the temptation to personalize and indeed to psychologize his texts, the temptation to be an actuary or an accountant of the soul, of his soul—and usually, for most of the secondary literature, to find it wanting—a credit to the national debt. Of course, Nietzsche exhibits this preoccupation with himself early on, clearly betraying a romantic, youthful bias—in his several autobiographical sketches, his early reflections on religion, fate, and free will. With his writings on culture by the period of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche still writes under the influence of Schopenhauer, stressing the role, and the suffering, of the genius, the purported defender and savior of traditional culture—the "true" or "superior" culture—faced with what he calls the "universalization" of culture, the "commercial culture" fostered by state and industrial interests. Such an individual must suffer isolation and personally carry the burden of cultural enlightenment. In the earliest accounts of this, such a burden is sustained by cultivating the Apollonian-Dionysian instincts or drives. This is most obvious in the Lugano Fragment of early 1871,⁶ and in the lectures "On the Future of our Educational Institutions," of late 1872.⁷ But a striking change takes place with the revision of the Lugano Fragment into his essay "The Greek State,"⁸ whereby the rather romantic, metaphysically suffering individual is seen not so much in some heroic, individual isolation, but rather as a product of the culture's social and political dynamics. This cultural subjection is also paralleled in his revision of the essay, "On Music and Words,"⁹ whereby the individual's most intensely personal states of Dionysian ecstasy are in fact induced by the actual performance of the dynamic musical spectacle; the shift to the cultural dynamic is also seen in his celebrated essay, "Homer's Contest,"¹⁰ whereby it is the socially and politically orchestrated *agon* that gives rise to the unique strengths of classical Greek civilization, and to the individuals such a culture produces. Clearly, it was Jacob Burckhardt who was behind this remarkable decentering shift in Nietzsche's concerns, particularly Burckhardt's lectures on "The Agonal Age,"¹¹ lectures Burckhardt had been working on since as early as 1864, and which were the focus of his many extended conversations with Nietzsche.

In any case, it is the role of the *agon*, the contest or competition, that will, as it were, put Nietzsche's preoccupations with the individual per se back in the box of the social symbolic. It is from this perspective of Burckhardt's

methodology of cultural historiography that Nietzsche will develop the broad outlines of cultural analysis that stem from *The Birth of Tragedy* itself right to the end of his productive writings. Already, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, we see his preoccupation with the Greek cultural dynamics of the "tragic age," the broad cultural motifs of the Apollonian and Dionysian elements, the role of religious cult worship and celebrations, and finally the Socratic culture itself. "Homer's Contest" sharpens the focus of the underlying cultural dynamics, and the *Untimely Meditations* offers us several analyses of his contemporary cultural milieu, perhaps most importantly his scathing treatment of David Strauss's rational Christian theology, and his critique of monumental and antiquarian "great men" historiography, in *The Use and Abuse of History*, as well as his insistence on critically understanding what he calls "our historical horizon," i.e., the whole set of traditions, usage, codes, customs, values, social and cultural assumptions that constitute our social symbolic order. It is this social symbolic order that will be repeatedly articulated through his analyses of our religio-metaphysical tradition, as the death of God and its aftermath, the morality of mores, and especially slave morality, with its remarkable power to induce and to structure our very affects themselves so as to produce a culture of *ressentiment*, guilt, bad conscience, asceticism, shame, etc., all pointing the way to his account of a seemingly inevitable decadence and nihilism.

While each of these concerns is treated to one degree or another in *Human, All Too Human* and *Dawn*, they are perhaps best presented, collectively, in *The Gay Science*, where Nietzsche carefully lays out a detailed account of the death of God—his avatars of nationalism, modern science, the utilitarian ethics of sympathy and pity, as well as nihilism—and the antidote of a de-deified nature, understood under the formulation of the eternal return. In the first version of *The Gay Science*, i.e., the first four books, published in 1882, the penultimate section, 341, is the only one that deals with the eternal return in any detail whatsoever, and it is only two brief paragraphs long. It poses the question of whether one would be crushed or liberated by the "eternal hourglass of existence" (*GS*, sec. 341, pp. 273–4). The preceding section, "The Dying Socrates," clearly indicates that Socrates was indeed crushed; Nietzsche recalls his dying remark: "O Crito, I owe Asclepius a cock" (*GS*, sec. 340, p. 272). The section before that, "Vita Femina," celebrates what he calls "the most powerful magic of life.... A veil of beautiful possibilities, sparkling with promise, resistance, bashfulness, mockery, pity, and seduction. Yes, life is a woman" (*GS*, sec. 339, pp. 271–2). Since Nietzsche composes this in the presence of Lou Salomé, during their retreat to Tautenburg, in the early summer of 1882, we may assume that Nietzsche, unlike Socrates, did *not* suffer life as a disease. The final section of the 1882 edition of *The Gay Science* has Zarathustra emerge from his cave, bathed in sunlight, to give his teaching about the eternal return, which will be his under-going, or

rather his overcoming of the old morality, what he will call the "spirit of gravity." This final section, #342, of *The Gay Science* is effectively the beginning of *Zarathustra's* Prologue, which will itself issue on the specific, and quite dramatic, motif of one's own self-overcoming—namely, in Zarathustra's first speech on "The Three Metamorphoses."

The question that occurred to me was precisely, "What is there to overcome?"—for Zarathustra himself, who after all has left Plato's cave, much less does this have anything to do with the person of Friedrich Nietzsche, who seemed so blissfully happy in Tautenburg. In *The Gay Science*, the textual distance between the eternal return and *Zarathustra's* Prologue, presciently entitled "Incipit Tragoedia," is one section number, but between *The Gay Science* and *Zarathustra's* completion, there is a distance of some three years. What accounts for this distance? What happened? Quite simply, Nietzsche's world completely fell apart. His break with Wagner was sealed in stone by the spring of 1878, when Wagner accused him of suffering from an excessive preoccupation with onanism, and this was revealed to Nietzsche by his physician, Dr. Otto Eiser, who, as President of the Frankfurt Wagner Circle, also circulated Wagner's charge about Nietzsche's onanism to the assembled festival celebrants at Bayreuth. Nietzsche was humiliated, and forcibly had to remove himself from perhaps the single group of educated and cultivated figures with whom he would have enjoyed public contact and recognition. But by the spring of 1882, he had met—and fell passionately in love with—Lou Salomé. At once he found the love of his life, to compensate for his loneliness, and an intellectual peer, whom he also thought of as his closest disciple. While she rejected his three marriage proposals, Nietzsche nonetheless pursued her avidly, thinking their four weeks in Tautenburg, vacationing in a country home secluded in the forest, would bring her around to his affections. Unfortunately, she dropped Nietzsche for Paul Rée, who was infinitely more pliable than Nietzsche, was emotionally stable—if somewhat dull at times—but who was nonetheless wealthy, his family having extensive land and property holdings in Pomerania and East Prussia. When Nietzsche met the two for an afternoon in Leipzig, in October of 1882, he realized that all his hopes for Lou had been irretrievably crushed. He never saw either of the two again, he was devastated by what he thought was Rée's deception, and was cast completely alone, bereft of any emotional or intellectual companionship whatsoever.

Thus, I finally made sense of some of the remarks Nietzsche had communicated to his earlier friends during the period of *Zarathustra's* composition. In a letter to von Gersdorff, Nietzsche writes:

My *Zarathustra* ...will be sent to you within a few weeks.... Don't be put off by the mythic style of the book: my entire philosophy is behind those homey and unusual words, and I have never been more serious. It is a beginning at self-disclosure—nothing more! I know perfectly

well that there is no one alive who could write anything like *Zarathustra*.¹²

Likewise, he writes Peter Gast: "It is incredibly full of detail which, because it is drawn from what I've seen and suffered, only I can understand. Some pages seem to be almost *bleeding*."¹³ In another note to Gast, he writes:

At the moment *Zarathustra's* value is entirely personal.... For everyone else, it is obscure, mysterious, and ridiculous. Heinrich von Stein (a splendid example of a man, whose company has given me real pleasure) told me candidly that of said *Zarathustra*, he understood 'twelve sentences and no more.' I found that very comforting.¹⁴

For me, these remarks were completely counterintuitive. Was not *Zarathustra* precisely the most widely read, admired, and commented upon of all of Nietzsche's works—in practically every language from Ural-Altaic to Urdu? Yet Nietzsche seems to have held, even to the end, that *Zarathustra* was entirely personal, bred from his own experience and suffering, and that it was a beginning at self-disclosure. In fact, in *Ecce Homo*, he recounts the story of von Stein's incomprehension, this time claiming that von Stein did not understand even a single word of *Zarathustra* (*EH*, p. 259). In any case, thus provoked by the veritable eruption of Nietzsche's personal life into the text of *Zarathustra*, I spent practically the entire summer reading the Nachlass from early 1882 to late 1885. The detail is extraordinary, almost like those biographies of Joyce or Proust where every single laundry slip is exhaustively documented and referenced. In fact, the whole of the Lou affair is bared through tears, the years of ridicule from Wagner, the final sense of Wagner's pitiable transformation into a fawning, repentant Catholic in Parsifal, the devious deceptions and slights by Wagner and Rée—all of it is rehearsed in the Nachlass, and finds its expression in the text of *Zarathustra*—usually encoded symbolically, figuratively. But more strikingly, what is really at work in the Nachlass of the period is Nietzsche's work of self-therapy, his *working-through—by writing-it-out*—of his desperate sense of rejection, humiliation, and shame, the memories of his earlier successes, which now burden him, as well as the memories of his lonely isolation, despair, impotence, and frustration. This whole process of self-rehabilitation is orchestrated precisely according to the initial statements of the three metamorphoses: the camel, lion, and child.

Just to give one case: in the Nachlass to *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche symbolically works through his own despair, pitting a female protagonist, named "Pana," against the broken-hearted Zarathustra. Pana is the symbolic Lou Salomé who had herself created the broken-hearted Nietzsche. Through several drafts, Nietzsche has Pana kill her own now-baleful creation, precisely the despairing, broken-hearted Zarathustra, and in the last of several versions, Pana collapses

in death because she could not grasp the eternal return—which states that everything depends on one's own happiness, and that one must simply accept what happens, together with the blessings this brings. Unable to grasp this "secret" of the eternal return, she dies, broken by this simple truth, in despair and revenge. She takes her posthumous revenge on the broken-hearted Zarathustra, however, when *he dies* of laughter at *her* pitiful, suffering condition.¹⁵

There is much dredging up of painful personal material here, and he recounts a remarkably detailed series of personal and interpersonal dynamics. But it seems as if Nietzsche himself did not reach a satisfactory resolution in the text of *Zarathustra*. Zarathustra's self-overcoming is incomplete in that he never attains the state of innocence, the third metamorphosis of the child. Rather, he stands accused, and indeed acknowledges his final *sin*, namely, that of "pity for the higher man" and wanders off once again with the lion—ever courageous, but not yet innocent, at the very close of Part Four (*Z*, p. 336). Even if Nietzsche worked through his intense personal suffering, and really came to deal with it effectively, what ultimately forecloses resolution in *Zarathustra* is that he cannot overcome the memory content of his previous states of elation and despair—both kinds of memories are instruments of torture to him—and he simply cannot forget them, i.e., he cannot forget the "it was," the acceptance of which the eternal return was meant to accomplish. "The *child* is innocence and forgetting," not the Nietzsche of *Zarathustra*.

We know that Nietzsche contemplated writing another, final part to *Zarathustra*. But he did not. Probably for a variety of well-considered reasons. But what he did do was to resolve the third metamorphosis of *Zarathustra* in his immediately succeeding works of 1886: Book Five of *The Gay Science* and his series of new Prefaces to his earlier works, for a second, collected edition, by his new publisher, Fritzsch. In these works of 1886, Nietzsche comes to realize that, as an individual, he was himself constituted precisely by the elaborate system of cultural encoding that he had so insightfully described and criticized in his earlier work. He realizes that he too was subject, as was everyone else, to the ethics of sympathy and pity, to the elaborate moral and affective determination of his cultural milieu, governed by two thousand years of Christian-priestly-ascetic values—not the least of which was the belief that love itself is redemptive, salvific. Of course, this value tradition is the very source of moral authority, the entire inherited series of "thou shalt" that Zarathustra so labored to destroy.

Nietzsche's turn, his *Kehre* (to borrow a by now somewhat shop-worn term), lies in his recognition that he must perform an autocritique of the values, customs, traditionally sanctioned and sanctified emotions and affects that *constituted his very being*. In short, that critique had to be supplemented by a rigorous autocritique. He states this necessity frequently in the new Book Five of *The Gay Science*. Section 380, "The wanderer speaks," is perhaps

the most clearly expressed articulation of the real problem: the necessity of being able to critique the very social symbolic order that governs one's identity in the first place. In doing so, he borrows an analogy from Machiavelli's Preface to *The Prince*:

If one would like to see our European morality for once as it looks from a distance, and if one would like to measure it against other moralities, past and future, then one has to proceed like a wanderer who wants to know how high the towers in a town are: he *leaves* the town. 'Thoughts concerning moral prejudices,' if they are not meant to be prejudices about prejudices, presuppose a position *outside* morality, some point beyond good and evil to which one has to rise, climb, or fly—and in the present case, at least, a point beyond *our* good and evil, a freedom from everything 'European,' by which I mean the sum of the imperious value judgments that have become part of our flesh and blood. That one *wants* to go precisely out there, may be a minor madness.... [T]he question is whether one really *can* get up there.... One must have liberated oneself from many things that oppress, inhibit, hold down, and make heavy precisely us Europeans today. The human being of such a beyond who wants to behold the supreme measures of value of his time must first of all 'overcome' this time in himself—this is the test of his strength—and consequently not only his time but also his prior aversion and contradiction *against* this time, his suffering from this time, his un-timeliness, his *romanticism* (*GS*, sec. 380, pp. 342–3).

The cure for his despondency and alienation begins with a ruse, a deception—namely, with the creation of an imaginary interlocutor. Much as Descartes devised his "evil demon" to test the limits of his resolute reflection, so does Nietzsche say that he "invented" a series of companions—sometimes called "free spirits," or "shadows," or even "good Europeans"—with whom he could engage in a spirited dialogue. What motivated this, he says in the Preface to Part One of *Human, All Too Human*, was precisely his profound sense of isolation and loneliness, and his need to be, at least at the outset, *diverted away* from his almost obsessive preoccupation with it:

I had need of them at that time if I was to keep in good spirits while surrounded by ills (sickness, solitude, unfamiliar places, torpor, inactivity): as brave companions and familiars with whom one can laugh and chatter when one feels like laughing and chattering, and whom one can send to the Devil when they become tedious—as compensation for the friends I lacked (*HAH*, I, Preface, sec. 2, p. 6).¹⁶

The products or results of these dialogues are, of course, his works, his

books, his notes of the period. Their content derived from his recognition of the causes and origins of his own restrictions, inhibitions, and suffering—precisely what he had been debating with his feigned interlocutor. The alterity, or otherness, of the imaginary companion makes concrete the range of his own imagination: by continually varying a perspective, by contradicting an initial judgment, or by insistently prodding himself into recognizing a secondary or tertiary consequence of a position. This imaginary exchange may take the form of a jest or a question as well: "Is that what you *really* believe?" "Is there a *deeper* motivation for you saying that?" "Is that what *you* think, or is it what most people maintain?" Effectively, such a seriously maintained self-conscious dialogue serves as a metacritique of beliefs, values, positions, explanations—and it raises underlying questions of conditionality, legitimacy, verifiability, truth-functionality, agency, efficacy, etc., all of which issues are discussed repeatedly in Nietzsche's "work" of the period, published and unpublished.

What initially results from this discursive questioning in Nietzsche's pursuit of a "cure," or a "self-overcoming," is his discovery of the particular elements that bind or restrict himself, and he finds these elements to be the causal agents, the cohesive factors, that structure the morality of mores and define the individual as such within the traditional system of morality. He terms these defining and determining elements "fetters," and he claims that they serve to constitute normalcy itself, one's "home," or one's "being at home"—the regularity and normalcy of convention, of all that is usual, familiar, and "day-to-day" in social life. He enumerates those "fetters" which most palpably bond the individual not only to the traditional order, but to his own personally experienced past, thereby preventing his liberation. As he says in the new Preface to *Human, All Too Human*:

What fetters the fastest? What bonds are all but unbreakable? In the case of men of a high and select kind they will be their duties: that reverence proper to youth, that reserve before all that is honored and revered from of old, that gratitude for the soil out of which they have grown, for the hand which led them, for the holy place where they learned to worship—their supreme moments themselves will fetter them the fastest, lay upon them the most enduring obligation (*HAH*, I, Preface, sec. 3, pp. 6–7).

It is upon conducting this intense and highly focused experience of analyzing the nature of his "fetters," and of being able to articulate them critically—their number, type, and range, their purchase upon himself and upon the culture at large—that something personally dramatic occurs to Nietzsche. He is struck by the *feeling* (literally, an emotional *shock*) that many of these formerly revered duties, values, obligations, and past memories are simply meaningless,

nonsensical, absurd, and that they merit little more than his honest contempt for their obtrusive pettiness and small-mindedness. Once this emotionally charged thought befalls him, he realizes that he has himself changed, and this is the first step in his self-liberation. He can no longer hold these "fetters" in respect and esteem, and by this very fact, they no longer bind him. What it was, formerly, to be "at home" is now revealed to him under an entirely new sensibility—and this is felt as a new "drive" or "impulse"—as unworthy of residence, indeed, they are felt to be contemptible: "'Better to die than to go on living *here*'—thus responds the imperious voice and temptation: and this 'here,' this 'at home' is everything it had hitherto loved" (*HAH*, I, Preface, sec. 3, p. 7).

Nietzsche described the immediate effects of his new revelation as being twofold: he experienced a practically intolerable feeling of shame for the loss brought about by his obsessive inquisitiveness, his going to the utmost limits of his imagination to understand his distress, and by doing so, to have lost the veneration and respect for everything that until then constituted belonging, identity, value, and honor, everything worthy of love and worship. But this feeling of loss was tempered, then overwhelmed, by a new feeling for the enormity of what he had accomplished, a feeling of immense pride and personal exultation that it was possible at all, and that his contempt could overturn the very norms by whose agency he had previously suffered. Then he was tempted, even dangerously, to test other norms, limits, prescriptions, and proscriptions. To question what was formerly forbidden, and find it delightful, joyous, the sweetest fruit. From this feeling of exaltation and delight there follows a determination to will and esteem, to evaluate, on one's own account, in one's own name—one leaves "home," seeking to develop and to relish the further capacity of self-determination through new, multiply transforming and overturning, valuations and estimations. Literally and figuratively, for Nietzsche, this involves the determination to travel, to get beside himself,¹⁷ to self-consciously seek other, strange, abodes and customs, other entire systems of valuation, other realms of the human spirit itself: to be an "Argonaut of the ideal" (*GS*, sec. 382, p. 346). Thus, *one uses oneself* as an experiment, as an open-ended source of experiences for experiment in the construction of one's developing hierarchy of values, one's own considered construal of what really is important, what is significant, of worth and merit, what is worthy of admiration, affection, and esteem—again, in one's own name and in one's own service (*HAH*, I, sec. 292, p. 134).

At the same time, one progressively uncovers the truth of things, of people and of events. By withholding the conventional value-positing perspective, the prevailing mode of esteem or belief that enshrouds something, by "turning it around," one can uncover the distorting biases that contextualize and determine the very significance, the symbolic "truth," of things. Gradually, they begin to appear to a less biased eye as things yet unseen, marvellous

in their complexity of texture, their simplicity of intent, ever adaptable to the disposition of the observer, mutable in their very disclosure. As Nietzsche says in the new Preface to *Human, All Too Human*:

With a wicked laugh he turns round whatever he finds veiled and through some sense of shame or other spared and pampered: he puts to the test what these things look like *when* they are reversed. It is an act of willfulness and pleasure in willfulness, if now he perhaps bestows his favor on that which has hitherto had a bad reputation—if, full of inquisitiveness and the desire to tempt and experiment, he creeps around the things most forbidden (*HAH*, I, sec. 3, p. 7).

Spurred on by the possibility that "all values" may be turned around, Nietzsche says that he began to cultivate a curious sort of cynicism, thinking that the very absolutes themselves may well have been little more than platitudes. This acquired cynicism and a certain irony attendant to it provoke even further "wandering" and testing of limits, until he is quite far afield, in "the desert" of his tempting experiments. This "experimentalism" produces in him, Nietzsche says, a kind of "solitude," sometimes even a "morbid isolation," but one that has gathered into itself such a breadth of values and penetrating perspectives that he no longer feels constrained at all, least of all by the old "fetters": "One lives no longer in the fetters of love and hatred, without yes, without no, near or far as one wishes ... also [without] the quantum of stupidity that resides in antitheses of values and the whole intellectual loss which every For, every Against costs us" (*HAH*, secs. 5, 6, pp. 8–9).

Having broken these fetters, one has the feeling of a great elation—namely, "that *mature* freedom of spirit which is equally self-mastery and discipline of the heart, and permits access to many and contradictory modes of thought" (*HAH*, sec. 5, p. 8). Freed from "the spirit of gravity," and free to will one's own "scale of values," one is no longer compelled by the old fetters or compelled to suffer from them. This sense of elation or "weightlessness" one has attained, together with the fact that one has welcomed so much—in gratifying one's inner temptation to experiment with a plethora of experiences—means that one returns from one's desert transformed. One possesses a generosity of spirit, an "inner spaciousness and indulgence," such that everything appears benign and innocent, drained of ominous portent and freed from malice of intent. One gains the stability of one's own power over one's perspective, and this at once liberates the individual from bitterness and recrimination while it places one above—at a distance, with a feeling of distance from¹⁸—the pettiness and vindictiveness of others; rather, with a spirit of exuberance and freedom, in which "curiosity is united with a tender contempt," he remarks:

It again grows warmer around him, yellower, as it were; feeling and

feeling for others acquire depth, warm breezes of all kinds blow across him. It seems to him as if his eyes are only now open to what is *close at hand*. He is astonished and sits silent: where had he been? These close and closest things: how changed they seem! what bloom and magic have they acquired! He looks back gratefully—grateful to his wandering, to his hardness and self-alienation, to his viewing of far distances and bird-like flights in cold heights. What a good thing he had not always stayed 'at home,' stayed 'under his own roof' like a delicate apathetic loafer! He had been beside himself: no doubt of that. Only now does he see himself—and what surprises he experiences as he does so!

Attaining such a state, such an attitude of mind, one is "cured," as of a past illness and a long convalescence, by the "Great Liberation." Everything is welcomed, without addition or loss, even "the *necessary* injustice ... as inseparable from life, life itself as *conditioned* by the sense of perspective and its injustice" (*HAH*, I, sec. 6, p. 9). Thus, finally having gained possession of his own self-mastery through controlling his sense of perspective, having freed himself from bondage to the imperative of the "thou shalt," and the personal discontent caused by it, Nietzsche would reflect: "You come to realize how you have given ear to the voice of nature, that nature which rules the whole world through joy" (*HAH*, V, sec. 292, p. 135). Reviewing the joys that nature itself bestows upon someone so "cured" as himself, Nietzsche ends the discussion of his own "liberation" with a series of light-hearted "injunctions," the last of which affirms the resolution to Zarathustra's paradoxical departure: smiling, strong as bronze, accompanied by his laughing lion: "You shall ... You shall ... You shall ... You shall—enough: from now on the free spirit *knows* what 'you shall' he has obeyed, and he also knows what he now *can*, what only now he—*may* do..." (*HAH*, I, sec. 6, p. 9).

This is the Nietzsche I hoped to bring to the secondary literature—one who, of course, was already there: an individual seen as the very consummation of his own best reflections—critical, enlightened, generous to a fault.

Notes

1. David B. Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy, The Gay Science, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, and On the Genealogy of Morals* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001).

2. C. G. Jung, *Nietzsche's Zarathustra: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1934–1939*, ed. James L. Jarrett, 2 Vols. (Princeton: Princeton University

Press, 1988).

3. Letter to Erwin Rhode, Oct. 7, 1874, in Nietzsche, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Briefwechsel*, eds. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978), II, 3, 262. (Hereafter *KGB*.)

4. Nietzsche, *Samtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, eds. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag / de Gruyter, 1980), Vol. 9, 358. (Hereafter *KSA*.)

5. Letter to Malwida von Meysenbug, May, 1887, in *Nietzsche: Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Christopher Middleton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 266.

6. *KSA* 7: 333–50.

7. *KSA* 1: 641–752.

8. *Ibid.*, 764–77.

9. *KSA* 7: 359–69, 185–90, trans. W. Kaufmann, in Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later 19th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 106–19.

10. *KSA* 1: 783–92. trans. Christa D. Acampora, in *Nietzsche: Nietzscheana*, No. 5 (Urbana: North American Nietzsche Society, 1996). See also Carol Diethe's translation of "Homers *Wettkampf*," as "Homer on Competition," in Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. K. Ansell-Pearson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 187–94.

11. Jacob Burckhardt, *The Greeks and Greek Civilization*, ed. Oswyn Murray, trans. Sheila Stern (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 160–213.

12. Letter to Carl von Gersdorff, June 28, 1883, in *Selected Letters*, 213.

13. Letter to Peter Gast, August, 1883, in *ibid.*, 218.

14. Letter to Gast, Sept. 4, 1884, in *ibid.*, 230.

15. *KSA* 10: 443.

16. In the Preface to Part Two of *HAH*, he reformulates this "invention" of another "free spirit" and, less dramatically, says that, "As a solitary I spoke

without witnesses," thus internalizing the discussion as an "inner" dialogue (*HAH*, II, Preface, sec. 5, p. 212).

17. Even if this involves an initial period of studied affectation or pretense, such that by repetition one could induce oneself to acquire in person those attitudes one initially feigns: "It was then I learned the art of *appearing* cheerful, objective, inquisitive, above all healthy and malicious.... [H]ere a sufferer and self-denier speaks as though he were *not* a sufferer and self-denier. Here there is a *determination* to preserve an equilibrium and composure in the face of life and even a sense of gratitude towards it, here there rules a vigorous, proud, constantly watchful and sensitive will that has set itself the task of defending life against pain and of striking down all those inferences that pain, disappointment, ill-humor, solitude, and other swampgrounds usually cause to flourish like poisonous fungi" (*HAH*, II, Preface, sec. 5, p. 212).

18. Nietzsche would call this "the pathos of distance" in *BGE*, IX, sec. 257, pp. 201–2. See also *BGE*, II, secs. 43–4, pp. 53–6; *EH*, p. 281.