

PREFORMATIONS

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PREFACE TO PART I

One of the benefits of the study of philosophy is the opportunity to rethink previous forms of knowledge. In the essays that follow in Part I we will rethink Truth, Being, and Mind by way of Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Hans Jonas respectively. Hence, our title, “<Un>knowing the known,” serves to emphasize the vital thread of this work.

We begin with a critical analysis of an early essay by Nietzsche entitled *Truth and Falsity in an Ultramoral Sense*. Next we will focus on Martin Heidegger’s essay, *What is Metaphysics?* We leave Part I with a reading of, “Life, Death, and the Body in the theory of Being,” and, “Is God a Mathematician?” from Hans Jonas’ *Phenomenon of Life*.

Perhaps these three essays will encourage an expiation of our ever-shifting horizon.

THE NIETZSCHEAN UNKNOWN

What is "knowing?" What do we "know" when we "know?" What is the value of this "knowing" that we "know?" These fundamental questions provide departure points for epistemological theorists in the Modern era, be they rationalist or empiricist. Nietzsche, succeeding the Moderns, engaged this line of inquiry in the late nineteenth century with some provocative and ambiguous results. The essay, *Truth and Falsity in their Ultramoral Sense*, advances Nietzsche's introductory exploration of epistemological thinking. We will focus a critical eye on this bold work, and perchance on insight itself, as we make our way through the labyrinths of the Nietzschean mind in our quest for knowledge *of* knowledge. We will begin with analysis of Nietzsche's intuitive, perceptive essay.

"In some remote corner of the universe, poured out and glittering in innumerable solar systems, there once was a star on which clever animals invented knowledge. That was the haughtiest and most mendacious minute of "world history" - yet only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths the star grew cold, and the clever animals had to die." This fable sets the stage for Nietzsche's introduction *and* production of the enigmatic, ubiquitous consciousness. The tone is one of bewilderment at the exorbitant value presumption man has placed in consciousness. The power of knowing seems to bring with it a self-satisfied side effect, a bloating of self-importance. Nietzsche muses that a mosquito, if endowed with consciousness, would feel itself the "flying center of the world." Nietzsche, with jocundity, philosophizes that the philosopher models as the most awful case of this *hubris* of knowing, feeling that the universe itself is focused on his

every thought. As Nietzsche makes clear however, the *feeling* of value is in no way *proof* of value.

This proud valuing of existence afforded by the power of knowledge is the first example of deception inherent in consciousness, thinks Nietzsche. Knowledge of the value of existence as a whole is unknowable due to our inherently partial perspective. To propose a universally binding value judgment of existence would require standing outside the whole of existence to compare and contrast it with something else. We inherit a thoroughly partial perspective that lacks the prerequisites for a value judgment with validity. Thus, the valuation of knowing conveyed by our consciousness is disclosed as a presupposition and a problem.

Nietzsche speculates that consciousness is intrinsically deceptive due to its tendency to universalize particulars, particulars that are themselves only generalizations of unique experience. Echoing Darwin *in this particular*, Nietzsche states that the intellect developed as a means to preserve the individual. As in the animal kingdom, the primary power for weaker species is simulation. The power of self-control afforded by consciousness is advantageous to self-preservation. To disguise, flatter, pose, and play a role: these are all essentially masks for personal advantage. Nietzsche is emphasizing the trans-moral sense of this simulation. It is not *good* or *bad* in that sense, but it *is* natural. The suggestion seems to be that this simulation is the genus of art. Knowledge primarily serves as a means to the advantage of the knower, and so is not sought for the sake of itself, unlike the later claims of the so-called disinterested scientists. Only certain *varieties* of knowledge are endeavored at this point, in opposition to other possibilities of knowing.

Nietzsche playfully confesses that how the honest urge for truth in itself (i.e., the motive of his paper) made its appearance is almost incomprehensible. The useful conviction of truth proved far more valuable to man than truth itself for eons. Self-knowledge is a forcible example. Pre-dating Freud and psychoanalysis by several decades, Nietzsche asserts that what we know of ourselves falls far short of what we do not know. The conviction that we know ourselves entirely proves to be only an assumption.

Nietzsche contemplates the possibility that the urge for truth evolved out of the social instinct. Through society, designations of what is and what is not truth are fixed for the first time by the invention of language. Predating the linguistic semiology of Ferdinand Saussure by a generation, Nietzsche explores the idea that language is a structure defined by its relationships. Words furnish the opportunity to invent static signs for truth that can then be utilized to define the false. The liar abuses the fixed conventions for self-serving ends that are potentially damaging and thus suffers the loss of trust from his fellow men. It follows that men fear the damage of deception more so than being deceived. The consequences of certain types of deception delineated by the social construct are devalued as opposed to deception itself, which originates in the arbitrarily fixed standard of truth. Language is viewed as a power structure that imposes a digestible meaning on the perpetual change of existence. Metaphors are generalized signs that substitute for an infinitely complex reality. Words are only useful and perhaps necessary representations of phenomenon. As Nietzsche puts it, "What is a word? The image of a nerve stimulus in sounds."

Language designates what is in relation to man. These "relations" are first given a designated image; second a designated sound. Every word has value as a generalized concept useful to designate something unique and individual. For example, we designate leaves with the sign "leaf," and yet every leaf of every tree, if viewed with preponderant precision, is divulged as uniquely exceptional in itself. In spite of this, metaphor is confused for the "thing in itself" over a process of time, by habit and retreat into the unconscious. Parallel to Plato's theory of forms, the concept "leaf" comes to designate the real; particular leaves are imperfect copies. The illusory and static certainty of language becomes the real. The arbitrarily invented signifier becomes primary, the inaccessible and indefinable signified ancillary. Truth becomes an obligation imposed by the dominant social structure to submit to a schema of customary metaphors.

In society the distinction true/false becomes possible for the first time. As Nietzsche dramatically puts it, "truth is the obligation to lie according to a fixed convention." The lie is unconscious and habitual and is experienced as the illusion of an absolute. By contrast, the "liar," by abusing the designated conventions of his society, comes to represent the false. Truth is first experienced as a moral conviction when confronting the liar. The "liar" comes to represent the counter-concept to the conventional schemata endorsed by the social construct.

Thus, truth reveals itself as a social phenomenon that replaces the authority of perception with a conceptual schematic. Abstract social constructs become the regulating, but unknowingly fictitious, reality in which the citizen submits. Truth is primarily architectonic, not cognitive. We invent a foundation of concepts in which to live out of reflections of an unknown given. These inventions we can "understand," unlike the meta-

conceptual source of our conceptions. As seekers of truth we are validating our own inventions. For Nietzsche, this discovery is empowering in that we have an aesthetic relationship with our world. To some extent we have a creative power to define our world. Nietzsche's thought suggests that we have no right to claim knowledge of the essence of things, only the reflectional inventions of our perception. Thus the habitual metaphors we call truth are not exclusive. This insight seems particularly aimed at the logical positivists, who Nietzsche claims mistake metaphors for facts and habitual perspectives as universal laws. The laws of nature are a sum of relations of concepts, i.e. space, time, number, and as such are a particularly human contribution. The human perspective is only one among many, in which there is no standard. The perspectives of the varieties of organic life, though contradictory to ours, are legitimate to our own. Thus, Nietzsche ends the first part of his essay by clarifying the subjective structure of the universe.

To recap the first section of Nietzsche's essay, man increases knowledge by forgetting his metaphors *are* metaphors. He "discovers" laws out of the primacy of sense experience translated into concepts, habituated through the evolution of conventional schemata that have become unconscious. This phenomenon reveals a human creative power, not the "truth in itself," knowledge of which we have no capacity, since we only have access to the conceptual representations of perception in consciousness.

In the second section, Nietzsche closes with some comments on the relationship between art and science. As language contributed the initial prerequisite of conventional schemata, science now serves contemporary man. Science is the modern security blanket for an unknowable existence. Out of the "world order" of science, which subverts the

creative impulse in the determination of its truth claims, a need arises to expend the creative power, which originally expended itself through the inventions of language. Art, and in particular myth, now becomes the outlet for the original creative powers of man. The Homeric world of ancient Greece provided Nietzsche's main example of the phenomenon of art. Art disrupts absolutes and supplants them with infinite possibilities. In art, man commands his inherent creative power; ideas become subservient to intuitions, i.e., ideas now attend man instead of the opposite.

Nietzsche ends by contrasting the abstract man of science with the intuitive man of art. The abstract man values knowledge as a defensive measure for avoiding and reducing suffering, while the artist creatively applies knowledge as a means to increase happiness. By consequence, the artist suffers *and* enjoys life more. Thus, Nietzsche leaves off by adumbrating the value of the rational *and* irrational for life.

We can now see, for Nietzsche, the value of knowledge lies in the creative power and not in *absolute* truth. The uncertain and irrational are the "ground" out of which "truth" emerges. Man invents out of an intrinsic unknown a work of art we call: REALITY.

DEFINING <NO>THING BY WAY OF MARTIN HEIDEGGER

Martin Heidegger, in the essay “What is Metaphysics?” pursues an inquiry into the nothing. He claims that “scientific existence is possible only if in advance it holds itself out into the nothing,” and logic, as a way of thinking, is insufficient to address what the nothing is. Why does Heidegger consider logic inadequate to address what the nothing is? Is there an adequate way of thinking that is capable of revealing the nothing? These questions will serve as our focus for an analysis in which we will examine several key Heideggarian terms in our attempt to come to an understanding concerning the nothing.

Heidegger starts by revealing the fundamental substructure of any metaphysical inquiry: any particular metaphysical question includes the whole range of metaphysical problems and the questioner is by necessity always included in the questioning. Thus, human existence is disclosed as the questioning source of any metaphysical inquiry. Heidegger uses the German term “Dasein” as the signifier for this state of human being which questions Being. From Dasein, he goes on to question what happens in the grounds of man when scientific inquiry of beings (objects, things, matter) becomes our sole mode of questioning. What becomes apparent is that in the scientific pursuit of the particular (being), man loses sight of the universal (Being). When man reduces his inquiry solely to matter (things), his awareness beyond that (<no>thing) is forfeited. From this, Heidegger claims that science desires to avoid the nothing. Yet, science itself concedes the nothing when it reduces inquiry to “matter and nothing besides.” Metaphysical questioning is

concerned with what is beyond physics. The direction of inquiry is thus opened up: “what is the nothing?” Posing the question, we posit nothing as a thing, which is exactly what it is not. Thus, we have arrived at a definite reduction concerning the nothing: It is not a thing. However, this exposes the very limits of universal logic in that every logical answer requires a thing. Yet, the intellect derives at nothing by negating things.

Heidegger then claims that the intellect itself is dependent on the nothing since without “nothing” to begin with the mind would not have the capacity to negate. We are then forced to assert that the impossibility of answering the question lies in the logical mode of questioning and not in the question itself if we are to proceed. Heidegger then goes on to ask how we find our way within the totality of beings. He asserts that moods are the “founding mode of attunement” for Dasein. To explain, the totality of beings reveals itself in differing ways by our differing moods or “attunements.”

Is there a mode of attunement that reveals nothing? Heidegger claims that anxiety does in fact reveal the nothing. Anxiety is consciousness slipping away from beings, as well as our own being, and into the unknown. Thus, pure Dasein is all that is left in the state of anxiety that reveals the nothing. Anxiety, which reveals the nothing, is then a mood of complete depersonalization and detachment. Heidegger then obscurely states that nihilation is the essence of the nothing that is revealed in the anxiety of Dasein. Nihilation is the act of the nothing that prefigures negation.

Following this mode of inquiry, it now becomes apparent that the nature of man *is* Dasein, and metaphysics itself. Man himself transcends the logical scientific reduction of Being to beings since he is the questioning state of being that reveals Being. Thus, Heidegger’s ingenious metaphysical inquiry serves to lead us back to ontology. Science

inquires strictly into being (ontics) and has no grounds for dogmatic ontological assertions, and by consequence, metaphysical inquiry is opened up as a fundamental ontology: What is Being?

HANS JONAS AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE ORGANIC MIND

Hans Jonas, in *The Phenomenon of Life*, attempts an examination of life in terms of a philosophical biology. Jonas claims “that the organic even in its lowest forms prefigures mind, and that mind even on its highest reaches remains part of the organic.” His argument is twofold in that the faintest stirrings of life, even down to its minutest formations, are antecedent representations of mind, and that mind never transcends its organic origins. In our attempt to come to an understanding of Jonas’ claim, we will examine arguments for each of his contentions. We will also explore Jonas’ responses to opposing views.

In the first essay of the book, “Life, Death, and the Body in the Theory of Being,” Jonas offers a historical analysis of differing interpretations of existence. Man’s initial efforts to interpret being naturally were in terms of his own experience. From man’s earthbound perspective, life was the sole determinant of being. The natural abundance of life on earth expanded to include the totality of beings. All of existence was alive; death was the one contradiction to the animistic interpretation of existence. Panvitalism, the view that the whole of existence is alive, was the comprehensive view, and death was the particular problem. Early metaphysics consisted in transforming the fundamental riddle of death into a passage of life. Funeral rites served to transform death into a transfiguration of life as expressed in myths, cults, and religion. Jonas then goes on to explain the modern view as an inversion of ancient panvitalism. Matter and the

mechanics of inertia become the sole facts of existence. Being, as dead matter, is the comprehensive view and life is the particular problem.

With the Copernican revolution, came the modern perspective in which life was the puzzling exception, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Panvitalism inverted to panmechanism. The goal of science, concerning life, was to interpret the phenomenon of life in mechanical and material terms. Gnosticism prefigured the transition between the ancient and modern views. In the effort to come to terms with the problem of death, a dualistic split between life and death ensued. The soul became the repository for life, as the spiritual dimension increasingly retracted from the material world. Life was conceived as separate from the "tomb" of the body. The dualistic view of body and spirit was expressed in the Orphic religion of the Greeks, and reached its highest point in the Gnosticism of Christianity. Soul and nature were now viewed as a dichotomy in mutual exclusion. The soul became the storehouse for man's highest values, and consequently the external world became valueless. The universe became the temporal tomb for the eternal soul of man. With the duality of nature and spirit, the stage was set for materialistic monism: simply remove the soul. Thus, the inversion of animistic monism was complete. Yet, this dominance of the matter, pun intended, revealed the particular problem of life. The organism, and its life-sustaining environment, was now narrowed for focus. The attempt to reconcile the duality left only two directions: modern materialism and modern idealism. Thus, mind or matter takes the sole claim for existence. Materialism reaches its limits with consciousness: idealism with matter. However, mind exists with a body and vice versa. The attempt to explain them as separate is unsupportable by experience.

The challenge now is an integrated ontology. Materialism exposes the problem of life as such, as what is unexplainable from its own view. The highest integration of mind and matter is man. Man is the complex nexus of mind and matter. Without awareness, matter cannot be revealed; without matter, there is nothing to be aware. Thus, Jonas defends his position that the mind of man is inseparable from the organic world.

Jonas argues in his third essay, that mind is prefigured from the beginning in the organic world. He starts by posing the question "Is God a Mathematician?" in an attempt to draw out the inability of scientific Gnosticism to explain life. What would the God of modern physics see when gazing on an organism? Jonas states that the problematical nature of metabolism would soon become apparent. The exchange of matter in the organism's environment and its assimilation would mark the significant difference between the organic and inorganic worlds. The material content of the organism is only temporal, yet it maintains a consistent form. Jonas likens this phenomenon to a mathematical wave, in that the wave maintains its form through its changing constituents. The glaring difference with the organism is that the matter, which it consists of, is transformed into something autonomous. The organism is in "perpetual self renewal through process." The organism is individual from, and seeks to appropriate itself to, its environment. Thus, the organism is in a state of "needful freedom to matter." Metabolism, then turns out to be the founding qualification of life. Metabolism as an autonomous freedom exposes the capacity to make choices, which Jonas claims prefigures mind.

Thus, we see Jonas faces his claim through a dialectical account of the history of ontology. The inability of those ontological assertions to account for life leads him to a

philosophical biology as the most capable way of answering the insuppressible question:

What is life?

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INTERSTICE:
EPISTEMOLOGIES OF POWER IN
PLATO AND NIETZSCHE

Plato, in *Republic* book six, categorizes an ontological priority to knowledge partitioned from the sensible realm by the intelligible. Knowledge is predicated on formal abstraction at the highest levels of the intelligible. The domain of knowledge is the exclusive right of the philosopher king, empowered as the vehicle of metaphysical elucidation of a perfect and absolute being through dialectic. What is this relationship alluded between power and knowledge? Are implicit models fabricating the epistemological distinctions, and if so, are they assumed? Are there transient motivations active beneath Plato's conceptualizations? What rivalries are indulged in his speculations, and are they parallel to ours today? Does the link between desire and freedom, as a subliminal power structure, implicate or expropriate the philosopher? Friedrich Nietzsche followed such inquiry in the late nineteenth century, as a paradigmatic of reflection concerning his own epistemological formulation of knowledge as "the will to power." In this essay we will address these questions concerning Plato's epistemology explicated in the *Republic*¹ and mirrored in Nietzsche's various philosophical works. More specifically, we will consult Nietzsche's collection of notes in the posthumous publication, *The Will to Power*² (*Der Wille zur Macht*). As such, one focus of this essay

¹ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, revised by C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1992).

² Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York, New York: Vision Books, 1967).

will be the exposition of Nietzsche's epistemological theories in light of Platonic logography. Similar to Plato, Nietzsche's epistemological theories implicate his metaphysics, ontology, ethics, and aesthetics. We will also explore these related topics as they surface.

PLATONIC EPISTEMOLOGY

Book five of Plato's *Republic* offers an ontological categorization of knowledge, opinion, and ignorance. Knowledge resides in an extra-sensory realm of being; it is formally abstract and eternal, i.e., beyond the contingencies of time. Opinion, on the other hand, partakes of the realm of becoming, the mundane sensory world of the present, chaotic and inconsistent. In the context of being, opinion is the syncretion of being and non-being. Ignorance is the negative correlate to knowledge and characterizes nothingness; ontologically it is prioritized as non-being.

How do we come to the recognition of knowledge, in contrast to opinion and ignorance? Plato makes this distinction vital to his conception of knowledge in book V: knowledge is formally defined by what it *does*, as a means to what it *is*:

Powers are a class of the things that are that enable us or anything else for that matter – to do whatever we are capable of doing.³

Is knowledge a power, or what class would you put it in? It's a power, the strongest of them all.⁴

Knowledge is set over what is, to know it as it is? Yes.⁵

So for Plato, knowledge is essentially a power that manifests in its own self-revelation.

Socrates alludes to “the most important subject” in book VI: the “form of the good;” all knowledge is just, useful, beneficial, in relation to it. Playfully, Socrates insists that he is *ignorant* of what the good actually is, but pressed by Adeimantus, he offers an

³ Plato, *The Republic*, stephanus 477c.

⁴ Ibid., st. 478d.

⁵ Ibid., st. 478a.

opinion as to what it most resembles. First, a bifurcation of visible (sensory, empirical) and intelligible (ideal, rational) realms are distinguished; good is “seen” as beauty in the visible realm by the power of light emitted by the sun. According to this comparison, the sun is the closest visible likeness to the good. But, the sight of beauty is contingent on a good that is sensually invisible, abstract, ideal. Only by the “sight of the soul” can the good be apprehended. How does one see the good? The good, like the sun, empowers its own recognition in the intelligible realm. In this *sense*, the “form of the good” is both the *cause* and *object* of knowledge. Ontologically speaking, knowledge *is* and *is known* by the good; the good provides knowledge and truth, but is superior to them.

The divided line is given as an approximate representation of the epistemological categories described in book five: On the vertical axis, we begin with the visible realm, which consists first of imagination, then belief. Next, we have the intelligible realm of thought, then understanding. Each division of the divided line ascends closer to the truth, which is crowned, as we have reviewed, by the “form of the good.” In the visible realm, we first envision an image of things; we then infer what we believe the things themselves to be. In contrast, at the level of the intelligible, thought reaches conclusions based on what it takes to be first principles derived from the visible realm (mathematics, empirical science). Finally, the understanding grasps the good by the power of dialectic (philosophy), this power being a manifestation of the good itself. Dialectic starts with the hypotheses derived by thought and by their means reaches a first principle. Once dialectic grasps this first principle, it reverses itself and reaches conclusions without the use of the visible realm, from forms to forms. The ultimate first principle reached by dialectic is the form of all forms: the “good,” which has been characterized by some as the general

principle of order in the universe. This form of all forms grounds Plato's epistemology, and yet Socrates has something puzzling to say about it:

Therefore, you should also say that not only do the objects of knowledge owe their being known to the good, but their being is also due to it, although *the good is not being*, but superior to it in rank and power.⁶

Glaucou even teases Socrates on this point, by alluding to his notorious daimon, perhaps to playfully suggest that Socrates is satirizing us:

And Glaucon comically said: By Apollo, what a daimonic superiority!⁷

Is Plato reminding us here of the speculative nature of his epistemological assertions? Or is he hinting at a subterranean undercurrent at play in his text? Perhaps it is closer to Plato's intentions to say that the form of the good is the principle on which the order of the divided line rests, i.e., the principle of the good manifests in the ontological seriatim, but is itself beyond that ontology, as the enigma that makes "being" possible at all.

The troglodytes of Plato's conceptual cave are the allegoric "earth-bound" perceivers of the visible world, as adumbrated in book VII. Perception can be likened to a "movie-screen" of images reflected onto the wall of the cave, which are mistakenly taken for the true nature of things. The stiff-necked perceivers are unaware that the manifold representations are merely imperfect reflections of perfect and eternal forms. Through didactic "reawakening," the metaphysical infinitude of knowledge can be ideally accessed, thereby liberating the cave dweller to the light of the intelligible world.

⁶ Ibid., st. 509b, emphasis mine.

⁷ Ibid., st. 509c.

The essentials of Plato's epistemological edifice outlined here should prove sufficient for our proceeding excursion into the challenging conjectures of Nietzschean philosophy.

NIETZSCHEAN EPISTEMOLOGY

Truth is the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live. The value of *life* is ultimately decisive.⁸

Despite their many parallels, Nietzsche contradicts Plato's ontological epistemology by granting extrinsic reality only to the world of becoming. "Truth," as a universal concept with universal import, is arrived at through the intuitive belief in metaphysical constructs like Plato's that project a world of permanence (eternal and consistent) over and above the world of change. This false postulation of permanence is perhaps necessary for preservation, but Nietzsche differs from Darwin by insisting that beyond the motive of preservation are the motives of self-transcendence and the expansion of power. And, more valuable than the "will to truth," is the "will to create," i.e., the will to shape *this* world (and oneself for that matter) as one wills it to be. As Nietzsche asserts:

The belief that the world as it ought to be *is*, really exists, is a belief of the unproductive who do not desire to create a world, as it ought to be. They posit it as already available; they seek ways and means of reaching it. "Will to truth" – as the impotence of the will to create.⁹

The inherent creativity in life manifests in a particular interpretation of existence, called "truth." Yet this "truth" is contingent and contextually revealed in copious perspectives:

In so far as the word "knowledge" has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is

⁸ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, epigram 495c.

⁹ *Ibid.*, epigram 485a.

interpretable otherwise, it has no meaning,
but countless meanings. – Perspectivism.¹⁰

So, for Nietzsche there is no definitive “truth,” only manifold perspectival “truths.” *With this in mind*, consciousness and its inherent perspective serves as the epistemological starting point. Nietzsche hypothesizes that consciousness is an after-effect of the body, in which the reflexive awareness of a selective, simplified, and equalized regularity of perception is maintained in response to a complex, chaotic flux. “Knowledge,” in this sense, is the preservation enhancing regularities of perception afforded by consciousness, interpreted as fact:

The meaning of “knowledge:” here, as in the case of “good” or “beautiful,” the concept is to be regarded in a strict and narrow anthropocentric and biological sense. In order for a particular species to maintain itself and increase its power, its conception of reality must comprehend enough of the calculable and constant for it to base a scheme of behavior on it. The utility of preservation – and not some abstract-theoretical need not to be deceived – stands as the motive behind the development of the organs of knowledge – they develop in such a way that their observations suffice for our preservation. In other words: the measure of the desire for knowledge depends upon the measure to which the will to power grows in a species: a species grasps a certain amount of reality in order to become master of it, in order to press it into service.¹¹

For Nietzsche, “the will to power” signifies the fundamental principle of existence: manifold forces in a dynamic relationship of creation *and* destruction. An analytic of these power relationships is generally divided into active and reactive forces, respectively. To summarize briefly some of the human attributes of potent “will to power:” self-control, strategic judgments *and* suspensions of judgment (controlling ones

¹⁰ Ibid., epigram 481.

pro and con), the affirmation of suffering as the means to self-perfecting; i.e., the active seeking out of challenges as resistances to be overcome, as pleasure in overcoming displeasure;¹² and the accumulation and expenditure of force. Conversely, the “reactive man” desires and seeks power out of a fundamental lack. Ingratitude, self-pity, resentment, despair, paralysis of fear, hypersensitivity to pain, if latent and persistently manifest, are considered sure signs of degeneracy. The “healthy” man, while not immune to these irregularities, has the proper force to transmute them or discharge them spontaneously without their accumulation in the nervous cortex.

Nietzsche also considers the dichotomization of an “apparent” (world of opinion, appearance, becoming) and “true” world (world of reason, knowledge, being) false. As Nietzsche phrases it:

The reasons for which “this” world has been characterized as “apparent” are the very reasons which indicate its reality; any other kind of reality is absolutely indemonstrable.¹³

In other words, an eternal metaphysical world of knowledge is arrived at by the contradiction and devaluation of our temporal world of perpetual change. Nietzsche does not mean to deny the *intrinsic* reality and utility of reason, truth, and knowledge for *us* as a species, but only wants to expose them for what they are (creative constructs of “the will to power”) and their this-worldly origins. As Nietzsche states:

...Rational thought is interpretation according to a scheme that we cannot throw off.¹⁴

¹¹ Ibid., epigram 480.

¹² Examples: As in Nietzsche’s case, the endurance of solitude; or, the assimilation of difficult texts.

¹³ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche: The Twilight of the Idols*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufman (New York, New York: Penguin Books, 1968), epigram 6.

¹⁴ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, epigram 522.

What is the significance of Platonic metaphysics for Nietzsche? It is another example of “the will to power.” Why did Plato place the good outside of temporal life?

His is the case of the artistic genius in praxis:

...the charm of the Platonic way of thinking, which was a *noble* way of thinking, consisted precisely in *resistance* to obvious sense-evidence – perhaps among men who enjoyed even stronger and more demanding senses than our contemporaries, but who knew how to find a higher triumph in remaining masters of their senses – the mob of the senses as Plato said.¹⁵

Plato measured the degree of reality by the degree of value and said: The more “idea,” the more being. He reversed the concept “reality” and said: “What you take for real is an error, and the nearer we approach the ‘Idea,’ the nearer we approach ‘truth’.”...Fundamentally, Plato, as the artist he was, preferred appearance to being! Lie and invention to truth! The unreal to the actual! But he was so convinced of the value of appearance that he gave it the attributes “being,” “causality” and “goodness,” and “truth,” in short everything men value.¹⁶

In other words, Nietzsche claims that the Platonic world of knowledge *is* the apparent one. Plato reversed these out of an artistic trans-valuation. Yet, this is life once more, only selected and refined:

...One should not understand this compulsion to construct concepts, species, forms, purposes, laws (“a world of identical cases”) as if they enabled us to fix the *real world*; but as a compulsion to arrange a world for ourselves in which our existence is made possible: – we thereby create a world which is calculable, simplified, comprehensible, etc., for us...The world seems logical to us because we have made it logical.¹⁷

The “real world”, however one has hitherto conceived it

¹⁵ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), epigram 14.

¹⁶ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, epigram 572.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, epigram 521.

– it has always been the apparent world *once again*.¹⁸

The theory of “eternal recurrence,” as expounded by Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, is an earthly counter-concept to metaphysical constructs such as Plato’s. The categorical imperative: Live your life *as if* you will live that same life over and over again throughout eternity. This imperative is contingent on a single spontaneous moment of all-embracing life affirmation: the affirmative moment implicates all others that made it possible. As Nietzsche expresses it:

The ideal of the most high-spirited, alive, and world-affirming human being who has not only come to terms and learned to get along with whatever was and is, but who wants to have *what was and is* repeated into all eternity, shouting insatiably *da capo*¹⁹ – and not only to himself but to the whole play and spectacle...²⁰

Nietzsche terms the joyful affirmation of life *amor fati* (love of fate). Although the concept is mainly designed to operate as a psychological challenge, he does offer scientific support for the theory: if time is infinite and force is finite, hence the dynamic of power, then all possible formations of force are finite and will recur, including ourselves and all the necessary events of our existence. This theory divides active from reactive humanity, discourages all half-heartedness, and empowers an ontology of the present concerning all the “trivialities” of daily life that tend to be taken for granted.

Related to the “eternal recurrence,” is the critique of morality. Nietzsche considers morality a social phenomenon powered by fear, which masks the pluralistic nature of man:

Being moral means being highly accessible to fear.

¹⁸ Ibid., epigram 566.

¹⁹ From the beginning: a musical term.

²⁰ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, epigram 56.

Fear is the power by which the community is preserved
...The refinement of morality increases with the
refinement of fear. Today the fear of disagreeable
feelings in other people is almost the strongest of our
own disagreeable feelings.²¹

A revealing example of this phenomenon is the Christian morality of guilt, sin, punishment and reward.²² This morality, Nietzsche theorizes, is a fiction that masks reactive “will to power”, which is enforced by the belief in a free will in conflict with God.²³ By this means, simple physiological reactions such as sexual desire are reinterpreted as evil and punishable by eternal damnation: this generates a suppressive tension in the nervous system that can only be relieved by submission,²⁴ in order to receive “forgiveness,” and the ecstatic release of the blocked nervous energy. So, the Christian moral edifice first makes man “sick” (guilty, punishable, evil) in order to “save” (forgiveness, heavenly reward). It should be noted that its equally reactive counter concept is licentiousness (anarchy of the instincts). In contrast, Nietzsche understands morality to be a privilege and an earthly self-empowerment that is uniquely one's own, a giving “style” to one's life:

...every man is a unique miracle...The man who does not wish to belong to the mass needs only to cease taking himself easily; let him follow his conscience, which calls to him: ‘Be your self! All you are now doing, thinking, desiring, is not you yourself.’...Even if the future gave us no cause for hope – the fact of our existing at all in this here -and-now must be the strongest incentive for us to live according to our own laws and standards: the inexplicable fact that we live precisely today, when we had all infinite time in which to come into existence, that we possess only a short-lived today in which to demonstrate why and to what

²¹ Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, Note, p.74.

²² And love of neighbor as disguised *fear* of neighbor.

²³ For Nietzsche, free will and determinism are both concepts derived from the God hypothesis. In contrast, Nietzsche considers freedom relative to strength or weakness of the will.

²⁴ Examples: the baptism ritual, “born again” phenomenon.

end we came into existence now and at no other time...No one can construct for you the bridge upon which precisely you must cross the stream of life, no one but you yourself alone...for your true nature lies, not concealed deep within you, but immeasurably high above you, or at least above that which you usually take yourself to be.²⁵

One thing is needed. 'Giving style' to one's character – a great and rare art! It is exercised by those who see all the strengths and weaknesses of their own natures and then comprehend them in an artistic plan until everything appears as art and reason and even weakness delights the eye.²⁶

Nietzsche grasped the dynamic of power; the weaker eventually become the stronger, and the stronger the weaker in predictable cycles. With this insight, he analyzed active and reactive forces beginning with the Hellenic Greeks, in an attempt to account for what he considered to be the spiritual ill health of modern man.²⁷ An abbreviated sketch of his intricate analysis will suffice here. The relation of forces at play in the Occident reaches its peak in the Hellenic Greeks. The excessive discharge of lavish desires inherent in the overabundant healthfulness of the Greeks eventually threatens disintegration. Socratic philosophy serves as a necessary defense. Through the interpretation of Socrates by Plato, a metaphysical model is affirmed, in which the world and the outflow of worldly desires is judged false, i.e., immoral (instinctive value judgment for self-preservation). Through the influx of medieval era Judeo-Christianity, the Hellenic Greek moral distinctions noble (pride, generosity) and base (humility, pity) inherited by the Roman Empire, are subject to a trans-valuation by a hyper-expanding slave religion. Noble becomes evil, base becomes good; and truth is grounded in an all-

²⁵ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations: Schopenhauer as Educator*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997), essay I.

²⁶ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, "Gay Science," *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York, New York: Viking Press, 1968), pp. 98-99.

²⁷ For Nietzsche, the signifier "man" always signifies a specific "type" of man or woman.

knowing all-seeing, albeit metaphysical, God. This signals the victory of reactive forces over the active, for Nietzsche. Out of the worship of truth as God and the self-imposed tyranny of life-denial and cultivated pity (Christian asceticism), evolves the scientific man of the enlightenment era, whose instinctive demand for truth ultimately leads to the rejection of Christianity. Yet, he is an unknowing product of his inherited Christian morality. He pursues truth “disinterestedly” (objectively), all the while imposing a fictitious world of permanence onto existence. He is still unable to doubt the misanthropic origins of truth itself.²⁸ Nietzsche hinted that as science progressed into the twentieth century, it would reach the limits of its own “truth” paradigm (as measured ontologically) by discovering the mythology of “things” and the relativity of its truth claims (relativity theory, quantum physics). The onset of nihilism would begin. The lack of any convincing alternative value constructs to confer meaning would leave existence meaningless. Nietzsche further anticipated that the twentieth century would be the era of nihilistic devaluation, in which global wars and a chaotic world culture would emerge. Thus we have a genealogical movement from the priest, to the scientist, to the nihilist.

As Nietzsche defined him, “A nihilist is a man who judges of the world as it is that it ought not to be, and of the world as it ought to be that it does not exist.”²⁹ Nihilism is the counter-reaction to the instinctive loss of faith in a God who imparts universal meaning, and the subsequent devaluation of universal truth by scientific futility. Life is valued as valueless (ironically, this valueless-ness is judged in the negative). These subliminal valuations operate on a global level for the most part unawares:

The deeper one looks the more our valuations
disappear – meaninglessness approaches. We

²⁸ World of eternal knowledge as reactionary counter-concept to human finitude.

²⁹ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, epigram 585a.

have created the world that possesses values!
Knowing this, we know, too, that reverence
for truth is already the consequence of an illusion
and that one should value more than truth the
force that forms, simplifies, shapes, invents.³⁰

All this left Nietzsche contemplating with a tragic optimism. The nihilistic devaluation of existence makes possible the trans-valuation necessary for a renewed affirmation of life by dismantling the metaphysical structures standing in the way.

What is the subliminal motivation underlying the invention of a metaphysical world for the “unhealthy?” Nietzsche, specifically addressing institutionalized Christianity,³¹ which he considers to be a manipulative perversion of Christ’s teachings, claims it is a reactive revenge on life by its weaker elements – life’s suffering, injustice, tragedy. As compensation, a fictitious world is posited that places meaning and value outside existence.³² Yet, as Nietzsche reminds us in the prologue of *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, God is dead. Rephrased, the instinctive belief in God has been undermined by the morality of truth:

When on a Sunday morning we hear the bells
ringing we ask ourselves: is it possible all this
is going on because of a Jew crucified 2000 years
ago who said he was the son of God...A god who
begets children on a mortal woman; a sage who
calls upon us to no longer to sit in judgment, but
to heed the signs of the imminent end of the world;
a justice which accepts an innocent man as a substitute
sacrifice; someone who bids his disciples drink his
blood; prayers for miraculous interventions; sins
perpetrated against a god atoned by a god...how
gruesomely all this is wafted to us, as if out of the
grave of a primeval past! Can one believe that such

³⁰ Ibid., epigram 602.

³¹ Nietzsche considers institutional Christianity to be a different problematic than Christ – analysis of both are found in *The Antichrist*.

³² In contradiction to Christ – “The kingdom of Heaven is within you.”

things are still believed?³³

And Nietzsche further echoes:

The concept of “God” was until now the greatest objection to existence. We deny God, we deny the responsibility in God: only thereby do we redeem the world.³⁴

In the “healthy,” as Nietzsche conceives of them, the tragic and painful elements of life are stimulants, not burdens. An individual’s personal valuation of life reveals their “will to power.” The healthiest actively affirm the terrible and destructive aspects of life as the “hammer” of creativity, and find joy in rare and exceptional moments. The irony of the art of metaphysics as practiced by the “unhealthy” is that life serves itself through its own denial. In other words, an unhealthy element of life goes on living and enjoys its life by means of its artificial construct, in which imagined compensations for futile sufferings are projected onto a future life.

And so we have before us the challenge of any attempt at life affirmation: the absolute affirmation of life includes its creative *and* destructive elements. Nietzsche found ultimate solace in life through the spiritual warfare expressed in his philosophic rhetoric and extended gratitude to the “enemies” he fought out of the lexis of his own genius. He spoke for the benefit of a cultural trans-valuation and life enhancement. As a philosopher, Nietzsche shaped a new vision of man informed by the ancient Greeks, in which a stronger, healthier, more robust and joyful existence would manifest itself. It is Nietzsche’s open challenge to man to actualize his energetic vision.

³³ Nietzsche, *Human, All too Human*, epigram 113.

³⁴ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* “The Four Great Errors”, epigram 8.

CONCLUSION

We now see that Plato's conception of knowledge had recourse to an abstract metaphysics, which was judged superior to the natural world. Nietzsche subsequently reversed Plato's theories. By asserting that abstractions are apparent, Nietzsche inverted the epistemological hierarchy of Plato and denied the extrinsic reality of knowledge. While knowledge for Plato was both a cause and object, Nietzsche maintained that causes and objects were fictions. Yet, Nietzsche's claim that truth is interpretation has self-reflexive consequences. Aren't Nietzsche's own speculations interpretations as well? And how are conflicting interpretations to be validated? Aren't Nietzsche's own universal concepts such as "the will to power" and "eternal recurrence" called into question by his perspectivism? Nietzsche, anticipating criticisms, comments in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

...every power draws its ultimate consequences at every moment. Supposing that this is also only interpretation – and you will be eager enough to make this objection? – well, so much the better.³⁵

In a rare and rather generous move for a philosopher, Nietzsche dispenses with demand to act as his own authority. Objections are themselves only interpretations, and he encourages this plurality. Thus, *Nietzsche's theories are validated by both his critics and admirers*. Or as Zarathustra cries:

Now I go alone, my disciples. You too go now, alone. Thus I want it. Verily, I council you: go away from me and resist Zarathustra! And even better: be ashamed of him! Perhaps he deceived you...Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you.³⁶

³⁵ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, epigram 22.

So, what are we to make of Plato and Nietzsche and all this talk of truth? May we still beg the question: what is “truth?” Perhaps the truth is more than we think. The reader may guess the riddle with a hint from this concluding passage:

“I think, and know that this, at least, is true, actual, and certain.”... “Sir,” the philosopher will perhaps give him to understand, “it is improbable that you are not mistaken; but why insist on the truth?”³⁷

³⁶ Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche: Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 190.

³⁷ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, epigram 16.

**APPENDIX OF APHORISMS: SELECTIONS FROM
*BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL*³⁸ WITH COMMENTARY**

69

One has watched life badly if one has not seen the hand that considerately – kills.

Destruction can be consideration.

93

Compassion contains no hatred of men, but for that very reason too much contempt for men.

Compassion can be a vice.

94

A man's maturity – consists in having found again the seriousness one had as a child at play.

First a man, then a child.

107

Once the decision has been made, close your ears even to the best counter argument: sign of a strong character. Thus an occasional will to stupidity.

Stupidity can be an act of wisdom.

108

There are no moral phenomena at all, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena.

Values are secret.

153

Whatever is done from love always occurs beyond good and evil.

Morality lacks love.

166

Even when the mouth lies, the way it looks still tells the truth.

The body never lies.

177

Perhaps no one yet has been truthful enough about what “truthfulness” is.

Until now?

³⁸ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, slight revisions.

PREFACE TO PART III

Is meaning co-extensive to an inter-subjective field of awareness? Is interpretation necessarily an *interpretation of*? In regard to these questions, we will abstract Merleau-Ponty's notion of "latent intentionality" and his effort to subvert naturalistic interpretations of existence.

Is space an absolute of some sort, or a complex web of relations in interactive transformation? Are conventional notions of space exclusive or do they mask subterranean spatial domains? Is a chronology of "spatiality" at all possible? Michel Foucault explored such questions as prerequisites to his spatial ontology. As an exposition of Nietzsche's influence and methodology, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," is imperative for any credible assessment of Foucault's ontological project. We will analyze this text in detail as a resource on Foucault's interpretation of Friedrich Nietzsche and as an exposition of genealogical method.

Finally, we will decipher Foucault's conception of the "heterotopia" as articulated in "Of Other Spaces."

Perhaps these essays will awaken a subterranean curiosity in these prodigies of the un-thought. The thoughts explored here offer liberation from solidified errors and expropriations. While uncertainty may be disconcerting, the threat is ours alone. Only the embrace offers reparation.

MERLEAU-PONTY'S MILIEU

We ask where to begin, and in the asking we have already begun. Thus, something pre-given must constitute the possibility to ask: what is the relationship between noesis and noema, I and other? The naturalist view maintains a dualist, bifurcation between world and mind. Is that tradition a constitution? In the coming to terms with our questioning, we will briefly examine the hints and allegations of phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty, and his concept of “latent intentionality” as articulated in the essay “The Philosopher and his Shadow.”³⁹

For Merleau-Ponty, meaning is defined by context: the inter-subjective field of awareness *is* the constitutional ground from which I and other are manifest: *I* perceive (other), therefore *I* exist. Our context is our milieu – environment, field, horizon, world. By consequence, the world and mind are not in dualistic tension; they are two sides of the same coin. The founding phenomenologist, Edmund Husserl, coined the term intentionality to represent the necessary “acts” of consciousness, in which subjects and objects appear. For Merleau-Ponty, “latent intentionality” is the pre-existent “being”, in which consciousness is predicated. This is the ground of the pre-theoretical, the “being-with” that actualizes the possibilities of consciousness as I and other. This unfolds the necessity of permanent radical reflection of the un-thought; a challenge by thought to frontier the un-thought

Naturalistic views are only possible within a constitutional “being-with.” The inter-subjective fabric of our “being-in-and-of-the-world” exposes the limits of dualistic thinking, and the beginning of our ever-shifting relational horizon.

Merleau-Ponty considers our horizon co-constitutional to any meaningful appropriation. The separation of “I” and “other” prove illusiory. Only the closed mind maintains the distance.

³⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans. R. McCleary (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1987).

ON “NIETZSCHE, GENEALOGY, HISTORY”

Foucault, in “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” opens with an illumination: genealogy dispenses with origins in favor of transformations. While genealogy makes use of the historical, it rejects meta-historical presuppositions such as idealized significations and teleological interpretation. In other words, genealogy recognizes language, meaning and purpose to be contingent. Although it makes use of history, it also concerns itself with topics conventionally perceived to be without history. This entails relentless erudition and a rigorous method of deployment.

Ursprung, (origin) is recognized as a term Nietzsche used in a variety of ways. By the unstressed use of the term Nietzsche designated origin in general and is equivalent with *Entstehung* (emergence) and *Herkunft* (descent). Nietzsche also used *Ursprung* ironically in a stressed sense: Nietzschean origins tend to be compromising: the search for origins is an attempt to recapture metaphysical “forms” and “essences” that precede the external world. However, metaphysical postulates are fabrications projected onto a fortuitous world. Thus, there are no fixed origins. The contingent origins of reason are one example:

Examining that history of reason, he learns that it was born in an altogether “reasonable” fashion –to chance; devotion to truth and the precision of scientific methods arose from the passions of scholars, their reciprocal hatred, their fanatical and unending discussions, and their spirit of competition –the personal conflicts that slowly forged the weapons of reason.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984) p. 77.

Similarly, genealogy reveals the concept of “liberty” to be an “invention of the ruling classes,” and not inherent in human nature. In place of the “holy” origins of the metaphysicians the genealogist finds disparity. Here, Foucault reminds us of the compromising origins of man. Thus, a sense of humor is in order. Even “truth” is not exempt from the critique of genealogy: history reveals “truth” to be a series of solidified errors that constitute “epochs;” truth has a history within history that is a subject for genealogy.

Herkunft (descent) is another key term for genealogy. Nietzsche uses this term mainly to designate racial or social bonds. However, these bonds are not naive unities of character, but a disparate synthesis of “traits.” The complex nature of the German “soul” and the attempt to account for it is given as an example: the disorder revealed by the history of the Germans is a manifestation of a lack of coherent identity. This is masked in an attempt to posit a racial unity. Fragmentation, not foundations are the findings of genealogy, and the search for origins resembles confusion rather than an evolution.

Descent is traced by genealogy to the body: ancestors precipitate instincts and behavior patterns. Both Nietzsche and Foucault consider the errors of ancestors to be inherited:

Fathers have only to mistake effects for causes, believe in the reality of an “afterlife,” or maintain the value of eternal truths, and the bodies of their children will suffer.⁴¹

Paraphrased, the body is the site of history’s errors, its destruction and disintegration.

Entstehung (emergence) is the moment of arising. Nietzsche frequently makes use of this term as a signifier for a particular play of forces in which something reveals itself. Unlike the metaphysicians, who search for emerging meaning, the genealogist focuses on

dominations of power: the struggle of forces in unfavorable conditions. The species “man” has emerged from such constraints. Once man emerged victorious from his external circumstances power struggles moved to the interior domain” moral codes dominate as a means to avoid disintegration.

The “space” of emergence is the eruption of power relations. The concepts “good” and “evil” are indicative of this: they both emerge in a “space” or “void” where the contrary concepts play themselves out, always in relation to each other. As descent signifies the instincts of the body and their relative strength and weakness, emergence signifies the space of power confrontations. This “space” is a “non-place,” in which no one is responsible or credited for the emergence. As Foucault phrases it, the emergence of dominant power relations occurs in the “interstice.” This drama manifests in socially enforced value differentiations. Foucault considers that these power relations are fixed by a given society’s legislation and beliefs. Foucault contradicts conventional notions by considering that rules of law are systems of violence designed for the satisfaction of violence and not its avoidance.

Thus, violence is combated with violence:

The successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing these rules, to replace those who had used them, to disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them; controlling this complex mechanism, they will make it function so as to overcome the rulers through their own rules.⁴²

Disguises, ploys, and substitutions, are methods by which power displaces power.

In opposition to the metaphysical search for essential meaning, genealogy records the

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 79

⁴² Ibid., p. 86.

history of reversals of power and the imposition of interpretation. As Foucault states, “the development of humanity is a series of interpretations.”⁴³

Nietzsche conceived of various historical views. One he refers to as *Wirkliche Historie* (Historical Sense). This view is distinguished by the assumption of a supra-historical view outside time, and is determined by belief in absolutes such as eternal truth, immortality, and the identity of consciousness (Hegelianism). However, when absolutes are denied as forgeries, then this form of history can liberate marginal elements and empower diversity. Even feelings have a history in which the oscillations of their relative strengths and weaknesses play themselves out in time. Nor does the body itself escape history:

The body is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest, and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances.⁴⁴

“Effective History” is without constraints. It subverts all “stabilities” and “rediscoveries.” In place of progress, effective history designates multiplicities in life and nature. All teleological interpretations are held suspect. This kind of historical knowledge disrupts and confounds the understanding. As Foucault states, “knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting.”⁴⁵

Effective history is not facilitated by distance, but by the physiology of the body: the epochs of history are constituted by physiological dispositions. By this means, effective history serves as a curative science for the health of the species. This entails the acknowledgement of perspective and the life bias.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 86.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 87.

The historian himself is not exempt from historical treatment. Nietzsche speculates that the historian is of humble birth. He opposes free choice and qualitative judgment in his submission to history. This reveals an excessive curiosity and a severe lack of taste. He also displays a predilection for mediocrity. Nietzsche considers that the genealogy of history dissolves these supra-historical viewpoints.

The historical sense gives rise to three historical methods that combat traditional notions of history derived from Plato on: parody, dissociation, and sacrifice. Parody opposes history as a remembering or recognition of metaphysical postulates. Dissociation opposes identity and the notion that history represents a “tradition.” Sacrifice opposes history as knowledge and the notion of universal truth.

Parody is the counter concept to what Nietzsche labeled “Monumental History.” This mode of history venerates great individuals. But, even great men wear the mask of unreality. Individuals are artistic constructs. Man hides a plurality of possible identities and the genealogist openly parodies this with exaggerated characters that encourage diversity and not the emulation of dead heroes.

Dissociation counters what Nietzsche called “Antiquarian History,” which posits universal identities and purposes. The polymorphous nature of man is thus suppressed. Genealogy dissociates these fictitious identities and promotes disparity.

Sacrifice counters “critical history,” which claims to be a history of knowledge. Knowledge rests upon injustice. Knowledge discloses a dangerous “will to truth” that displaces the “will to life.” Sacrifice combats this movement by sacrificing the “knowing” subject with the injustice inherent in the concept of “truth.” This is truth turned against itself.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 88.

We close this essay with the recognition that all motives for truth are forms of injustice. Ironically, this injustice proves just when it combats the “will to truth” in favor of the “will to life.”

FOUCAULT'S "HETEROTOPIA"

The ontological signification of spatiality inherent in the notion of "heterotopia" as revealed in Foucault's "Of Other Spaces,"⁴⁶ belies a structural analysis of unstable power relations. What are these plays of power that feign hiding, and can the seeking force that brings them to bear manipulate, as well? Are the interplays of the incongruous transients of power accessible to the self in the contemporary arena? Does this "self," which is itself a relation of irreconcilable resistances and submissions, constitute and conflate a genetic freedom? What is the relation between the practice of freedom as care of the self, and the ontological priority of the other? With these questions in mind, we shall now court an analytic of the "heterotopia."

Heterotopic sites concretize the fabric of a given society, yet their obeisance tends to be neglected, much as the white background of this page. Meaning is imposed by a radical and paradigmatic reconstitution of place; without engaged critical thinking the power play underlying this imposition is left socially unaware. A semantic of the heterotopia includes the cemetery, theater, garden, library, fairground, brothel, and boat: the sites are representative, but by no means exhaustive; a communal embroidering of structural disciplines sediments them all. Historically speaking, "epochs" can be classified by respective spatial ontologies that coerce and inform that multitudinal sites that make up a society: this significates the dynamic contingency of the heterotopia, and the necessity of restitution by critical enquiry. Restitution revolves around the practice of freedom.

⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec in "Diacritics," Spring 1986 (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1986).

The relation of freedom is one of the “self” to other: ethical implications surface in the openness of the in-between. To care for the self as the fundamental heterotopic agent is to displace the codification of ruling power structures; the displacement is one of intellectual agency: active inquiry as the responsibility of a <self> determination. To engage in critical scrutiny of ones society and its various spatial manifestations is to self-empower. This contemplate obviates a scurrilous imposition of farcical meaning by the pluralized other on oneself.

To close with a paraphrase: the practice of freedom is the commitment of the questioning uncertainty of the social awareness of self in its heterotopic relation to the other(s).