

THE CONCEPT OF “IDEOLOGY” IN NIETZSCHE’S PHILOSOPHY:  
THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SUBJECT

EROL MUTLU

BOĞAZIÇI UNIVERSITY

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Erol Mutlu

Boğaziçi University

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## Thesis Abstract

### Erol Mutlu, “The Concept of ‘Ideology’ in Nietzsche’s Philosophy: The Construction of the Subject”

Although Nietzsche employs the concept of “ideology” very rarely, his strong critique of Western culture can be read, in terms of methodology and content, as an analysis of ideology. The values, ideals, idols, illusions, delusions, images and representations he attacks are the constitutive elements of the corpus of an ideology. Ideology works as a “reality” in Nietzsche’s writings. This thesis aims to reveal the results and hints Nietzsche’s analyses might suggest concerning the “theory of ideology” which was a topic of lively debate in the 1970s.

The category of the subject, the constitutive element of ideology, plays a permanent and decisive role in Nietzsche’s analyses. Any interpretation and evaluation that aims to give meaning to and organize life conceals its own partial and perspectival character, becomes totalitarian as it claims to be universal and eternal, and builds its own regime. The subject is constructed as a controversial and vulnerable fiction in the context of this power struggle. Nietzsche’s aim is to break into pieces the decadent structure that has turned into nihilism, and create a new world of values, a conception that will liberate the self. The problem emerges exactly at this point of conceptualization of the agents –that is, the “free spirits”– who will carry out this strategic undertaking. A philosophy which posits that the subject depends on a perfect automatism of instinct, that human activity is possible only through a suspension of thinking and pushing the real conditions of existence into the unconscious, will have difficulties in explaining the conditions under which the “free spirits” will create a new world of values.

The tension in Nietzsche’s philosophy stems from the fact that the project it undertakes is engaged in an enormous problematic that goes beyond the limits of human activity: The recreation of the self and the world. Yet the conditions which will render possible this self-creation are challenged by the most essential claims of its analysis. On a stage where the society is identified with the “herd” and the relation of mutual recognition in the intersubjective sphere is destroyed, the free-spirited individual of the future will either create himself with a godlike, isolated and hermitic action, or will be destroyed, losing his self and spiritual integrity. Thus the subject is a hold for the practice of ideology and in turn, it is under its attack.

## Tez Özeti

Erol Mutlu, “Nietzsche’nin Felsefesi’nde ‘Ideoloji’ Kavramı:

Öznenin İnşası”

Nietzsche “ideoloji” kavramını çok seyrek kullandığı halde, batı kültürüne karşı geliştirdiği şiddetli eleştiri, yöntem ve içerik açısından bir “ideoloji eleştirisi” olarak okunabilir. Nitekim hücum ettiği değerler, idealler, putlar, yanılısamalar, yanılgılar, imge ve hayaller, tasarımlar bir ideoloji gövdesini kuran öğelerdir. Eserlerinde ideoloji bir “gerçeklik” olarak devrededir. Bu tez çalışmasında amacımız, yetmişli yıllarda canlı bir tartışma gündemi oluşturan “ideoloji teorisi”ne bugün yeniden geri döndüğümüzde, Nietzsche’nin çözümlmelerinden ne tür sonuçlar ve ipuçları çıkarılabileceğini incelemektir.

O’nun çözümlmelerinde ideolojinin kurucu ögesi olan “özne” kategorisi kalıcı ve tayin edici bir yer tutar. Hayatımızı anlamlandırmaya ve düzenlemeye dönük her yorum ve değerlendirme tarzı, kendi kısmi ve perspektival yapısını gizler, evrensellik ve ebedilik iddiasında bulunarak totaliterleşir ve kendi rejimini kurar. Özne, bu iktidar mücadelesinin cereyan ettiği bağlamda ihtilafli ve kırılğan bir kurgu olarak inşa edilir. Nietzsche’nin amacı artık nihilizme dönüşmüş olan dekadan yapıyı parçalamak ve yeni bir değerler dünyası, benliği özgürleştirecek bir kavrayış yaratmaktır. Sorun tam da bu stratejik girişimi üstlenecek faillerin, yani “özgür ruhlar”ın kavramsallaştırılmasında ortaya çıkacaktır. Öznenin kusursuz bir içgüdüsel otomatizme bağlı olduğunu, insan faaliyetinin ancak düşünmenin askıya alınması ve gerçek varoluş koşullarının bilinçdışına itilmesi ile mümkün olduğunu ileri süren bir felsefe, “özgür ruhların” hangi koşullarda yeni bir değerler dünyası yaratacağını açıklamakta sıkıntıya düşecektir.

Nietzsche felsefesinin taşıdığı gerilim, giriştiği projenin, insan faaliyetinin sınırlarını aşan devasa bir sorunsalla uğraşmasından kaynaklanır: benliğin ve dünyanın yeniden yaratılması. Oysa bu öz-yaratımı mümkün kılacak koşullar, kendi analizinin en temel iddiaları tarafından tehdit edilirler. Toplumun “sürü” ile özdeşleştirildiği ve öznelerarası alandaki karşılıklı kabul etme/tanıma ilişkisinin imha edildiği bir sahnede, geleceğin özgür tinli bireyi ya yalıtık ve münzevi bir tanrısal edimle kendi kendini yaratacak, ya da benliğini ve ruhsal bütünlüğünü kaybederek parçalanacaktır. O halde, özne hem ideoloji pratiğinin dayanak noktasıdır hem de onun saldırısı altındadır.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Erol Mutlu  
PLACE OF BIRTH: İstanbul, Turkey  
DATE OF BIRTH: 9 May 1966

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:  
Boğaziçi University.

DEGREES AWARDED:  
Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy, 2007, Boğaziçi University.  
Master of Arts in Philosophy, 1995 , Department of Philosophy, Boğaziçi University.  
Bachelor of Philosophy, 1992 , Department of Philosophy, Boğaziçi University.

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When all these contributions are taken into account, the dissertation presented here can also be read as a text which has a collective aspect.

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II: LANGUAGE AND ITS METAPHYSICS.....	14
CHAPTER III: THE HUMAN SUBJECT.....	31
What is the Subject? .....	31
Consciousness .....	40
Free Will .....	46
CHAPTER IV: THE ANALYSIS OF IDEOLOGY .....	63
Genealogy: A Form of Ideology Critique .....	63
Morality as a Problematic .....	130
The Impasse .....	166
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION .....	180
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	186

## ABBREVIATIONS

The following are the list of Nietzsche's works and their English translations I have cited. The letters indicate the abbreviations; the letter 'P' is used to signify 'Preface'. I have cited section numbers in Arabic and chapters in Roman numerals.

KSA *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*

BT *The Birth of Tragedy*

TL *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense*

UM *Untimely Meditations*

HH *Human, All Too Human*

AOM *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*

WS *Wanderer and His Shadow*

D *Daybreak*

GS *The Gay Science*

Z *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

BGE *Beyond Good and Evil*

GM *On the Genealogy of Morals*

CW *The Case of Wagner*

TI *Twilight of the Idols*

A *The Antichrist*

NCW *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*

EH *Ecce Homo*

WP *The Will to Power*

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The way people experience the world is bound with the system of values they have. One's values construct his unique personality. Ideology can be called the ideas and values one stands up for, the values one adopts, i.e., the web of meanings which represent the world to him. While doing this, ideology limits us, puts guiding pressures on us; but at the same time, it provides us with the possibility to interpret, to set up goals and realize them. In other words, ideology defines a field of action, and thus produces the conditions of production of meanings. Ideology, therefore, is not a schema of mistakes that presents us an incorrect image of the world, but rather a field of representations (ideas, images, notions, concepts, myths and so on) through which we relate ourselves to the world.

Our relation to the world is mediated through language, and this is essentially an imaginative relationship. That is to say, individuals do not live the real conditions of life, but rather an imaginary relation figured within the system of representations in which they are situated. The fact that it is an "imaginary" relation does not mean that it is "unreal", but rather that it is lived in connection to an image.<sup>1</sup> In addition, representations in ideology are mostly unconscious in character; ideology operates

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<sup>1</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 142. For preliminary information about the history of the term 'ideology' and its various conceptualizations by different theoretical traditions see Jorge Larrain, *The Concept of Ideology* (London: Hutchinson, 1979) and Michèle Barreth, *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

for the unconscious without the awareness of individuals, hence they live ideology as their own “world”.

This situation stems from the fact that ideology has its own logic. It is through this very logic that ideology acquires a convincing character and enables us to give meaning to our experiences. In Marx’s words, in ideology, men become conscious of their place in the world. Since it is in ideology that men become subordinated to certain ideas, values and attitudes (concerning not merely political issues but also every aspects of life) the individual can become a subject only through submitting himself to this system of values.

That becoming a subject is possible only through being “subjected” to a certain world of norms has been a long-standing debate in the social sciences. Is it possible to overcome this subordination? Can we transform ideology in a way to create the conditions of liberating ourselves from the commitments and boundaries besetting us? In fact, this important problem is raised brought up once again by anti-systemic movements. I think that the relation between ideology and the subject is crucial in this respect: Is it possible to keep at a distance to ideology? Is it possible to assume a critical and independent stance, which could enable us to stay away from illusions? We can suggest answers to this question by engaging in a critique of ideology, that is, building up a theory of ideology. In the debates carried out during the 1970s, it was commonly accepted that the ideas of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud (“the three children that were not expected”, that is, the three “natural children” of Western Reason) were pivotal for such a critical undertaking.<sup>2</sup>

I believe that Nietzsche, at this point, presents us with very remarkable hints for an enterprise of building up a theory of “ideology”. Although he has neither tried

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<sup>2</sup> For a comparative analysis of the conceptions of ideology in Marx and Nietzsche see Nancy Sue Love, *Marx, Nietzsche and Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 113-140.

to conceptualize this term, nor attempted to construct a theory of ideology, he has (in fact) endeavoured, throughout his life, to analyse the forms and patterns in which ideology puts itself into being and the processes through which it reproduces itself. He has expressed his views in very striking language, within the form of aphorisms and the framework of short passages, but it is not hard to see that these writings are based on a very detailed and comprehensive analysis. He has qualified the ideology of the age in which he lived as “decadent”, and has realised that this sick culture was against the most humane and vital feelings and instincts of men, that it produced values inimical to the human being and to life, and, finally, that the logical point it arrived at was nihilism. With a psychologist’s sensitivity, he has undertaken the analysis of the castration of the most valuable human motives and instincts. Therefore, it should be noted that Nietzsche has made “psychological” analysis an inseparable and organic part of his philosophical perspective. Today, tracing explicitly the close and indispensable relation of philosophy to psychoanalysis in Nietzsche’s philosophy can provide us with a fruitful point of view.

To avoid a possible misunderstanding, I should also note that in this dissertation, I do not claim that Nietzsche has anticipated or foretold the ideas posed in the debate concerning the theory of ideology which reached its peak during the 1970s. Rather, I argue that Nietzsche’s writings bear profoundly rich and mind-opening elements which could help us to build a theory of ideology; I must mention that, especially to understand and conceptualize how the subject is constructed in the material processes of ideology, we should reconsider Nietzsche’s genealogical analysis. While trying to relate Nietzsche to the contemporary debates on ideology, what we have to pay attention to is to avoid curbing or leveling out the unique, divergent and dissonant character of his ideas which form the basis of his originality.

At this point, it would be useful to turn briefly to the 1970s, the period when the most foundational concepts of an analysis of ideology were formulated.<sup>3</sup> Here I would like to call attention to some key concepts of the outline of theory brought forward by the French philosopher Althusser in his theorization of ideology and its mechanisms of operation, for these concepts will assume a guiding function in the present dissertation.

Certainly, I am neither in search of a parallelism between these concepts and Nietzsche's ideas, nor is it possible to argue that there is a linear historical relation between them. There could be some points of intersection between the two philosophers, stemming from the fact that they have dealt with the same *problematique* (that of ideology) with similar concerns though in different periods—but this intersection can be stronger than expected: it can be argued that the point of view which holds that the constitutive category of the ideology articulated not at the level of ideas but in the field of material practices (Christian practices and the rituals of the ascetic ideal organized by the Church and by other institutions) is the category of the subject (which may be at work under various names such as God, soul, and so on), is closely related—though implicitly—to the field of intellectual influence of Nietzsche.

In the 1970's, discussions and studies on the theory of ideology provided a fruitful and creative framework. When we take Althusser's essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus" (1971), as a primary attempt, we see that his account of ideology abides to four "fundamental" theses (among others):

-ideology has no history, in other words, ideology is eternal in the exact sense that the unconscious is eternal in Freudian conception.

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<sup>3</sup> For a compilation that involves various contributions to the discussion concerning the theory of ideology, see Slavoj Žižek, ed. *Mapping Ideology* (London & New York: Verso, 1994).

-ideology is a “representation” of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence; ideology has two functions: recognition and misrecognition.

-ideology has a material existence; the “ideas” or “representations”, etc., which seem to make up ideology do not have an ideal (*idéale* or *idéelle*) or spiritual existence; an ideology always exists in an apparatus and its material practice(s).

-ideology hails or “interpellates” individuals as subjects; there is no ideology except by the subject and for the subjects; the category of subject is constitutive of all ideology.

In the works of his later period, Althusser made some revisions on his theoretical frame; and what concerns us here is the three essential aspects of a draft of theory to which he calls attention:

- 1) imaginary representation of reality,
- 2) inversion of a relation,
- 3) the subject as a central category of ideology.

Our aim is to seek what kind of elements we can find in Nietzsche’s genealogical analysis; in other words, in what way his genealogy can contribute to raise the critique of ideology.

Although the term “ideology” occurs very rarely in Nietzsche’s works,<sup>4</sup> his writings not only allow, but also provide a framework in which we can attend to them and read them in terms of the critique of ideology. He has not written in terms of ideology, but at the same time, his very enterprise, as a whole, exemplifies a profound and far reaching analysis of “ideology”. Since he challenges Western culture and its religious-moral grounds, Nietzsche, throughout his life, committed

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<sup>4</sup> *BGE*, 44, see also 202; *WP*, 351, cf. 281.

himself to the ideals, illusions, idols, fallacies, erroneous evaluations, degenerated virtues, decadent values on which culture is constituted. This content of culture has been constructed on the basis of Christian metaphysics, and this heritage has, no doubt, ideological essentials in all layers, and is bounded to be so out of necessity. While Nietzsche analyzes the ideological layers of Western culture, namely religion, morality, custom, philosophy, political structures, institutions, metaphysical values, etc., he presents a complicated picture.

Nietzsche's works provide a "firm ground" which underlies all enterprises of the critique of ideology; thus ideology, so to speak, does work in all his writings. His ascertainments about the nature and logic of metaphysical spheres seem to provide invaluable clues which shed light on the discussions about the theory of ideology.

His contributions can be classified in various ways, for instance;

- thoughts as rationalization of interests;

- metaphysical systems as masks which conceal an enormous body of presuppositions;

- philosophical thinking as a subtle channel which processes and legitimizes the notions of common sense;

- morality and religion as the structures of decadent values;

- custom and acquired habits as ideologies of everyday life;

- science as a miscarriage and not-yet-science, which still has the same faith (faith in absolute truth) with metaphysics, and in which reality is not encountered, and thus science as a necessary ally with asceticism.

- ideals as the binding inventions (e.g. the ascetic ideal) which function to condemn this world and to glorify the divine world as the pure, ultimate address of truth.

The list is certainly not complete. It is possible to add new items to the list, but it is no longer necessary for the present; what we are interested in is the common and central features of the logic of ideology.

We can classify his extensive critique in terms of the problematic of ideology under three headlines:

1) The level of presuppositions our conceptions and actions rest upon.

-all human acts have a fictive character; they rest upon the presupposition of a consistent, free human subject—to wit, upon an illusion.

-our faiths and assumptions by which we act, are not grounded in firm foundations, and they mask the real conditions of our agency.

-the faith in the human subject convinces human beings that they are responsible, and thus subject to “punishment” (the sense of guilt) in Christian metaphysics.

2) The level of inversion of all values by morality and metaphysics.

3) The level of “culmination”: ensuring a perfect automatism of instinct as a “prerequisite” of all mastery (power): the aim of every holy lie is to make life “unconscious”.

These are the main concerns Nietzsche focuses on, in his genealogical analysis. In a theory or an analysis of ideological structures, three distinctive aspects seem to be decisive: the imaginary representation of reality, inversion, and the subject as a central component. No doubt, we cannot assert that Nietzsche’s enterprise has these aspects in an exact sense. Nonetheless, without imposing a strict definition on his thought, it is possible to read his entire work in order to get certain

insights for an elaborate theory of ideology. We will follow his analysis especially through the lines of his later writings.<sup>5</sup>

We should bear in mind two main controversial points that we will argue in our dissertation:

1- Nietzsche conceives the subject not as a conscious agent; in other words, consciousness or conscious activity is not a constitutive component of the subject. It is a function or an effect of our need and experience of communication with others; consciousness and the need for communication grow up hand in hand. Here consciousness is defined and grounded in a network of relations, that is, in an intersubjective sphere. However, in Nietzsche's account of the moral subject, this intersubjectivity is not posed as a fundamental condition for being a subject. Individuals enter into relations with each other, but it seems that they do not influence each other; to put it another way, an individual is not considered to be something constructed from his mediated relation with another individual so as to turn and form himself as an integral and autonomous agent, as a subject.

This gap reveals itself in Nietzsche's description of the relation of the master (or the noble) with the slave: the master does not have any need to enter into interaction with the slave, nor does he need an experience of awareness of others. In Nietzsche, the form of an awareness of others is not an essential component in the emergence of the self. The fact that intersubjectivity is a condition of subjectivity itself is excluded in the very beginning of his identification of the social with the herd (*die Herde*). In reality, if social consciousness is, by its very nature, a herd consciousness, then one can be "what he is" only through his own resources and this means nothing but a repudiation of others. Such an elimination of "the social"

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<sup>5</sup> *BGE*, *GM*, *TI*, and *A*; also some complementary elucidations in unpublished notes from his *Nachlass*.

abolishes the grounds of intersubjectivity as an indispensable component of self-awareness and identity. Thus an awareness of oneself as a subject can no longer be accomplished. This is a point that we deal with in his genealogical analysis.

2- Furthermore the subject, in all his interpretations, acts as an incomplete individual under the established scheme of concluded experience. This body of experience, in other words this culture, declares itself to be the final stage, to be concluded, according to which one should—and can—live; ultimately this whole experience formed throughout history is embodied in a codification, in law-texts: “Consequently, what must now be prevented above all is further experimentation, a continuation of the fluid state of values, testing, choosing, criticizing values in infinitum”.<sup>6</sup> Nietzsche thinks that this goal is ensured by two instruments.

Firstly, “revelation” enters the picture and asserts that the law is not a product of human activity, but has a divine origin; it is not found out through many trials and errors, but is already-given and merely communicated as a perfect gift, a miracle.

Secondly, “tradition” claims the immemorial character of the law, demands an absolute compliance and regards any doubt against it as a crime against the ancestors. This twofold wall erected against all probable critical and experimental enterprise aims to ground the law on a certain kind of “ahistoricity” peculiar to all ideology, that is, on a divine authority, here God. The ultimate intention is to transform one’s unconditional obedience into an instinct, to make life unconscious:

“The higher reason in such a procedure lies in the aim, step by step, to push consciousness back from what had been recognized as the right life (that is, proved right by a tremendous and rigorously filtered experience), so as to attain the perfect automatism of instinct—that presupposition of all mastery, of every kind of perfection in the art of

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<sup>6</sup> A, 57.

life. To that end, it must be made unconscious: this is the aim of every holy lie”.<sup>7</sup>

It follows from this that we become “conscious agents” only on the ground that in our actions, the real conditions of existence are kept outside of our consciousness. We have to exclude or suppress the real conditions of our life, that is to say, we have to not recognize, but misrecognize them. This misrecognition cannot be restored, rather it constitutes a necessary element of all agency. Ironically, in a culture of several centuries, one turns to be a conscious agent on the basis of unconsciousness, that is, on the ground of attainment of the perfect automatism of instinct.

This necessary repression of consciousness, this lack of reflection leads us to the problem of misrecognition. Misrecognition is essentially a matter of self-misrecognition; in the situation in which the true conditions of human activity are kept out of one’s consciousness, the way one experiences the world should rest on a self-misunderstanding, an illusory image of oneself. Furnished with this imaginary self, man considers his imaginary relation to his social conditions to be a real one.

The system of values which has been prevalent until Nietzsche’s age, has compelled individuals to self-denial, self-destruction and self-sacrifice, and castrated their vital powers. The values which have constructed the modern world have turned into a burden for humanity. The modern world has been established at the expense of this self-sacrifice, but the prevailing ideological structure cannot legitimize itself any longer: Western civilization is at a stage where its values have come to a dead end, turning into decadent values which are hostile to life. Nihilism has become the destiny of a world which stood in contradiction to the basic instincts of life.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

It is not sufficient to reverse these values to overcome nihilism; they have to be pushed to move beyond their limits and all values have to be reevaluated.

Nietzsche delegates this task to the subjects whom he calls “new philosophers”, “the men of the future” or “the free spirit” (*der freie Geist*). They are designated to be commanders and legislators. Their task is a heavy one: creating the self and the world we live in. As opposed to the “subject” of traditional psychology, they will create their own selves. And at the same time, they will value the world with a new perspective, without concealing the very perspectival character of their mode of valuation, without making it absolute, that is, without allowing it to turn into ideology.

However, the problem lies exactly at this desperate task of god-like creation. Nietzsche has been left with weak tools at hand in his enterprise to cope with nihilism and to go beyond it. As will be discussed in this dissertation, Nietzsche identifies society with the herd and does not allow a subjectivation of the individual in a reciprocal interaction with others, that is, in a relation of recognition within the social-intersubjective sphere. Instead, he compels the individual to a self-creation with his own resources and his own capacity. In so doing, he disregards an essential problem: With which faculties and abilities does the free spirit need to be furnished to realize this creation? Under the circumstances where human action is transformed into a perfect automatism of instinct and life is necessarily experienced without entering one’s consciousness, do we have any reason to believe that this agency of the free spirit is possible?

Although Nietzsche puts special emphasis on the analysis of the boundaries and circumstances surrounding the individual, he does not tend to accept that this experience of limitation is at work also for the free spirit. If this is the case, both the

conditions of the existence of free spirits and the possibility of their creative activity cease to exist. The problem is that Nietzsche sees the process of subjectivation as an action which can be performed by the subject in an individual and isolated life. A scene in which the society is ruled out by being condemned as “herd”, leaves the individual with a God-like task. However, this is an impossible task; this enterprise which goes beyond the limits of his power, his capacities, can in turn operate to disintegrate the individual. The individual is immersed in a self-misunderstanding concerning his own capacity or potency, and the conditions in which he is situated. This is one of the basic “effects” of ideology. The philosophical undertaking of Nietzsche implicates many elements that could help in the construction of a theory of ideology, while, at the same time, it indicates its own tragic end, the limits of the resistance of ideology against such a critical enterprise.

To sum up: I believe that Nietzsche still offers important insights and considerations for an elaborate analysis of ideology. In my dissertation, I tried to engage in a discussion of what philosophical and genealogical indications Nietzsche could suggest for an analysis of ideology. What can we learn, what sort of fruitful hints can we obtain concerning this issue, through a reading of Nietzsche? In my view, although he does not employ these terms, we can say that Nietzsche engages in a critical and genealogical account of ideology, for he has seen that the central category of ideology is the subject. He has tried to analyse the construction of the subject around and within the context of relations of power. He has harshly criticized the cultural structure of his times and attacked not only morality, religion and metaphysics (as the most fundamental ideologies) but also the grounds on which they are rooted, namely, language, common sense, old-style psychology, and so on.

He rejects all moral presuppositions, all cultural prejudices, and all metaphysical notions accepted to be *given* and *universal* in an unconditional and unquestionable way. These values, distinctions or concepts do not take root from a divine or super-natural origin to be defined and fixed once and for all. On the contrary, Nietzsche aims to demonstrate that they are historically conditioned by perspective, by perspectival interpretation. But such a genealogical knowledge is not ready-made, it is not already-there; it should be produced on the basis of the *historicality* of the web of meanings and values. “Genealogy” is expected to be an elaborate form of critique which aims to decipher the metaphysical reference of modernity and its norms. What genealogy attempts to show is that like all modes of evaluation, the system of modern values is a product of a particular perspective. This point will help us to reveal the ideological nature of any cultural paradigm, be it moral, religious, commonsensical or pseudo-scientific.

In the dissertation we shall discuss the sense and implications of Nietzsche’s genealogical approach for a theory of ideology.

## CHAPTER II

### LANGUAGE AND ITS METAPHYSICS

In Nietzsche's writings, language weaves the forms of consciousness in the life of the "slave" and the ordinary man, the mediocre, the average; and the ordinary man performs his acts according to his average consciousness. Man enters into the world of morality as furnished with this cognitive faculty (with consciousness) and the language he has inherited. How does language operate? What kind of constraints does it produce in our thinking activity or rather, in our interpretations? Language is binding on our activity of making value judgments, since we "interpret" within the realm of language.<sup>8</sup>

In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche says that by using the words that lie at hand we express our thoughts; "we have at any moment only the thought for which we have to hand the words".<sup>9</sup> Our mental horizon seems to be drawn by the words and concepts we use to define our world. Nietzsche clarifies what he thinks concerning the relation between our thoughts and words: language provides us with a possibility—as a means—for the expression of our experiences, but it also limits us; and he writes that

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<sup>8</sup> In his very earlier philosophical position about language, Nietzsche is convinced that language has a metaphorical (or figural) character; see *TL*. For a creative view adopted by de Man and attributed to Nietzsche, which asserts that the metaphorical (or the figural) structure is the paradigm for language ("The figurative structure is not one linguistic mode among others but it characterizes language as such"), see Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 103-118.

<sup>9</sup> *D*, 257.

“even one’s thoughts one cannot reproduce entirely in words”.<sup>10</sup> However, this is not a matter of inability, as it were; it arises from the inherent nature of thinking itself; we think without knowing that we think, merely the smallest and the most superficial part of our thinking rises to consciousness. “For only this conscious thinking *takes the form of words, which is to say signs of communication*”.<sup>11</sup> Thus Nietzsche links the development of language firmly with the development of consciousness, placing them in a parallel process of growth:

The emergence of our sense impressions into our own consciousness, the ability to fix them and, as it were, exhibit them externally, increased proportionately with the need to communicate them to *others* by means of signs.<sup>12</sup>

We will try to expand on the structure of consciousness in the succeeding chapter. At this juncture, we shall confine ourselves to pointing out that consciousness governs our thoughts on behalf of the “average” perspective of the “herd”.<sup>13</sup> One acquires self-consciousness through satisfying one’s need to communicate to others by means of creating signs; one invents signs, and in this process, becomes more conscious of oneself as a social animal: “all our actions are altogether incomparably personal,

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<sup>10</sup> *GS*, 244.

<sup>11</sup> *GS*, 354.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* In order to get a true conception of the fundamental concepts developed by Nietzsche and of their context in the original text, we give some crucial quotations in German from *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe* (hereafter *KSA*), 1967-77, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 15 vols (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988): “...das Bewusstwerden unserer Sinneseindrücke bei uns selbst, die Kraft, sie fixiren zu können und gleichsam ausser uns zu stellen, hat in dem Maasse zugenommen, als die Nöthigung wuchs, sie *Andern* durch Zeichen zu übermitteln” (*KSA*, vol. 3, p. 592).

<sup>13</sup> By the term ‘herd’ Nietzsche means the social sphere to which the ordinary man (but not the nobles) belongs; this unfortunate inclination to identify the social with the herd damages a true conception of ‘intersubjectivity’ which operates as an indispensable condition of the self, of subjectivity itself. We will deal with this point in the last chapter.

unique, and infinitely individual... But as soon as we translate them into consciousness they no longer seem to be”.<sup>14</sup>

At this very point, we have to emphasize that while the human being has acquired a subtlety and complication through the development of language and consciousness, s/he has at the same time lost her/his access to a peculiar thing: her/his unique individuality. This loss of individuality has some profound implications in Nietzsche’s detailed analysis of the slave-herd morality, that is, in “genealogy”.

In Nietzsche’s conception, language constitutes a *locus* around which our inner experiences lose their immanent, inward nature, leave their specificity and take the form of what is common (*die Gemeinheit*). Our concepts are approximately definite image signs (*Bildzeichen*) for frequently recurring sensations and for groups of sensations. However, to use the same words to understand one another, “one also has to use the same words for the same species of inner experiences”;<sup>15</sup> we have to have experiences in common. On the basis of the predominance of an equal number of frequently recurring experiences (over those occurring more rarely), humans understand each other more rapidly; thanks to this quick comprehension people associate and create a unity. Nietzsche concludes his brilliant reasoning by equating the history of language with “the history of a process of abbreviation”. The process of abbreviation must denote here the process which makes communicability of need easy, that is to say, need itself necessitates that human beings express similar requirements and experiences by similar signs. Accordingly “abbreviation” (*die Abkürzung*) implies an undergoing of only average and common experiences. What

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *BGE*, 268.

destroys the existence of subtle “individuality” is just this necessary (and for Nietzsche, “dangerous”) emergence of commonness, vulgarity—abbreviation.<sup>16</sup>

The necessary character of language which is created for the average and its inability to express our true, intrinsic experiences run through all his works; let us read the following remark:

Our true experiences (...) could not communicate themselves even if they tried. That is because they lack the right word (...) Language, it seems, was invented only for what is average, medium, communicable.<sup>17</sup>

The grammatical structure of language has a decisive role in the way of philosophizing and even in our scientific comprehension. Humans are embroiled in the metaphysical assumptions involved in ordinary language; they are seduced by the grammar of the language they speak. We inherit the assumptions that run through language spontaneously, since it has been imbued with them unquestionably, such as unity, identity, causality, permanence, substance, being, reason, will, etc.; and it goes without saying that this ordinary language (that of “common sense”) is at work in our philosophical systems through undergoing a refinement. Different philosophies which are independent of each other, are compelled into an “affinity” by a definite fundamental scheme: “something within them leads them, something impels them in a definite order, one after the other—to wit, the innate systematic structure and relationship of their concepts”.<sup>18</sup> Hence, Nietzsche claims that philosophizing is a kind of recognition of a primordial source out of which those concepts philosophers have used grew originally. To be more precise, what produces the affinity of the

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<sup>16</sup> Also cf. *TL*, 1.

<sup>17</sup> *TI*, IX, 26. In the original text: “Unsre eigentlichen Erlebnisse (...) Sie könnten sich selbst nicht mittheilen, wenn sie wollten. Das macht, es fehlt ihnen das Wort. (...) Die Sprache, scheint es, ist nur für Durchschnittliches, Mittleres, Mittheilsames erfunden” (*KSA*, vol. 6, p. 128).

<sup>18</sup> *BGE*, 20.

most diverse philosophical systems is the common philosophy of grammar, in Nietzsche's own words "the unconscious domination and guidance by similar grammatical functions". What lies hidden behind the affinity is the fact that linguistic structure and its grammatical functions are "prepared at the outset for a similar development and sequence of philosophical systems".<sup>19</sup>

How does this mechanism work? One of the central notions Nietzsche severely criticizes is the "subject-object" grammar; and Nietzsche propounds this philosophical notion as something to be questioned mercilessly and taken to court.<sup>20</sup> This notion constitutes one of the main "seductions" performed by language. In fact the notion our grammar involves is inherent, or more accurately, *naturalized* within the linguistic operation. Now let us pursue the main steps of his criticism:

1) Nietzsche sees and questions language *as a problem*, since it contains its own *metaphysics*,<sup>21</sup> in plain talk, the presuppositions of reason. Language sees everywhere "a doer and doing; it believes in will as *the* cause; it believes in the ego, in the ego as being, in the ego as substance, and it projects this faith in the ego-substance upon all things".<sup>22</sup> What he aims for is to indicate that although language, just as the world, is neutral and indifferent, it has been subjected to make *commitments* to a particular, historical usage of a metaphysical conception of the

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Throughout his intellectual life, Nietzsche constantly—so to speak, in an 'obsessive' manner—treats this problem (and the other 'opposite terms' of metaphysics) and wages a war against its excessive penetration into many philosophies.

<sup>21</sup> For the extent of Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics see Stephen Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics* (Cambridge & London: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 38-95. He maintains that the main attack of Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics is directed towards its faith in language; see Houlgate, p. 77. See also Tracy B. Strong, "Language and Nihilism: Nietzsche's Critique of Epistemology", *Theory and Society*, vol. 3, no. 2 (Summer 1976), pp. 239-263. He argues how the metaphysical and moral elements of language operates as the epistemological categories and premisses in the nihilistic conception.

<sup>22</sup> *TI*, III, 5 (cf. *GM*, I, 13). In the original text: "Das sieht überall Thäter und Thun: das glaubt an Willen als Ursache überhaupt; das glaubt an's 'Ich', an's Ich als Sein, an's Ich als Substanz und projicirt den Glauben an die Ich-Substanz auf alle Dinge" (*KSA*, vol. 6, p. 77).

world and of life. It acquires its specific content from within the profound relations with interpretive activities of a society; “in its origin language belongs in the age of the most rudimentary form of psychology”.<sup>23</sup> Basic presuppositions involved in language create a realm of crude fetishism in which metaphysical terms are posited by reason to such a great extent that we are compelled into error—a real fallacy, a true illusion! Essential illusion in grammatical habit appears in the form of a duality—the duality of “doer-deed, subject-object”. By virtue of our belief in the ego as being, as substance, and projecting our faith in the ego-substance on all things, we invent the concept of “thing”; therefore from the concept of ego (the subject) we derive that of being and from the concept of being we generate the concept of “thing”. What underlies this mode of thinking is the enormous error that “the will is something which is effective, that will is a capacity. Today we know that it is only a word”.<sup>24</sup> In metaphysics, one is faced with the dichotomy between subject (as cause, substance)-object (as effect, attribute) and with the subject acting on the object, standing in a purportedly causal connection with what occurs in the latter. In the past one believed in the soul “as one believed in grammar and the grammatical subject: one said “I” is the condition, “think” is the predicate and conditioned”.<sup>25</sup>

At this juncture, we should not lose sight of what matters most: language imposes restrictions; in so far as it is incomprehensible to think that interpretation is an activity going on by itself without a subject performing it, we are tempted to say that someone “interpretes”—it is considered as an activity of an agent. This is exactly a habit of reasoning inherent within language; it says to us that if there is an

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<sup>23</sup> *TI*, III, 5.

<sup>24</sup> *TI*, III, 5. In passing, we have to underline that ‘the will’ here denotes that of traditional, psychological conception, rather than the one involved in his famous doctrine of ‘will to power’.

<sup>25</sup> *BGE*, 54; cf. 17.

agency, there must also be a subject (an agent) who carries it out; “there is thinking: therefore there is something that thinks” and Nietzsche insists upon the point that we are bound up with “grammatical custom that adds a doer to every deed (...) this is not merely the substantiation of a fact but a logical-metaphysical postulate”.<sup>26</sup> Here we must not miss a crucial point, that an erroneous form, a fallacy, an illusion can be necessary for our experiences: the domain of our activity is encompassed by ideological practices. That is why Nietzsche attacks language as a distorting form of thought but nonetheless believes that it is inevitable for understanding the “structure” of the world. He reminds us that one cannot assert that the world has such a general structure of which any linguistic/grammatical system is and can be an accurate expression. As A. Nehamas aptly points out, “just as language makes no commitments regarding the world, so the world imposes no constraints upon language”.<sup>27</sup>

However, as stated above, Nietzsche holds that language makes epistemological claims on those who use it. A characteristic and refined instance can be found in the concept of “substance”, the root of which is present in language, not in beings outside us. On the other hand, substance is merely a small part of the general picture which the metaphysics of language presents before us:

The concept of substance is a consequence of the concept of the subject: not the reverse! If we relinquish the soul, ‘the subject’, the precondition for ‘substance’ in general disappears.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *WP*, 484.

<sup>27</sup> Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life As Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985), p. 97. In one of his earlier writings, Nietzsche has focused on the problem of the adequacy of language to express all realities; see *TL*, 1.

<sup>28</sup> *WP*, 485. In the original text: “Der *Substanz* begriff eine Folge des *Subjekts*-begriffs: *nicht* umgekehrt! Geben wir die Seele, ‘das Subjekt’ preis, so fehlt die Voraussetzung für eine ‘Substanz’ überhaupt” (*KSA*, vol. 12, s. 10 [19], p. 465).

Common sense makes us believe in the implicit assumption that there are external things, objects, processes which endure between our perceptions regardless of whether we continue to perceive them or not; on another note, we consider this object—existing independent from us—to be “identical with itself”, that is, as something that remains the same; thus, we hold the world as the sphere of enduring, persistent, permanent objects although undergoing changes in time: this is the idea of “substance” (substratum) of common sense and it is transferred into philosophical sense through a naturalization by the grammar. Our language ascribes to all that is permanent a status of “being” isolated from its flux, its alterable, changeable nature—to sum from its becoming; at last “every word we say and every sentence speak in its [being’s] favor”.<sup>29</sup>

In ordinary observation we take a group of phenomena as “one” and designate it to be “a fact”; and we isolate every fact through imagining an empty space between facts. Put another way, we reflect them in a succession of isolated indivisible facts and empty space, but not as a continuous flux; thus we derive “identical facts” and also a group of identical facts—“in both cases erroneously” says Nietzsche, and goes on to point out that “the word and the concept are the most manifest ground for our belief in this isolation of groups of actions”.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, what we do through words and concepts is undoubtedly to conceive “things as being simpler than they are, separate from one another, indivisible, each existing in and for itself. A philosophical mythology lies concealed in *language* which breaks out again every moment”.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *TI*, III, 5.

<sup>30</sup> *WS*, 11.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

2) As a complementary discussion, Nietzsche points out that the subject does not only invent a stable world of identical objects, but also imagines itself as a “substratum”, that is to say the subject considers many similar states in it to be the effect of a *unity* underlying all the different states and impulses; that which remains the same, keeps itself to be identical with itself, is experienced as “the subject”. Firstly, we create the similarity of these states, and then we posit this similarity to be “the fact” itself. Finally, we perceive ourselves as the identical unity of the “created” similarity of many states. Nietzsche ironically adds that “our adjusting them and making them similar is the fact, not their similarity”.<sup>32</sup> The fact that just as one perceives things/objects through incorporating their attributes in a *substantiality*, so that one experiences oneself in terms of “substantial ego” is an essential problem which permeates all Nietzsche’s works; the following passage is from *Human, All Too Human*:

The primary universal law of the knowing subject consists in the inner necessity of recognizing every object in itself as being in its own essence something identical with itself, thus self-existent and at bottom always the same and unchanging, in short as a substance.<sup>33</sup>

He claims that the belief that there are identical things has been inherited from the period of the lower organisms; and philosophy has undertaken to support the same faith in “identity”. When we analyze, for instance, the process expressed in the Cartesian motto “I think” we find a whole series of assertions that we take for granted. We assume that we know what thinking is, that it is an activity of being accepted as a cause, that there is an “ego” who has—throughout many different

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<sup>32</sup> *WP*, 485.

<sup>33</sup> *HH*, 18. In the original text: Gesetz des erkennenden Subjects besteht in der inneren Nothwendigkeit, jeden Gegenstand an sich, in seinem eigenen Wesen als einen mit sich selbst identischen, also selbstexistirenden und im Grunde stets gleichbleibenden und unwandelbaren, kurz als eine Substanz zu erkennen (*KSA*, vol. 2, p. 38-39).

states—a fixed identity as a *cogitans*; in brief “the assertion “I think” assumes that I *compare* my states at the present moment with other states of myself which I know, in order to determine what it is”.<sup>34</sup> All presuppositions involved in the assertion serve to hide that the subject “I”, the doer of the deed “thinking” is simply a fiction, an *imaginary substratum* which we attribute our many similar states to. The subject is “the term for our belief in a unity underlying all the different impulses of the highest feeling of reality (...) we believe so firmly in our belief that for its sake we imagine “truth”, “reality”, substantiality in general”.<sup>35</sup> The criticism of the “Cartesian ego” occurs as a constant theme in Nietzsche’s writings.

While Nietzsche casts suspicion on the concept of the substance, of the subject, he engages in a pivotal notion for traditional philosophy, to wit: *the will*. He formulates three “inner facts” so that humans believe most firmly in interpreting the world and their lives entirely in causal terms: the will, the spirit (the conception of consciousness as a cause), the subject (the conception of the ego as cause). Nietzsche posits the will as the most persuasive one which is firmly accepted as given and which guarantees the conception of causality. Human beings project their own image, constituted within the three “inward facts”, at issue into the thing/being, and to the world in general.

He even took the concept of being from the concept of the ego; he posited ‘things’ as ‘being’, in his image, in accordance with his concept of the ego as a cause.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *BGE*, 16.

<sup>35</sup> *WP*, 485.

<sup>36</sup> *TI*, VI, 3. In the original text: “...er nahm erst den Begriff Sein aus dem Begriff Ich heraus, er hat die ‘Dinge’ als seiend gesetzt nach seinem Bilde, nach seinem Begriff des Ichs als Ursache” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 91).

Add to this the remarkable point that “the faith in the ego as cause” is the *faith* in grammar, the dual subject-object structure of language; what comes to the same thing, behind both the *cogital* “ego” as a cause (a doer) for thinking (a doing) and the concept of an unchanging substrate which is the subject of properties that do change, the same notion underlies implicitly: the metaphysical concept of substance.

According to traditional philosophy, since the senses give us no knowledge of such a permanent, hidden being and deceive us about reality, philosophers seem to have a “non-empirical mode of access to reality”,<sup>37</sup> which is another illusion Nietzsche particularly rejects: man after positing “things” as “being” in his image “always found in things only that *which he had put into them*. The thing itself, to say it once more, the concept of thing is a mere reflex of the faith in the ego as cause”.<sup>38</sup>

Nietzsche maintains that the most ancient philosophy worked here and formulated all that happened as a doing and all doing as the effect of a *will*. It follows from this that the error (the assumption of the spirit as a cause) is not only mistaken for reality but also “made the very measure of reality! And called God!”<sup>39</sup>—to wit, the supreme substance.

Thus our belief in God is provided with and justified through *both* the logical-metaphysical postulates (the belief in substance, accident, property, etc.) and the acting of will from which all these postulates derive their convincing force. To be more precise, the justification of our belief is produced and structured by the faith in grammar and the duality of its “subject-object”: “I am afraid we are not rid of God

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<sup>37</sup> For a detailed discussion on this specific point, see Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), pp. 106-109.

<sup>38</sup> *TI*, VI, 3.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

because we still have faith in grammar”.<sup>40</sup> That is why language is an essential and constitutive component of our interpretive agency and of the way we comprehend the world:

Must all philosophy not ultimately bring to light the preconditions upon which the process of reason depends?—our belief in the ‘ego’ as a substance, as the sole reality from which we ascribe reality to things in general?... our thinking itself involves this belief (with its distinction of substance, accident; deed, doer, etc.); to let it go means: being no longer able to think.<sup>41</sup>

Although these notions and dual categories are entities we posit, they constitute the *content* of metaphysics and gain a power of mental sanction upon our thinking and reasoning; they circumscribe our intellectual horizon, imposing themselves on our reflection. Language *conceals* its value-laden character, its nature of being a human invented reality, *projects* itself as absolute and universal form into things regarding the world as being formed by “unity, identity, being, etc.”; and we are led to take the categories and notions of language as “real”, we are compelled to admit the distinctions (already-given in language); finally we naturally (as it is “illusory”) believe that the ways in which we think and speak about the world present us the true structure of the world; in other words, we have a deep faith that we can read the nature of reality by means of the nature of language—another real illusion which is to be unmasked.

3) We have to recall that Nietzsche endeavors to decipher the supposed (hence “pseudo”) opposition of terms—opposite values in his vocabulary—such as becoming-being, apparent world versus true world, senses versus reason/ideas/concepts, multiplicity versus unity, change versus permanence, etc.

These contradictory and mutually exclusive opposite terms grow up in the soil of the

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<sup>40</sup> *TI*, III, 5.

<sup>41</sup> *WP*, 487.

metaphysics of language, and in turn, our way of comprehending the world is afflicted with the grammatical functions which these terms determine. Metaphysics falsifies the complicated and multi-valued nature of reality, it partly performs this, thanks to the transference of grammatical dualities to the world. Language presents the very measure according to which a regularity and order can be ascribed. Opposite terms of language “interpret” in the sense that they arrange, engender, and reproduce these regularities and classifications.

4) The words, the terms are the most manifest ground for our belief in these classifications of identical facts and also actions (such as good, evil, envious, sympathetic actions, etc.), thereby our world in which we think and live is formed through *the world of language* itself. We do not only designate things with the words, the terms, says Nietzsche, “we think originally that through them we grasp the *true* in things”,<sup>42</sup> and restates that language itself turns into a “special world”. He upholds the same point even in his earlier works:

[M]ankind set up in language a separate world beside the other world, a place it took to be so firmly set that, standing upon it, it could lift the rest of the world off its hinges and makes itself master of it.<sup>43</sup>

In this notable section, Nietzsche highlights three points: (i) that for long ages man has believed in the concepts and names of things as *aeternae veritates*; (ii) that in language man thinks that he possesses the knowledge of the world; he has conceived “with words he was expressing supreme knowledge of things”; (iii) that in this belief in language men have propagated a tremendous error.

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<sup>42</sup> *WS*, 11.

<sup>43</sup> *HH*, 11. In the original text: “...dass in ihr der Mensch eine eigene Welt neben die andere stellte, einen Ort, welchen er für so fest hielt, um von ihm aus die übrige Welt aus den Angeln zu heben und sich zum Herrn derselben zu machen” (*KSA*, vol. 2, p. 30).

Here the critical point Nietzsche indicates is that an erroneous belief (even a tremendous one) constitutes a necessary ingredient for both the preservation of life and the development of reason; “happily, it is too late for the evolution of reason, which depends on this belief, to be again put back”.<sup>44</sup> Just in the same way that language limits our thinking process, logic also constrains us and by that we render the world regular, consistent and logical.

It is we who created the ‘thing’, the ‘identical thing’, subject, attribute, activity, object, substance, form, after we had long pursued the process of making identical, coarse and simple. The world seems logical to us because we have made it logical.<sup>45</sup>

If “we have made it logical”, our linguistic assumptions and logical postulates and categories make up a particular and perspectival interpretation of the world, but they do not give an accurate and adequate representation of it in itself, nor can language make claims to reflect the world as it is. What we have is not an exhaustive explanation of a thing, but merely interpretations formed on a certain perspective: “the demand for an adequate mode of expression is senseless”.<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, though we cannot consider language, logic (or other particular endeavors) to be adequate reflections of the structure of the world, we cannot do without them; “*We cease to think when we refuse to do so under the constraint of language*; we barely reach the doubt that sees this limitation as a limitation. *Rational thought is interpretation according to a scheme that we cannot*

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *WP*, 521 (cf. *BGE*, 21). In the original text: “Wir sind es, die ‘das Ding’, das ‘gleiche Ding’, das Subjekt, das Prädikat, das Thun, das Objekt, die Substanz, die Form geschaffen haben, nachdem wir das Gleichmachen, das Grob- und Einfachmachen am längsten getrieben haben” (*KSA* vol. 12, s. 9 [144], p. 418).

<sup>46</sup> *WP*, 625.

*throw off*.<sup>47</sup> However, that we cannot perform thinking unless we obey the linguistic constraints does not imply that they are true, correct or real (“a belief can be a condition of life and nonetheless be false”<sup>48</sup>). They are merely fictions which have to be uncovered and displayed in the sense that the human being has manufactured them in accordance with her/his needs and drives to preserve and promote life: “We have measured the value of the world according to categories *that refer to a purely fictitious world*”.<sup>49</sup> The sense for security, i.e. the “instinct of fear” of what is strange, unusual, unfamiliar leads humans to arrange a world of regular and familiar things-objects-relations. In this process we receive and experience ourselves and the things around us in schematic and simplified terms in order to meet our needs, and to make our own existence possible:

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.<sup>50</sup>

To sum up, if language is, as it were, a *sine qua non* form of thought without which we cannot think and make a sensible and significant conversation, then it is not the language that is wrong; the erroneous thing is our attitude to allow it to gain power

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<sup>47</sup> *WP*, 522. In the original text: “...*wir hören auf zu denken, wenn wir es nicht in dem sprachlichen Zwange thun wollen, wir langen gerade noch bei dem Zweifel an, hier eine Grenze als Grenze zu sehn. Das vernünftige Denken ist ein Interpretiren nach einem Scheme, welches wir nicht abwerfen können*” (*KSA* vol. 12, s. 5 [22] pp. 193-194).

<sup>48</sup> *WP*, 483.

<sup>49</sup> *WP*, 12.

<sup>50</sup> *WP*, 521. In the original text: “Man soll diese *Nöthigung*, Begriffe, Gattungen, Formen, Zwecke, Gesetze — ‘*eine Welt der identischen Fälle*’ — zu bilden, nicht so verstehn, als ob wir damit die *wahre Welt* zu fixiren im Stande wären; sondern als *Nöthigung*, uns eine Welt zurectzumachen, bei der *unsre Existenz* ermöglicht wird — wir schaffen damit eine Welt, die berechenbar, vereinfacht, verständlich usw. Für uns” (*KSA* vol. 12, s. 9 [144] p. 418). We must bear in mind that Nietzsche finds linguistic instruments for expressing ‘becoming’ futile; he holds that language “accords with our inevitable need to preserve ourselves to posit a crude world of stability, of ‘things,’ etc.” (*WP*, 715).

and domination over our perception and conception of “reality”. Nietzsche aims to show that we have to deny and disregard the idea of language as a correct representation of the world and our surroundings, and we should reinterpret language as something full of “living images” which are various, fluid, multiple, changeable and even contradictory as life is, rather than as something filled with dead concepts, with “concept-mummies”.

Language is intersubjective and social (in the sense of “herd”); it provides a realm for interpretation which itself is an instance of the “will to power”. Here we shall not dwell upon the doctrine of the will to power,<sup>51</sup> but it should be noted that language is one of the modes in which the will to power expresses itself: making an imposition of forms of thought on reality is one of the modes performed by the will to power itself. So construed, language is exactly a form of thought, and interpretation, which is generated in that form, is an instance from within the will to power. In the final analysis, if philosophy/metaphysics enforces our interpretations into definite and fixed schemes and channels, then this means that within the domain of language, relations of power and struggles in power do occur. In fact, as previously mentioned, consciousness, which grows up in mutual connection with language, is designated as a network of communication “particularly between those who commanded and those who obeyed”.<sup>52</sup> Essentially, Nietzsche’s approach to the power relations in language is formulated more clearly in his later works, and he gives an account about the intersubjective character of language in terms of *power*, that is, within the agency of humans in the creation of *values*,

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<sup>51</sup> An illuminating account that traces the gradual growth and maturation of the ‘will to power’ through Nietzsche’s books and notes is provided in Kaufmann’s work; see Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Cleveland & New York: Meridian Books, The World Publishing Company, 1963), pp. 153-180.

<sup>52</sup> *GS*, 354.

The lordly right of giving names extends so far that one should allow oneself to conceive the origin of language itself as an expression of power on the part of the rulers: they say ‘this is this and this,’ they seal every thing and event with a sound and, as it were take possession of it.<sup>53</sup>

The attitude to decipher the power-relations language carries, and to keep a distance to its fictitious/ideological structure to which we make commitment, will be extensively dealt with throughout twentieth century philosophy as one of the fundamental leitmotives of the critique of ideology.

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<sup>53</sup> *GM*, I, 2. In the original text: “Das Herrenrecht, Namen zu geben, geht so weit, dass man sich erlauben sollte, den Ursprung der Sprache selbst als Machtäusserung der Herrschenden zu fassen: sie sagen ‘das *ist* das und das’, sie siegeln jegliches Ding und Geschehen mit einem Laute ab und nehmen es dadurch gleichsam in Besitz” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 260).

## CHAPTER III

### THE HUMAN SUBJECT

#### What is the Subject?

The human being turns into be a subject through morality, man, in the modern world, is a moral subject. Before this transformation, we will look at with what kind of traits, capacities and disabilities man is furnished in his psychic organization. In Nietzsche's view, the subject or soul cannot be defined in terms of its psychic predicates; otherwise expressed, the knowledge of human psychology does not exhaust all there is to be known about the structure of the human subject, nor does this knowledge elucidate how it is constructed in some interpretive processes of certain moral practices and rituals.

If the subject as "ego" is merely a habitual fiction of our grammar (as discussed in the chapter on Language), and is not one with the central government of our nature,<sup>54</sup> what is *that* which experiences and performs some acts in and throughout life? Inner experiences, inward facts or in a broader term, the "inner world" does not supply a firm ground for a comprehension of the "subject". On the basis of the famous "inner facts", of which "not a single one has so far proved to be factual", we create the world as a world of causes, of will, of spirits:

The most ancient and enduring psychology was at work here and did not do anything else: all that happened was considered a doing, all

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<sup>54</sup> *WP*, 370, 371; cf. 483.

doing the effect of a will; the world became to it a multiplicity of doers; a doer (a 'subject') was slipped under all that happened.<sup>55</sup>

At the level of common sense of traditional conceptions, individuals do not recognize their psychic world; they act in accordance with “the phantom of their ego which has formed itself in the heads of those around them and has been communicated to them”; and they dwell in a world of phantasms which produce, as it were, a fog of habits and impersonal, “commonsensical” opinions, and which perform on them independently. Nietzsche thinks that it is in this phantasmatic sphere (and a phantasm refers to an “ideological” sphere) that “lies the tremendous effect of general judgments about ‘man’—all these people, unknown to themselves, believe in the bloodless abstraction ‘man’, that is to say, in a fiction”.<sup>56</sup>

Intrinsically, the words “unknown to themselves” refer to the fact of “alienation”; since common sense presents a ready-made, fictively real, persuasive, total and—on its own account—legitimate conception of subject as ego, we *(mis)recognize* ourselves, we *misread* the nature of our individuality.

We do that, partly because the nature of language hinders us in explaining our inner experiences and drives, since for instance, “words really exist only for *superlative* degrees of these processes and drives”, that is to say, the realm of words exists in order to designate our extreme states (such as anger, hatred, love, desire, joy, pain, etc.), it does not suffice to describe the milder ones: “the milder, middle degrees, not to speak of the lower degrees which are continually in play, elude us, and yet it is they which weave the web of our character and our destiny”.<sup>57</sup> Extreme states (in Nietzsche’s vocabulary, “cruder outbursts”) form violent exceptions and

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<sup>55</sup> *TI*, VI, 3.

<sup>56</sup> *D*, 105.

<sup>57</sup> *D*, 115.

these exceptions outweigh the rule; thus those cruder outbursts mislead us, make us misunderstand ourselves:

[W]e misread ourselves in this apparently most intelligible of handwriting on the nature of our self. *Our opinion of ourself*, however, which we have arrived at this erroneous path, the so-called 'ego,' is thenceforth a fellow worker in the construction of our character and our destiny.<sup>58</sup>

The fact that the knowledge of the subject is always controversial and that the construction of the self is more complicated than has been thought is a main point with which Nietzsche deals in a ceaseless way. "Traditional" philosophy, according to his conception, however, has not concerned itself with the constitutive process of the human subject; it has rather taken over the notions of common sense and made them subtle and refined; philosophy still sets up the terms of common sense at the center of its realm. In Nietzsche's opinion, philosophers have always started out from man; "they involuntarily think of 'man' as an *aeterna veritas*, as something that remains constant in the midst of all flux, as a sure measure of things".<sup>59</sup> Here the pivotal term is "all flux", because it sends us to one of his fundamental notions: becoming.<sup>60</sup>

Nietzsche opposes the denial or debasement of "becoming", which is an expression of the lack of historical sense. On the contrary everything is in flux, in a process of becoming, so is the human being and his/her traits and faculties which are supposed to be eternal and unchanging by philosophy. He thinks that "becoming must be explained without recourse to final intentions", it justifies itself at its every

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* In the original text: "...wir verlesen uns in dieser scheinbar deutlichsten Buchstabenschrift unseres Selbst. *Unsere Meinung über uns* aber, die wir auf diesem falschen Wege gefunden haben, das sogenannte 'Ich', arbeitet fürderhin mit an unserem Charakter und Schicksal" (*KSA*, vol. 3, p. 108).

<sup>59</sup> *HH*, 2. In the original text: "Unwillkürlich schwebt ihnen 'der Mensch' als eine *aeterna veritas*, als ein Gleichbleibendes in allem Strudel, als ein sicheres Maass der Dinge vor" (*KSA*, vol. 2, p. 24).

<sup>60</sup> This term, no doubt, is closely connected with antithetical terms such as 'appearance-real', 'apparent world-true world'.

moment, it is what it is. Becoming does not have anything hidden behind it; it “does not aim at a *final state*, does not flow into being. Becoming is not a merely *apparent state*; perhaps the world of beings is mere appearance”,<sup>61</sup> so is the human being in becoming, in flowing. Traditional philosophy thinks that it can reach its aim through an analysis of the human: a subject that has everlastingly remained the same and is furnished with the same faculties and capacities. This lack of historical sense leads philosophers to take “man”, although he has arisen under the impression of certain religious, moral and political events, as the fixed starting point; and they even derive the world as something to be spinned out of the faculty of “cognition” of humans. They fix the human being as something that has definite, unchangeable instincts, and consider these to be tied to the “unalterable facts” of humanity; this ideological operation supplies a key to the conception of the world:

The whole of teleology is constructed by speaking of the man of the last four millennia as of an *eternal* man towards whom all things in the world have had a natural relationship from the time he began.<sup>62</sup>

However, both man and his faculties (his faculty of cognition, too) have *evolved* in becoming, they are not ahistorical and eternal; intrinsically Nietzsche’s approach to the notion of becoming is firmly supported by the more general assertion he makes: “...everything has become: there are *no eternal facts*, just as there are no absolute truths”.<sup>63</sup> Man is not at the center of the universe, nor at the center of the world; man has no a privileged or *a priori* position according to which we measure the value of things/facts in the world; in contrast to theology and religious considerations the human being as a subject cannot be derived from “the deity” or “the holy spirit”, nor

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<sup>61</sup> *WP*, 708.

<sup>62</sup> *HH*, 2.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* In the original text: “Alles aber ist geworden; es giebt *keine ewigen Thatsachen*: sowie es keine absoluten Wahrheiten giebt” (*KSA*, vol. 2, p. 25)

can s/he be placed at the top of the living creatures in an hierarchy; “man is by no means the crown of creation: every living being stands beside him on the same level of perfection”.<sup>64</sup>

Traditional philosophy formulates its own conception the sublime, supreme and divine human on the basis of two constitutive notions which give humans their essential nature: *consciousness* and *free will*. Nietzsche provides brilliant ascertainments about these two terms in connection to “the inner world”:

“‘Consciousness’—to what extent the idea of an idea, the idea of will, the idea of a feeling (known to ourselves alone) are totally superficial! Our inner world, too, ‘appearance’!”<sup>65</sup> Nietzsche, peculiar to his method, opposes all antithetical notions (opposite terms/values) and thus the distinction of the inner world-the outer world, inward facts-external things, motives-actions, etc. They are all merely oversimplifications and pure stupidities; his radical skepticism is at work here, too.

I maintain the phenomenality of the inner world, too: everything of which we become conscious is arranged, simplified, schematized, interpreted through and through—the actual process of inner ‘perception,’ the causal connection between thoughts, feelings, desires, between subject and object, are absolutely hidden from us—and are perhaps purely imaginary. The ‘apparent *inner* world’ is governed by just the same forms and procedures as the ‘outer’ world. We never encounter ‘facts’...<sup>66</sup>

This sameness, although not explicitly explained in the passage cited here, is profoundly related to his unfaltering opposition to the distinction drawn between the

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<sup>64</sup> A, 14.

<sup>65</sup> WP, 476. In the original text: “‘Bewußtsein’ — in wie fern die vorgestellte Vorstellung, der vorgestellte Wille, das vorgestellte Gefühl (*das uns allein bekannte*) ganz oberflächlich ist! ‘Erscheinung’ auch unsere *innere* Welt!” (KSA, vol. 11, s. 26 [49], p. 161).

<sup>66</sup> WP, 477. In the original text: “Ich halte die Phänomenalität auch der *inneren* Welt fest: alles, *was uns bewußt wird*, ist durch und durch erst zurechtgemacht, vereinfacht, schematisirt, ausgelegt — der *wirkliche* Vorgang der inneren ‘Wahrnehmung’, die *Causalvereinigung* zwischen Gedanken, Gefühlen, Begehungen, wie die zwischen Subjekt und Objekt, uns absolut verborgen — und vielleicht eine reine Einbildung. Diese ‘scheinbare *innere* Welt’ ist mit ganz denselben Formen und Prozeduren behandelt, wie die ‘äußere’ Welt. Wir stoßen nie auf ‘Thatsachen’” (KSA, vol. 13, s. 11 [113], p. 53 ).

apparent versus real world, or between the phenomenal thing and thing-in-itself. Nietzsche does not advocate a simple equation of these opposite terms under phenomenality (i.e., all things, outer or inner, are appearance), rather he finds these dichotomies purely fictitious, imaginary, invented under the struggles of power, and totally condemns them as metaphysical.<sup>67</sup>

We encounter the same theme in his earlier works; *both* external things/actions *and* acts of will, inner facts, motives are not what they seem to be; against the universal belief held by “the oldest realism” that “an action is what it appears to us to be”, he makes a striking assertion: “all actions are essentially unknown”, simply because the knowledge of our actions does not suffice to explain the action itself; to think that we can call by its name every moral possibility and every inner motion and motive which precedes action is just “primeval delusion”; this delusion enables us to think that one knows in every case “how human action is brought about”. This delusion requires and relies on a human subject who is convinced of it and says: “I know what I want, what I have done, I am free and responsible for it, I hold others responsible...”, etc.<sup>68</sup> This is *a typology of subject*—“one” that is actually free, morally responsible, mentally aware of oneself, consciously willing.

By the same token, the moral mentality of the herd calls for the same archetype in its description of man; it demands one to be knowable; it considers one to be capable of uttering one’s inner nature by using clear and constant signs; it

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<sup>67</sup> His condemnation must be understood in a more general context in which he sharply opposes to the distinction between reality and appearance. “The true world—we have abolished. What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? But no! *With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one*” (*TI*, IV, 6). This is an old idol (‘an ideal’ in his vocabulary) and he describes his mission as ‘overthrowing’ idols; the so-called true world is the mendaciously invented world—i.e. ideal world (*EH*, P, 2).

<sup>68</sup> *D*, 116.

cannot accept one that is secret and unrecognizable. At the same time, an individual must consider and experience himself in the same manner; one may not be hidden from oneself and may not believe that one changes. One is the very object of one's own knowledge; one's inner nature is/must be in the accessibility of an assessment: "the demand for truthfulness presupposes the knowability and stability of the person. In fact, it is the object of education to create in the herd member a definite faith concerning the nature of man: it first invents this faith and then demands 'truthfulness' [*Wahrhaftigkeit*]"<sup>69</sup>

Nietzsche's attack against the inner world goes parallel with an attack on the imagination of man by traditional paradigms. For him "they were still the heirs of the universal madness and presumption that there exist knowledge as to the essential nature of an action (...) Is the 'terrible' truth not that no amount of knowledge about an act *ever* suffices to ensure its performance, that the space between knowledge and action has never yet been bridged even in one single instance?"<sup>70</sup> and he concludes that exhaustive knowledge of actions (of one and others) and of our experiences is impossible, and that is so with necessity:

Our experience of another person... can never be complete, so that we would have a logical right to a total evaluation of him; all evaluations are premature and are bound to be. Finally, the standard by which we measure, our own being, is not an unalterable magnitude, we are subject to moods and fluctuations, and yet we would have to know ourselves as a fixed standard to be able to justly to assess the relation between ourself and anything else whatever. Perhaps it would follow from all this that one ought not to judge at all.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *WP*, 277.

<sup>70</sup> *D*, 116.

<sup>71</sup> *HH*, 32. In the original text: "Keine Erfahrung zum Beispiel über einen Menschen, (...) kann vollständig sein, so dass wir ein logisches Recht zu einer Gesamtabsehung desselben hätten; alle Schätzungen sind voreilig und müssen es sein. Endlich ist das Maass, womit wir messen, unser Wesen, keine unabänderliche Grösse, wir haben Stimmungen und Schwankungen, und doch müssten wir uns selbst als ein festes Maass kennen, um das Verhältniss irgend einer Sache zu uns gerecht

The fact that our evaluations are premature and that we posit ourself as a “fixed” standard *by necessity* reveals the imaginary ground of the processes in making sense of our experiences and relations. While, here, Nietzsche seems to, although covertly, complain about being *illogical and unjust*, in later works, he will try to provide a “space” in which this necessary “misrecognition” can afford an opportunity and obligation for an analysis of the subject, and compels us to a new definition of the self; because “this is one of the greatest and most irresolvable discords of existence”.<sup>72</sup> We see Nietzsche keeping track of the same problem in the later works of, so to speak, his mature period.

Consequently, the inner world and actions it causes are, in epistemic sense, controversial terms in his works; the dubious status of the inner world arises not only from the impossibility to bridge the gap between knowledge and the inner world, but also from the constitutive, multifarious and complicated structure of the inner world; for this inner world we do not have any sensitive organs, we sense merely a thousandfold complexity as unity introducing a causal sequence to the flow of thoughts and feelings as if they have in themselves a causal chain. On the other hand, he calls attention to another—in part, conflicting—aspect of this complicated inner world:

At the bottom of us, really ‘deep down,’ there is, of course, something unteachable, some granite of spiritual *fatum*, of predetermined decision and answer to predetermined selected questions. Whenever a cardinal problem is at stake, there speaks an unchangeable ‘this is I’... At times we find certain solutions of problems that inspire strong faith in *us*; some call them henceforth *their* ‘convictions.’ Later—we see them only as steps to self-knowledge, signposts to the problem we

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abzuschätzen. Vielleicht wird aus alledem folgen, dass man gar nicht urtheilen sollte” (*KSA*, vol. 2, p. 51-52).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

*are*—rather, to the great stupidity we are, to our spiritual *fatum*, to what is *unteachable* very ‘deep down.’<sup>73</sup>

Obviously it would not be wrong to associate the idea of this granit of spiritual *fatum*, this unteachable very “deep down”, with the Freudien fundamental conception of the unconscious nucleus of our psychic apparatus.<sup>74</sup> In fact, when he writes in an earlier book that “there are many things we must leave in the Hades<sup>75</sup> of half-conscious feeling, and not desire to redeem them out of their shadow existence, otherwise they will, as thoughts and words, become our demonic masters and cruelly demand our blood of us”<sup>76</sup> on the one hand, he refers us, though ambigiously, to an “underlying” core of our psyche in a psychoanalytical sense, but on the other hand, he tends to limit its extension and penetrating force to our self; and his deliberate reserve is quite compatible with his rejection of the self as something fixed, unchangeable and stable, something to be discovered. The unconscious (underlying psychic desires, drives, instincts, motives, etc. of one’s inner world) does not invade and pervade throughout the conscious self in his understanding: the self is something different from the fictitious, invented, imaginary subject (ego) held by

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<sup>73</sup> *BGE*, 231. In the original text: “Aber im Grunde von uns, ganz ‘da unten’, giebt es freilich etwas Unbelehrbares, einen Granit von geistigem Fatum, von vorherbestimmter Entscheidung und Antwort auf vorherbestimmte ausgelesene Fragen. Bei jedem kardinalen Probleme redet ein unwandelbares ‘das bin ich’; (...) Man findet bei Zeiten gewisse Lösungen von Problemen, die gerade *uns* starken Glauben machen; vielleicht nennt man sie fürderhin seine ‘Überzeugungen’. Später — sieht man in ihnen nur Fusstapfen zur Selbsterkenntnis, Wegweiser zum Probleme, das wir *sind*, — richtiger, zur grossen Dummheit, die wir sind, zu unserem geistigen Fatum, zum *Unbelehrbaren* ganz ‘da unten’” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 170).

<sup>74</sup> Note that in Freud’s *topographical model*, psychic life is represented by three levels, namely, the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious.

<sup>75</sup> ‘Hades’ (from Greek) refers to the god of the ancient Greek underworld.

<sup>76</sup> *AOM*, 374.

metaphysicians. His response to the problem of the delusive notion of the human subject will be an attempt to develop a new definition of the soul in his later period.<sup>77</sup>

As already said, the claim of the knowability of the inner world is presupposed and supported essentially by two inward facts, “consciousness” and “the will”. Now we will try to pursue the arguments formulated by Nietzsche so as to conceive his concerns about human nature.

### Consciousness

In *Gay Science*, as previously mentioned, Nietzsche gives a striking explication concerning the emergence and growth of consciousness in the need for communication; the strength of consciousness develops in a proportional relation to a human’s/animal’s capacity for communication; the need and distress produce a realm in which understanding each other becomes quick and subtle. This need of communication presses the necessity of the emergence and development of consciousness.

Nietzsche draws our attention to two related points: (1) man, as the most endangered animal, needs other persons and he has to learn to state his distress, i.e., he has to render himself understandable and “knowable”; (2) on account of the interrelation between consciousness and intercourse with “others”, “consciousness does not really belong to man’s individual existence but rather to his social or herd

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<sup>77</sup> Corngold argues that Nietzsche gives primacy “the self” over the ego, because, unlike the latter, the self never designates the *hypostasis* of the subject; for an insightful discussion on the development of the concept, “the self” in the works of Nietzsche’s mature period, see Stanley Corngold, “The Question of the Self in Nietzsche during the Axial Period (1882-1888)”, *Boundary 2*, vol. 9, No. 3 (Spring-Autumn, 1981), pp. 541-565.

nature”.<sup>78</sup> That is why he redefines consciousness as that which is “in subsidiary role, almost indifferent, superfluous”,<sup>79</sup> what is more, he asserts that the properties of one’s organization and adaptation of things cannot be attributed to consciousness; there is no ground for such an ascription; it plays no role in the total process of this systematization.<sup>80</sup> Conscious thinking is, by the same token, reevaluated on the basis of its position in our thinking in general; conscious thought cannot be considered as thought itself; the thinking that ascends to consciousness constitutes only the smallest, the most superficial and even the worst part of all thinking, since only this conscious thinking takes the form of words.

Nietzsche’s reasoning, here, must be clear; consciousness has a social (herd) character; it has developed in accordance with the need required by herd utility; but since communication concerning the needs naturally entails a recourse to the words of the herd, our consciousness (employing words, namely, signs of communication) loses its individual character and is involved in the average of the social; likewise, our thoughts are translated back to the perspective of the herd.

While Nietzsche claims the overestimation of consciousness in our psychic structure, he supports his assertion by indicating the existence of another region of human nature which pervades within us a more extensive locus in comparison to consciousness: drives. The herd nature of “average” man can be read in the totality of *drives* which, in Nietzsche’s thinking, constitutes man’s being. Nothing can be more incomplete than his image of totality, even for a man who may go far in self-

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<sup>78</sup> *GS*, 354. In the original text: “...das Bewusstsein nicht eigentlich zur Individual-Existenz des Menschen gehört, vielmehr zu dem, was an ihm Gemeinschafts- und Heerden-Natur ist” (*KSA*, vol. 3, p. 592).

<sup>79</sup> *WP*, 523.

<sup>80</sup> *WP*, 526.

knowledge. Our drives desire gratification; they regard every event of a day with a view to seeing how they can use it for their saturation; “their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counterplay among one another, and above all the laws of their *nutriment* remain wholly unknown to him”.<sup>81</sup>

Metaphorically speaking, the drive waits in its thirst, tasting every condition so as to gratify itself; if it discovers nothing for itself, it will go on thirsting; and in so far as this condition of non-gratification remains the same, “it will wither away like a plant without rain”. For that reason, each drive moves in a struggle for existence in which play and counterplay occur. To sum up, Nietzsche’s argument is as follows schematically:

- 1) in dreams, the scene in which all materials passing through nervous stimuli play the game, is interpreted by our drives in order to discharge itself;
- 2) in the situations in which nervous stimuli are the same, our interpretations may differ since it is, in this case, a different drive that has wanted to be active, to exercise itself, to gratify and refresh itself;
- 3) the inventive reasoning faculty *imagines* today a cause for the nervous stimuli so very different from the cause it imagined yesterday; thus a drive functions as a “prompter” of the reasoning faculty;
- 4) in waking life, likewise, our drives do nothing more than *interpreting* nervous stimuli and, according to their requirements, posit their causes.

And then he ties his metaphorical discussion to our cognitive world and consciousness:

...our moral judgments and evaluations too are only images and fantasies based on a physiological process unknown to us, a kind of acquired language for designating certain nervous stimuli (...) all our

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<sup>81</sup> *D*, 119.

so-called consciousness is a more or less fantastic commentary on an unknown, perhaps unknowable, but felt text.<sup>82</sup>

Nietzsche is going to return to the problem of consciousness and describe it in its connection with other parts of man's psychic topography, especially that of the unconscious—of instincts, desires and so on. He cites the words by Spinoza who says: "...*non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere*".<sup>83</sup> Nietzsche tries to convince us that the instincts (for instance, desires to laugh, lament, and curse) and conscious thinking are not separate and opposed to each other, but are interwoven in a fragile and transient *instance*, as it were, a kind of subtle, delicate equilibrium; Nietzsche's exposition has, no doubt intentionally, a metaphorical character which he often employs. Each instinct introduces its own one-sided view of the thing or event, and then a struggle occurs between these views, whereupon, one finds the claims of all contending sides right; in the end, a kind of justice and a contract comes up; this justice and a contract ensure a scope by virtue of which all these instincts maintain their existence and rights against each other:

Since only the last scenes of reconciliation and the final accounting at the end of this long process rise to our consciousness, we suppose that *intelligere* must be something conciliatory, just, and good—something that stands essentially opposed to the instincts, while it is actually nothing but a *certain behavior of the instincts towards one another*.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> D, 119. In the original text: "...auch unsere moralischen Urtheile und Werthschätzungen nur Bilder und Phantasien über einen uns unbekanntem physiologischen Vorgang sind, eine Art angewöhnter Sprache, gewisse Nervenreize (...) all unser sogenanntes Bewusstsein ein mehr oder weniger phantastischer Commentar über einen ungewussten, vielleicht unwissbaren, aber gefühlten Text ist" (KSA, vol. 3, p. 113).

<sup>83</sup> "...not to laugh, not to lament, nor to detest, but to understand"; this citation was translated by Kaufmann in the footnote. For its context, see also Benedict de Spinoza, "Tractatus Politicus", *The Political Works*, ed. and trans. A. G. Wernham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), I. s. 4, p. 262.

<sup>84</sup> GS, 333. In the original text: "Wir, denen nur die letzten Versöhnungsscenen und Schluss-Abrechnungen dieses langen Processes zum Bewusstsein kommen, meinen demnach, intelligere sei etwas Versöhnliches, Gerechtes, Gutes, etwas wesentlich den Trieben Entgegengesetztes; während es nur ein gewisses Verhalten der Triebe zu einander ist" (KSA, vol. 3, p. 559).

Consciousness is not a kernel of man; nor does it constitute eternal, ultimate and the most original part of man's self; it is not already-given, ready made. On the contrary, it grows and develops with intermittences; and besides, it is the most unfinished, weak and lacking part; since it is the last and latest development of organic life, it leads to innumerable errors, fallacies. "Usually, one takes consciousness itself as the general *sensorium* and supreme court; nonetheless, it is only a means of communication: it is evolved through social intercourse and with a view to the interests of social intercourse".<sup>85</sup> Nietzsche does not settle for this assertion which displaces consciousness in its so-called "unity of the organism" or any privileged position; his enterprise appears to go forward and to put consciousness in the sphere of other affections, drives, desires, passions, needs of the self. He seems to establish consciousness in a mutually complementary and fertile, perhaps uneasy and tensional, relation with the instinctive part of man; "by far the greater part of conscious thinking must still be included among instinctive activities (...) 'being conscious' is not in any decisive sense the *opposite* of what is instinctive...".<sup>86</sup> This approach is a part of a wider project which underlines the *affective aspect* of knowledge and conscious thought.<sup>87</sup>

At this juncture, what is important for Nietzsche is to preserve and to promote life, humanity; and this task cannot be assigned to a weak faculty, to consciousness.

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<sup>85</sup> *WP*, 524, italics are mine.

<sup>86</sup> *BGE*, 3. In the original text: "man muss noch den grössten Theil des bewussten Denkens unter die Instinkt-Thätigkeiten rechnen (...) ebenso wenig ist 'Bewusstsein' in irgend einem entscheidenden Sinne dem Instinktiven *entgegengesetzt*" (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 17).

<sup>87</sup> Owen, through an astute reading of the passage taken from *Genealogy*, asserts that our cognitive constitution is not separable from our "affective" constitution, nor is truth or rationality independent of our affective interests; *logos* is entwined with *eros* (cf. *GM*, III, 12); for more details about the relation between the cognitive and the affective (or erotic) in his standpoint see David Owen, *Nietzsche, Politics and Modernity: A Critique of Liberal Reason* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), pp. 32-39.

All instincts, drives commit themselves to the preservation of organism and gain a mastery:

If the conserving association of the instincts were not so very much more powerful, and if it did not serve on the whole as a *regulator*, humanity would have to perish of its misjudgments and its fantasies with open eyes, of its lack of thoroughness and its credulity—in short, of its consciousness; rather without the former, humanity would long have disappeared”.<sup>88</sup>

However, we have to beware of imposing an extreme assertion on Nietzsche’s conception of consciousness; while he attempts to overthrow its tyrannical dominance over the “spirit” as defined hitherto by metaphysics, nonetheless he places it together with other psychic and bodily (physiological) components within a multiplicity, as it were, an abundance of contradictory system of drives and impulses. He incorporates conscious activity into this multiplicity and hence impels a new spiritual picture: “To this day the task of *incorporating* knowledge and making it instinctive is only beginning to dawn on the human eye and is not yet clearly discernible; it is a task that is seen only by those who have comprehended that so far we have incorporated only our errors and that all our consciousness relates to errors”.<sup>89</sup> In the passage cited, the cardinal point is the phrase “making it instinctive”, and this thought is quite coherent with the enterprise to incorporate consciousness into the processes of one’s interpretive powers, into the structure of the self. Consciousness cannot remain by/in itself, it always acts in interaction with other parts, be it psychic or bodily; it is in the need of being unified with the system. That is why Nietzsche claims with a challenge that “the nervous system has a much more

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<sup>88</sup> *GS*, 11, italics are mine. Note that he will trace the same issue in his succeeding works, cf. *WP* 524.  
<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* In the original text: “...kaum noch deutlich erkennbare *Aufgabe*, das *Wissen sich einzuverleiben* und instinctiv zu machen, — eine Aufgabe, welche nur von Denen gesehen wird, die begriffen haben, dass bisher nur unsere *Irrthümer* uns einverleibt waren und dass alle unsere Bewusstheit sich auf Irrthümer bezieht!” (*KSA*, vol. 3, p. 383 ).

extensive domain; the world of consciousness is added to it. Consciousness plays no role in the total process of adaptation and systematization”.<sup>90</sup>

It follows from the discussion that self-knowledge remains problematical for two reasons: (i) consciousness, by its very nature, lacks the means of access to sufficient, exhaustive knowledge; (ii) knowledge is a subject-matter of much more extensive processes of interpretation and valuation oriented by non-cognitive forces in man that are different from consciousness; these forces cannot be captured in consciousness; “only now does the truth dawn on us that by far the greatest part of our spirit’s activity remains unconscious and unfelt”.<sup>91</sup>

Although self cannot make oneself a subject of knowledge, but considers that one can know oneself, it means that one places oneself within an ideological world in which one’s conception of the self is totally fictitious, imaginary and illusory. The implications of this assertion can be elucidated and elaborated in Nietzsche’s analysis of “free will”.

### Free Will

As already mentioned above, the notion of “free will” relies on the same theory of morality in which an agent is presupposed to have a *conscious* will and thus moral responsibility; both the idea of consciousness and of free will are based on the same prejudice; the former pertains to the naive psychology which says that “nothing belongs to us that we have not consciously willed”; the latter to the presupposition

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<sup>90</sup> *WP*, 526.

<sup>91</sup> *GS*, 333. In the original text: “...jetzt erst dämmert uns die Wahrheit auf, dass der allergrösste Theil unseres geistigen Wirkens uns unbewusst, ungefühlt verläuft” (*KSA*, vol. 3, p. 559).

that “one is responsible only for what one has willed”.<sup>92</sup> Here free will, thus, morality of man is considered as *causa prima*; by the same token, the value of man is posited as a moral value; hence man is subjected to morality; therefore each person, through the process of being in “subject(ion)”, becomes a moral subject.

At first step, Nietzsche counters the idea of the will of *psychology*; the will cannot be an ingredient of our so-called “inner world”: “The will no longer moves anything, hence does not explain anything either—it merely accompanies events; it can also be absent”.<sup>93</sup> In other words, the will does not exist; the will of psychology so far, has been an unwarranted generalization; it is merely an empty word. The will does not operate as a faculty which governs our actions. It is a complex plurality of sensation and thinking with their contents; this content is important for Nietzsche’s account: “let us not imagine it possible to sever this thought from the ‘willing’, as if any will would then remain over!”.<sup>94</sup> His view on the act of willing is parallel; since an act cannot be separated from its content, for Nietzsche, willing cannot be taken in isolation, willing must be comprehended with its total condition in which its aim is included; to discard aim from willing is to annihilate willing itself, because willing consists of concrete object as its content, its aim: “There is no such thing as ‘willing’, but only a willing *something*: one must not remove the aim from the total condition—as epistemologists do”.<sup>95</sup> It is only a simplified conception of understanding. This assertion can be rendered more clear when one extends it to his general idea of human nature:

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<sup>92</sup> *WP*, 288.

<sup>93</sup> *TI*, VI, 3.

<sup>94</sup> *BGE*, 19. In the original text: “...und man soll ja nicht glauben, diesen Gedanken von dem ‘Wollen’ abscheiden zu können, wie als ob dann noch Wille übrig bliebe!” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 32).

<sup>95</sup> *WP* 668.

To become *perfect*, he was advised to draw in his senses, turtle fashion, to cease all intercourse with earthly things, to shed his mortal shroud: then his essence would remain, the pure 'spirit.'<sup>96</sup>

In metaphysics, both the spirit and the will have been severed from their concrete contents; the former from "the nervous system and the senses", the latter from its actual conditions and objects. But metaphysics does not confine itself to an abstract representation of human nature as pure spirit, but rather it strives for an elaboration of another idea which has a constitutive role in our conception of the self: free will.

In his earlier books, Nietzsche has engaged in the idea of free will constantly. Free will is (like identity, causality, etc.) one of the original beliefs man inherited from the earlier ages. Here, the considerations that underlie his account of free will can be classified under three subtitles.

### Faith-Mythology

Under normal circumstances we behave in a rational and thus predictable manner; this rationality provides expectations about the future of our probable actions; all our actions are conditioned and controlled by our voluntary decisions we are aware/conscious of. Thus we are the reference for all our actions; we pose ourselves as subjects for the action. Since our faith in cause and effect takes every event/action to have a cause/agent, the *will* is introduced to account for our behavior. The subject takes his every sensation as something in isolation, emerging independently of anything earlier or later, something disconnected and unconditioned. Nietzsche writes: "We are hungry, but originally we do not think that the organism wants to

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<sup>96</sup> A, 14. In the original text: "...um den Menschen zu *vollenden*, rieth man ihm an, nach der Art der Schildkröte, die Sinne in sich hineinzuziehn, den Verkehr mit dem Irdischen einzustellen, die sterbliche Hülle abzuthun: dann blieb die Hauptsache von ihm zurück, der 'reine Geist'" (KSA, vol. 6, p. 180).

sustain itself; this feeling... isolates itself and considers itself *willful*. Thus: belief in freedom of will is a primary error committed by everything organic”.<sup>97</sup>

Our mode of observation erroneously imagines a set of phenomena as one single unity, names it a fact and isolates it. However reality does not conform to this imprecise mode of reflection which imagines things, facts and actions without context and content, that is, in an atomistic conception. All our doing, knowing and therefore experiences consist not of a succession of isolated, separated, unconditioned, disconnected facts but of a continuous, indivisible flux. Therefore “belief in freedom of will is incompatible precisely with the idea of a continuous, homogeneous, undivided, indivisible flowing: it presupposes that *every individual action is isolate and indivisible*; it is an *atomism* in the domain of willing and knowing”.<sup>98</sup> Nietzsche decidedly rejects the idea that one can take apart a fact (a group of phenomena) from the enduring, integral world of flowing and becoming.<sup>99</sup>

The issue seems like this: free will is taken as the cause of every effect (here, of every act), more accurately, as a presupposition of popular, commonsensical faith; in this belief, the feeling that every cause is always merely a cause and *not* an effect: the will is the cause. In the concept “will” itself we feel and thus derive the necessity that the effect follows upon the cause. Accordingly every action in its individual, disconnected isolation, is attributed to the will. To be sure, this scene cannot be an eternal flowing stream of the river of becoming, but rather it is a river transfixed and frozen by concepts such as causality, will, consciousness, linguistic notions, and so on.

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<sup>97</sup> *HH*, 18.

<sup>98</sup> *WS*, 11.

<sup>99</sup> In this context, his view associates with a Heraclitean world of flux and of becoming.

Nietzsche argues the notion of “free will” in connection with false inferences about the synthetic concept “I” to such a degree that human subject takes his willing to be sufficient for action, ascribes the success to his will (in this way, he associates the will with the ruling class in the very sense that the latter identifies itself with the successes of the society). Now a passage will be illuminating for what Nietzsche means:

Since in the great majority of cases there has been exercise of will only when the effect of the command—that is obedience; that is, the action—was to be *expected*, the *appearance* has translated itself into the feeling, as if there were a *necessity of effect*. In short, he who wills believes with a fair amount of certainty that will and action are somehow one; he ascribes the success, the carrying out of the willing, to the will itself.<sup>100</sup>

To sum up, one ascribes to the will something it can never have: no necessity, no relation of causality, no cause, no effect, no purpose, no end (“the ‘purpose’ *usually* comes into mind only after everything has been prepared for its execution”<sup>101</sup>). It is we alone who have devised these concepts; and when we combine this symbol world (in which these terms are involved) with things as if it exists “in itself”, Nietzsche condemns this attitude to be *mythological* without hesitation. By the same token the “unfree will” is also mythology; “in real life it is only a matter of *strong* and *weak* wills”.

This point leads us to deal with the relations of power occurring in the will, the relations between the commanding and the obeying parties of all willing.

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<sup>100</sup> *BGE*, 19. In the original text: “Weil in den allermeisten Fällen nur gewollt worden ist, wo auch die Wirkung des Befehls, also der Gehorsam, also die Aktion *erwartet* werden durfte, so hat sich der *Anschein* in das Gefühl übersetzt, als ob es da eine *Nothwendigkeit von Wirkung* gäbe; genug, der Wollende glaubt, mit einem ziemlichen Grad von Sicherheit, dass Wille und Aktion irgendwie Eins seien —, er rechnet das Gelingen, die Ausführung des Wollens noch dem Willen selbst zu” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 33).

<sup>101</sup> *WP*, 671.

## Social Context

Nietzsche underlines the social aspect of the idea of free will; the strong man (or class) identifies his power, the instance he feels himself strong and animated, as the element of his freedom, wherein he thinks himself powerful, he considers that it must be the ingredient of his free will. And in this way he gathers the power, independence and the feeling of life into a party against the party of the weakness, dependence and dullness. The last step is to extend his pseudo grouping in social domain to, so to speak, the “moral metaphysics”. In which terms?

In the former the strong man is also the free man; the lively feeling of joy and sorrow, high hope, boldness in desire, powerfulness in hatred is the property of the rulers and the independent, while the subjected man, the slave, lives dull and oppressed.—The theory of freedom of will is an invention of *ruling* classes.<sup>102</sup>

Nietzsche, in a striking manner, draws a parallel between the power relations in the subject and in the society, or the state as the political structure of the society: man ascribes the successful performance, thus the feeling of delight as a commander, to the will itself just as the governing class attributes the successes of the state to itself. What underlies this analogy in Nietzsche’s approach is his conception of the human which is, in a sense metaphorically, connected to societal terms: “our body is but a social structure composed of many souls...what happens here is what happens in every well-constructed and happy commonwealth... In all willing it is absolutely a question of commanding and obeying, on the basis, as already said, of a social structure of many souls”.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> *WS*, 9.

<sup>103</sup> *BGE*, 19. In the original text: “...unser Leib ist ja nur ein Gesellschaftsbau vieler Seelen (...) es begiebt sich hier, was sich in jedem gut gebauten und glücklichen Gemeinwesen begiebt, (...) Bei allem Wollen handelt es sich schlechterdings um Befehlen und Gehorchen, auf der Grundlage, wie gesagt, eines Gesellschaftsbaus vieler ‘Seelen’” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 33).

In his view, the free will reveals itself in its performance upon another man who must obey. The consciousness of the commander which demands obedience and fixes itself on one aim, the unconditional evaluation that “this and nothing else is necessary now”, the conqueror attention on what it focuses, and whatever else belongs to the position of the commander—all are immanent in every will. Freedom of the will “is essentially the affect of superiority in relation to him who must obey: ‘I am free, ‘he’ must obey’”.<sup>104</sup> To conclude, willing and its relations (its pressures and resistances) are included within the domain of morality, being understood as the doctrine of social relations of supremacy.

### Habituation

The most enduring stage of the illusion of free will that penetrates into one’s life profoundly is the level of long habituation; if one becomes inured to the facts and the ways in which one experiences them, it means that, there, various forms of ideological consciousness have set their domination. Here the body of all habits not only operates as ideology, but turns into ideology itself. We have to recall that the fundamental mode of dominance for “ideological” habituation is being commonsensical and invisible. Ideology achieves its purpose when it becomes “spontaneous”. In habituation ideology gets the consent of the mass; man submits to the relations of supremacy and does this freely. In other words, he “freely” accepts his subjection to customs, habits, moral rituals; both the conditions of critical reflection and therefore the awareness of his subjection have disappeared. In Althusser’s terms, he performs the gestures and actions of his subjection “all by himself”, that is, spontaneously and freely.

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

All three characteristics lead us to one of the basic theses of ideology critique: “the subjects ‘work by themselves’.”<sup>105</sup> Although Nietzsche engages in the nature of subjection, he does not appear to focus on how ideological practices are (re)produced, in what mechanisms they penetrate into our life and dominate over us. He calls attention to the *presuppositions* of habits and strives to unmask them. To the extent that we are *not aware* of our dependence on anything, we imagine ourselves as independent, *free* subjects. Man assumes that as soon as he undergoes any relation of subjection, he recognizes it under the presupposition that he can perceive a sensation antithetical to the one he is accustomed to, that is, antithetical to his “usual independence”. However Nietzsche asks:

But what if the opposite were true: that he is *always* living in manifold dependence but regards himself *as free* when, out of long habituation, he *no longer perceives* the weight of the chains? It is only from *new* chains that he now suffers:—‘freedom of the will’ really means nothing more than feeling no new chains.<sup>106</sup>

No doubt, that cannot be the end of the story; oddly enough, Nietzsche somehow does not care for the “adaptation” of new chains themselves. The fact that new and even strange forms of mastery that demand unconditional obedience are invented and elaborated in a subtle way, so that their “newness” disappears—in other words, the *articulative* power of ideology is unfortunately lacking in his account. New forms of dominance are, by the same practical/institutional mechanisms, included within the sphere of “old chains” in various ways: incorporating, displacing or articulating them

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<sup>105</sup> Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus”, *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001 [1971]), p. 123.

<sup>106</sup> *WS*, 10. In the original text: “Wie aber, wenn das Umgekehrte wahr wäre: dass er *immer* in vielfacher Abhängigkeit lebt, sich aber *für frei* hält, wo er den Druck der Kette aus langer Gewohnheit *nicht mehr spürt*? Nur an den *neuen* Ketten leidet er noch:—‘Freiheit des Willens’ heisst eigentlich Nichts weiter, als keine neuen Ketten fühlen” (*KSA*, vol. 2, p. 546).

with the old ones. Recall that once upon a time, the body of old habits was new, but are now articulated with the established system of ideology.

In actual fact, Nietzsche's argument on how a traditional philosopher includes free will within the domain of morals follows an elaborate line:

(i) The human subject is a specific fiction that is designed as "ego", as spirit (consciousness) and it is different and above its own acts, its agency, and it is described in transcendental terms. The fundamental feeling of humanity is that

man is the free being in a world of unfreedom, the eternal *miracle worker* whether he does good or ill, the astonishing exception, the superbeast and almost-god, the meaning of creation which cannot be thought away, the solution of the cosmic riddle, the mighty ruler over nature and the despiser of it, the creature which calls *its* history *world history!*<sup>107</sup>

In addition, an idea of the human subject is presented to persuade people of the possibility of acting differently from their actual attitude, since people act with their free will before the repertoire of probable actions in accordance with their almost-godly nature.

(ii) At this juncture, Nietzsche notes a remarkable point, he associates *freedom of will* with the psychical pleasure or displeasure provided by illusions, errors: man "believes in freedom of will, for instance when he thinks 'I did not have to do this', 'this could have happened differently' and (...) gains pleasure or displeasure". This sentence emphasizes that because of the possibility of acting differently, man is entirely responsible for his deeds, and the effect of this responsibility is measured by the degree of psychic affects, namely, (dis)pleasure. But if we regard this effect merely as a psychological phenomenon, it would be misleading. Nietzsche firstly

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<sup>107</sup> *WS*, 12. In the original text: "...dass der Mensch der Freie in der Welt der Unfreiheit sei, der ewige *Wunderthäter*, sei es, dass er gut oder böse handelt, die erstaunliche Ausnahme, das Uebertier, der Fast-Gott, der Sinn der Schöpfung, der Nichthinwegzudenkende, das Lösungswort des kosmischen Räthsel, der grosse Herrscher über die Natur und Verächter derselben, das Wesen, das seine Geschichte *Weltgeschichte* nennt!" (*KSA*, vol. 2, p. 547-548).

evaluates the *cultural* conclusions of this illusion, repeating again the necessity and function of illusions: “Without the errors which are active in every psychical pleasure and displeasure a humanity would never have come into existence”.<sup>108</sup>

Secondly, he draws a *moral* conclusion: if man is not bound by a particular, determinate action, but rather his action is contingent, and therefore he is responsible for his acts, he must be subjected to the consequences of what he chooses: that is, man is subjected to punishment in all moral, juridical and social senses. Here punishment is, above all, moralized and put against the guilty on account of the agent and thanks to his consent: once more, man is, as it were, “punished by himself”, that is freely, by his choice.

(iii) In this sense, the invention of the subject generates the conditions that enable the introduction of the idea of free choice because of the contingency of the agency of the subject.

(iv) This illusory fiction of freedom of choice is the successful work of the *slave rebellion in morality* and of Christianity.<sup>109</sup> Christian theologians, the priests, aim at making mankind responsible, dependent upon free will; and Nietzsche strives to decode the *psychology* of all “making responsible”:

The doctrine of the will has been invented essentially for the purpose of punishment, that is, because one wanted to impute guilt... Men were considered ‘free’ so that they might be judged and punished—so that they might become *guilty*: consequently, every act had to be considered as willed, and the origin of every act had to be considered as lying within the consciousness.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *BGE*, 195, 202, 260; *GM*, I, 7, 9, 11.

<sup>110</sup> *TI*, VI, 7 (cf. *WP*, 765). In the original text: “[D]ie Lehre vom Willen ist wesentlich erfunden zum Zweck der Strafe, das heisst des *Schuldig-finden-wollens*. (...) Die Menschen wurden ‘frei’ gedacht, um gerichtet, um gestraft werden zu können, — um *schuldig* werden zu können: folglich *musste* jede Handlung als gewollt, der Ursprung jeder Handlung im Bewusstsein liegend gedacht werden” (*KSA*, vol. 6, p. 95).

In this way, we return to the same point already mentioned in the beginning of the chapter: in traditional approaches of the human subject, will and consciousness together pave the way for the moral conception, and thereby the latter transfers the psychology of “responsibility” into the social sphere of moral-religious practices, of rituals, of worship and devotion; and thus, this psychology, in a complementary manner, reproduces power relations by fixing the parties as the commanders and the obeying one in a community: “The entire old psychology, the psychology of will, was conditioned by the fact that its originators, the priests at the head of ancient communities, wanted to create for themselves the right to punish—or wanted to create this right for God”.<sup>111</sup> Moral values are always interwoven with the relations established around power; in other words, morality seeks out a channel within the sphere of society through the transference of its ideology-laden values and practices to the struggles for power, and strives to keep this position everlastingly. Its aim is to represent itself as something universal, distant to all focuses of power, something independent from historical turbulences, changes and fights of specific interests. Morality is a claim of “eternity” without which it cannot live.

What is Nietzsche’s solution to the problem of the subject, to the idea of a substantial ego furnished with free will, consciousness, responsibility and so on? Nietzsche does not restrict himself to a restoration of the moralistic subject but rather he undertakes a formidable attempt for a construction of the world of values on entirely new grounds by destroying all decadent culture; and as a part of this project, he tries to develop a new description of the human subject which goes against the stream: *the subject as multiplicity*. Nietzsche’s attack aims at the metaphysical background of the idea of the “soul” in Christianity. He calls its representation the

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<sup>111</sup> *TI*, VI, 7.

*soul atomism* that regards the soul as “atomon”, or, so to speak, as “monad”; that is, the soul is considered as indestructible, eternal, indivisible. He does not defend that we have to annihilate the belief in the soul, but rather refines it in a radical manner:

Between ourselves, it is not at all necessary to get rid of ‘the soul’ at the same time, and thus to renounce one of the most ancient and venerable hypotheses... But the way is open for new versions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis; and such conceptions as ‘mortal soul,’ and ‘soul as subjective multiplicity,’ and ‘soul as social structure of the drives and affects’ want henceforth to have citizens’ rights in science.<sup>112</sup>

What should we understand by this new definition? His approach to the subject is radically different and will be essentially inspiring for psychoanalysis which asserts that the self is formed in an ongoing process of repressed desires and in the fight for power to gratify them. In other words, for the psychoanalytic approach, the self (and not the fictionally unified subject of morality) is fragmentary and is bound to be so; and Nietzsche foretells us that “a single individual contains within him a vast confusion of contradictory valuations and consequently of contradictory drives”.<sup>113</sup>

His denial of “one single subject” finds its meaning in a grander scenario: the multiplicity of subjects can be unified merely through power relations. All desires, bodily needs, drives and thoughts exist in complicated relations of complementarity, tension and contradiction. When certain desires set up their priority, and others fall into place below them, that is to say, an order of rank (*eine Ordnung des Ranges*) and supremacy is established among them, then this diversity gives way to unity; in

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<sup>112</sup> *BGE*, 12 (cf. *AOM*, 17). In the original text: “Es ist, unter uns gesagt, ganz und gar nicht nöthig, ‘die Seele’ selbst dabei los zu werden und auf eine der ältesten und ehrwürdigsten Hypothesen Verzicht zu leisten: wie es dem Ungeschick der Naturalisten zu begegnen pflegt, (...) Aber der Weg zu neuen Fassungen und Verfeinerungen der Seelen-Hypothese steht offen: und Begriffe wie ‘sterbliche Seele’ und ‘Seele als Subjekts-Vielheit’ und ‘Seele als Gesellschaftsbau der Triebe und Affekte’ wollen fürderhin in der Wissenschaft Bürgerrecht haben” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 27).

<sup>113</sup> *WP*, 259. We can recall Freud’s *topology* of the psychic structure of human—the ego, super-ego, and the id.

conclusion, the self is unified through power.<sup>114</sup> That the diversity “gives way to unity of the self” means that a chief drive establishes its dominance over the other drives which are weakened and placed under control in a way creating a transitory compatibility and coordination between each other: “Thus a drive as master, its opposite weakened, refined, as the impulse that provides the stimulus for the activity of the chief drive”.<sup>115</sup>

This depiction is strictly parallel to his general approach that explains all unities (object, subject, fact, identity, character and so on) merely as an organization and integration; “the ‘thing’ in which we believe was only invented as a foundation for the various attributes... All unity is unity only as organization and co-operation—just as a human community is a unity—as opposed to an atomistic anarchy, as a pattern of domination that *signifies* a unity but *is* not a unity”.<sup>116</sup> Here, as elsewhere, we encounter the same socio-political “metaphor” that associates the master drive with the ruling class of a society, the soul with a social structure, the unified self with the human community and all power-relations of drives with social struggles for power:

The assumption of one single subject is perhaps unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects, whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness in general? A kind of aristocracy of ‘cells’ in which

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<sup>114</sup> For a further discussion, see Ross Poole, *Morality and Modernity* (Routledge: London and New York, 1996), p. 122.

<sup>115</sup> *WP*, 966. In the original text: “Also ein Trieb als Herr, sein Gegentrieb geschwächt, verfeinert, als Impuls, der den *Reiz* für die Thätigkeit des Haupttriebes abgiebt” (*KSA*, vol. 11, s. 27 [59], p. 289).

<sup>116</sup> *WP* 561. In the original text: “das ‘Ding’ an das wir glauben, ist nur als Ferment zu verschiedenen Prädikaten *hinzuerfinden* (...) Alle Einheit ist *nur* als *Organisation und Zusammenspiel* Einheit: nicht anders als wie ein menschliches Gemeinwesen eine Einheit ist: also *Gegensatz* der atomistischen *Anarchie*; somit ein *Herrschafts-Gebilde*, das Eins *bedeutet*, aber nicht eins *ist*” (*KSA*, vol. 12, s. 2 [87] pp. 104-105).

dominion resides? To be sure, an aristocracy of equals, used to ruling jointly and understanding how to command?<sup>117</sup>

On the other hand, the multiplicity and the transitory and contradictory nature of the subject engender great strength for the individual; Nietzsche insists that the multiple drives are not a “disability” or insufficiency, on the contrary, drives are a channel through which one creates itself and becomes the lord of the world in so far as one combine one’s drives and impulses by synthesis in a compatibility; or more accurately, the temporal stability of the subject is ensured to the extent that it establishes a minimal harmony, in a certain moment, through circumscribing and directing the discords between conflicting drives towards a common goal. The multiplicity of contrary impulses and drives, so construed, generates the highest man: the one who is the wisest is also the one richest in contradictions in his great moments of grand harmony.

Consequently, Nietzsche does not confirm the denial and annihilation of drives, on the contrary, he defends possessing them to the highest degree, but in having them under control; and this control does not imply an *a priori* and unconditioned restrictive tyranny, but a necessary precondition for the construction of the self through its own inner resources. Let us read his concluding remark: “The highest man would have the greatest multiplicity of drives, in the relatively greatest strength that can be endured. Indeed, where the plant ‘man’ shows himself strongest

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<sup>117</sup> *WP*, 490. Once more, recall that Nietzsche regards consciousness as a certain attitude of the instincts towards one another (see, *GS*, 333). Nietzsche sometimes depicts the traits of this multiplicity in similar terms: the continual transitoriness and fleetingness of the subject, ‘mortal soul’, and so on.

one finds instincts that conflict powerfully (e.g., in Shakespeare), but are controlled”<sup>118</sup>.

Nietzsche infers from the above discussion a challenging and amazing claim: All that is done at the end of the insertion of the free will into the moral-social sphere is to destroy the “innocence of becoming”. What does he mean by this phrase? The theologians and priests insert moralized terms such as the “immortal soul” (soul-monad), free will, the notions of guilt-punishment. Christian metaphysics has taken the “soul” to be something that has fallen into this or that condition by chance, but its essence is not affected or conditioned by all this. It is regarded as something beyond becoming, something unchanging throughout history, something divine; whereupon, says Nietzsche, Christianity has invited the individual to enforce eternal rights against everything that is transitory, earthly, bodily, conditioned and so on.

In a complementary way, Christian theologians (as discussed before) design a free subject as having responsibility so that one can be judged and punished; hence what underlies one’s feeling to impute someone guilt is the *instinct of revenge*, and all morality, among others, is impregnated with it. Since every act had to be thought of as willed, as conscious, being in this or that state is traced back to a will, to intentions, to a responsible act; and thence one has deprived *becoming of its innocence*.<sup>119</sup> These apostles of revenge and *ressentiment* dirty the world with the concepts of guilt and punishment. The entire doctrine of the will, the old-style psychology of responsibility, is designed to infect the world and its nature of flux by means of inventing a “moral world-order”—a fictive world against this world of becoming. Nietzsche says that this moral world is illusory, simply because all of its notions are fallaciously and

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<sup>118</sup> *WP*, 966.

<sup>119</sup> *WP*, 765; *TI*, VI, 7; cf. *A*, 25.

arbitrarily invented.<sup>120</sup> There is no end, no will, no purpose, man is not the result of an eternal purpose, a will, a wish, an end; he is not the product of an endeavour to reach an “ideal of humanity”, an “ideal of happiness” or “virtue”; man is not an object of an activity to attain an “ideal of morality”—all these are ideological *artifacts* and no more than this.

The doctrine of free will has always involved the *most fundamental counterfeit* in the psychologist, which is made into the principle of psychology itself. The ideological operation of the old psychology, here, is to *devolve* man’s essence on some end or other; and this is the most characteristic pattern in depriving “existence” of its innocence.<sup>121</sup> However, once more, there is no one that endows man his attributes; no one that can judge, measure, compare, sentence or condemn his being; no one is responsible for man’s being there at all, for being such-and-such. Nietzsche denies the responsibility of an authority especially, including God (“the concept of ‘God’ was until now the greatest objection to existence”<sup>122</sup>) and thereby negates the moral world-order framed in the idea of *redemption (der Erlösung)*. That is why he thinks that “Christianity is a metaphysics of the hangman”; that if we deny God, do we “redeem” the world.

But who are “we”? Who undertakes the mission to banish and extinguish the notions of morality from the world? This task entails *agents* who commit themselves to a “destructive” movement against the established system; and Nietzsche is immensely aware of the issue: he declares that “we immoralists [*Immoralisten*],”

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<sup>120</sup> For his elaborate considerations at length also see *A*, 26.

<sup>121</sup> We come across this notion at various passages in his notebooks, as in the following fragment: “As soon as we imagine someone who is responsible for our being thus and thus, etc. (God, nature), and therefore attribute to him the intention that we should exist and be happy or wretched, we corrupt for ourselves the *innocence of becoming*. We then have someone who wants to achieve something through us and with us” (*WP*, 552).

<sup>122</sup> *TI*, VI, 8.

have entered into the reverse movement—a movement that is trying, with all its energy, to purify psychology, history, nature, social institutions and their sanctions. He, once more, inverts the content of the old notions by questioning the coherence of their inner and “functional” structure; whereby he reevaluates and liberates the concepts which will serve as the intellectual and moral weapons at his disposal:

That nobody is held responsible any longer, that the mode of being may not be traced back to a *causa prima*, that the world does not form a unity either as a sensorium or as ‘spirit’—*that alone is the great liberation*; with this alone is the innocence of becoming restored.<sup>123</sup>

Nietzsche invites the *new* psychologist to cease the superstitions which have so far flourished around the idea of the soul. His sensibility about the liberation from all ends, all divine soul, all moral chains strictly coheres with his discussion on free will; for him, a movement of total liberation from the chains of metaphysics is an inevitable agency, and “only the innocence of becoming gives us the *greatest courage* and the *greatest freedom!*”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> *TI*, VI, 8; my italics.

<sup>124</sup> *WP*, 787.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ANALYSIS OF IDEOLOGY

#### Genealogy: A Form of Ideology Critique

The reward of a long, brave, industrious, and subterranean seriousness, of which, to be sure, not everyone is capable.

*On the Genealogy of Morals*

In his earlier writings, history and historiography was one of the main concerns Nietzsche dealt with. In these works, we encounter the preliminary insights of his denial of the linear and progressive conception of history: “It is folly to believe that a new higher stage of mankind will unite in itself all the excellences of earlier stages and be obliged, for example, to include the highest phase of art”.<sup>125</sup> Every age has its own specific aura and attractions and gets rid of those of the other ages. His earlier passages can be read as initial signs for the pursuit of a different historiography. Indeed in a passage, he regards old-style moralists with contempt calling them the “trivial spirits” and proposes the task for discovering the emergence of problems by displaying “the complexity in the apparent simplicity” and focusing on the

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<sup>125</sup> *HH*, 239. Likewise, in the books of his later period, he keeps the same point and urges that ‘progress’ is modern, therefore, a false idea; we are not in a development towards the higher (cf. *A*, 4).

“interlacing of motives”, on the “delicate conceptual illusions” and on the individual and groups of sensations one has inherited from the old ages.<sup>126</sup>

Furthermore, he persists in the demand of analyzing the phenomena of morality called asceticism and holiness, although many thinkers make a great effort to represent these phenomena as a miracle and regard any attempt to make their rational explanation as a profanation, a sacrilege. In his earlier approach, firstly, he states that the nature of asceticism is *complex* and then, warns that the so-called “magical” has successfully been traced back to the complex, to the “multiply caused”: “Let us therefore venture first to isolate individual drives in the soul of the saint and ascetic and then conclude by thinking of them entwined together”.<sup>127</sup> Genealogy, in an exact sense, will be the analysis, in Nietzsche’s disposal, to decode the structure of this “multiply caused”, or of the *multi-layered*.

On the other hand, genealogy calls for a new eye, a totally different reading. The following paragraph indicates an invaluable methodological point of Nietzsche’s mode of reading: “Countless dark bodies are to be *inferred* near the sun —and we shall never see them. Among ourselves, this is a parable; and a psychologist of morals reads the whole writing of the stars only as a parable and sign-language which can be used to bury much in silence”.<sup>128</sup> In other words, a parable by means of which many things can be kept secret, is something that conceals meaning as well as reveals it.

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<sup>126</sup> *WS*, 20.

<sup>127</sup> *HH*, 136. A few years later, he will return to the same issue and elucidate it in an *intensified* note written in Spring-Fall 1887: “My task is to translate the apparently emancipated and denatured moral values back into their nature—i.e., into their natural ‘immorality’” (*WP*, 299; cf. *BGE*, 230).

<sup>128</sup> *BGE*, 196. In the original text: “Es giebt unzählige dunkle Körper neben der Sonne zu *erschliessen*, — solche die wir nie sehen werden. Das ist, unter uns gesagt, ein Gleichniss; und ein Moral-Psycholog liest die gesammte Sternenschrift nur als eine Gleichniss- und Zeichensprache, mit der sich Vieles verschweigen lässt” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 117).

That is why he understands moral judgments as symptoms and sign-languages, and so too morality itself. To be more precise, morality is mere “symptomatology”, and what Nietzsche did in genealogy is, in this sense, a *symptomatic reading* in which signs are interpreted just where they are in silence; here interpretation turns to be signification of silence, of the moments on which supposedly parables do not say anything. To the extent moral judgments are taken as *semiotics* they are of inestimable value: “they reveal, at least for those who know, the most valuable realities of cultures and inwardnesses which did not know enough to ‘understand’ themselves”.<sup>129</sup> Nietzsche’s emphasis on the art of reading betrays itself in his rigorous philologist’s sensibility; indeed, he describes his strategy for dealing with moral phenomena as the reading off facts with caution, patience and refinement, without falsifying them by interpretation: philology as *ephexis*.<sup>130</sup>

As a matter of fact, a new way of reading is required for the demand of a new type of knowledge that has never yet existed. For him, this demand itself is new too, since it orientates towards the need of a *critique of morality*: the critique of the value of moral values themselves. Nietzsche denies taking their value as given, factual; instead, he maintains that they must be questioned. For that, says Nietzsche, we need knowledge about the conditions and circumstances in which moral values emerged, grew and evolved.<sup>131</sup> Once more, we have to bear in mind that his real concern is not the origin of morality but rather the *value* of morality. Intrinsically, he comes to terms with Schopenhauer on the problem of morality; to put it another way, his concern (like Schopenhauer) is the value of the “unegoistic”, the instincts of pity,

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<sup>129</sup> *TI*, VII, 1.

<sup>130</sup> *Undecisiveness*. Also cf. *A*, 52

<sup>131</sup> Cf. *GM*, P, 6.

self-denial, self-destruction, self-sacrifice deified and sublimated for so long that at last they turn into “value-in-itself”. These instincts are decisive in one’s “interpretive” experiences since on the basis of them one says “No” and thereby negates life and oneself.

To be sure, Nietzsche’s concern must be situated in a broader picture in which he saw a fatal process that signifies the beginning of the end, the will hostile to life, the deadly signs of ultimate sickness; Nietzsche diagnosed this development and called it *nihilism*: the most sinister symptom of European culture. Thus genealogy will not only be an analysis of morality, but also an analysis of that which makes Western metaphysics *problematic*, thereby he is going to return to the problem of the man nature. Nietzsche’s project is to realize the fundamental knowledge of human nature through mediating a genealogical investigation of the moral-cultural values with which man is furnished. But this kind of knowledge is not ready-made, is not already-there.

The human being has been composed of moral patterns that furnish man with a “starry script” which burries him in the “garish finery of moral word tinsels”. For Nietzsche, genealogy must attempt to cleanse these glittering, flattering colours and paint, and recognize the basic text of *homo natura*<sup>132</sup> anew: “To translate man back into nature; to become master over the many vain and overly enthusiastic interpretations and connotations that have so far been scrawled and painted over that eternal basic text of *homo natura*”,<sup>133</sup> and this is the task of his famous “free spirits” who know that translating man back into nature is tantamount to going back to the

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<sup>132</sup> *Natural man*.

<sup>133</sup> *BGE*, 230 (cf. *WP*, 299). In the original text: “Den Menschen nämlich zurückübersetzen in die Natur; über die vielen eitlen und schwärmerischen Deutungen und Nebensinne Herr werden, welche bisher über jenen ewigen Grundtext *homo natura* gekritzelt und gemalt wurden” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 169).

state of being “immoral” (*unmoralischen*); more precisely, immorality (*die Immoralität*) is that one locates oneself beyond “good” and “evil”.

Consequently, the basic text of *homo natura* is the fact that it is constituted in an interpretation without which there is no sense, one speaks meaningfully about the text. In other words, there is no text independent of an interpretation in place. For that reason, the interpretation of Christian religio-moral metaphysics (“the ascetic ideal”, to use Nietzsche’s term) invents the meaning within its own paradigm, and then attributes it to the text of man.<sup>134</sup> It, as an interpretation, finds in the text what it attributes to it in advance; without this interpretive activity, there is no text. What Nietzsche lays stress on is that morality hides the interpretive, thus *specific* character of its operation and presents itself as a world of *universal* values. This is one of the basic ways ideology operates.

In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche depicts his enterprise in *Genealogy* as “three decisive preliminary studies by a psychologist for a revaluation of all values”;<sup>135</sup> in reality this revaluation is not an ordinary criticism in a conventional sense, but a radically destructive attack on morality: “We sail right *over* morality, we crush, we destroy perhaps the remains of our own morality by daring to make our voyage there”.<sup>136</sup> He rejects all moral presuppositions, cultural prejudices, all metaphysical notions which are unconditionally accepted to be given. He inverts the polarity of certain notions and most importantly counters the supposedly opposite terms

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<sup>134</sup> Schacht draws attention to the point that interpretation and evaluation are pervasive and inevitable human activities through which human beings make sense of things; they are not harnessed to only practical ends, but also are essentially creative in that “they do not passively mirror that of which sense is thus made, but rather make something of it”; for more details see Richard Schacht, *Making Sense of Nietzsche: Reflections Timely and Untimely* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), pp. 99-101.

<sup>135</sup> *EH*, “Genealogy of Morals”.

<sup>136</sup> *BGE*, 23.

(“antithetical values”) peculiar to all metaphysical standpoints, since the metaphysicians’ fundamental faith is the faith in opposite values. The possibility that these values are perhaps only provisional perspectives from some nook, merely tentative estimations made in the foreground has not occurred even to the most cautious and suspicious one (say, Descartes). However this opposition is just a fiction fabricated by metaphysics:

For all the value that the true, the truthful, the selfless may deserve, it would still be possible that a higher and more fundamental value for life might have to be ascribed to deception, selfishness, and lust. It might even be possible that what constitutes the value of these good and revered things is precisely that they are insidiously related, tied to, and involved with these wicked, seemingly opposite things—maybe even one with them in essence. Maybe!<sup>137</sup>

All things posited to be “good” exist in a dependence on evil; faith in opposite values prevents one from seeing their interdependence. And this fact betrays itself in Christianity as an outcome of slave morality (*der Sklaven-Moral*) because here, the Christian “good” arises from the spirit of *ressentiment*, and conscience out of the instinct of cruelty that turns inward, for it cannot discharge outwardly. The latter leads to an original development: man gets, thanks to the inward discharge of a

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<sup>137</sup> *BGE*, 2. In the original text: “Bei allem Werthe, der dem Wahren, dem Wahrhaftigen, dem Selbstlosen zukommen mag: es wäre möglich, dass dem Scheine, dem Willen zur Täuschung, dem Eigennutz und der Begierde ein für alles Leben höherer und grundsätzlicherer Werth zugeschrieben werden müsste. Es wäre sogar noch möglich, dass *was* den Werth jener guten und verehrten Dinge ausmacht, gerade darin bestünde, mit jenen schlimmen, scheinbar entgegengesetzten Dingen auf verfängliche Weise verwandt, verknüpft, verhäkelt, vielleicht gar wesensgleich zu sein. Vielleicht!” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p 17). Nietzsche’s struggle with the opposite values permeates his all works. *Human, All Too Human* starts with a remark that in two thousand years, philosophy has posed its problems in the same form: how can something emanate from its opposite, rationality from irrationality, living for others from egoism, truth from error, disinterested contemplation from covetous desire, and so on. Metaphysical mentality has so far rejected their interdependence and assumed a marvelous origin in the very essence of Kantian ‘thing in itself’; however there exists neither an unegoistic action nor completely disinterested contemplation; they cannot exist in their own purity, in isolation; antithetical terms are construed by Nietzsche in *Wanderer and His Shadow* as “differences of degree” (*WS*, 67). It seems that Nietzsche conceives seemingly antithetical values not in an absolute, exclusive opposition, but in a complementary relation of penetrability and intermixing. In a later position he asks philosophers of the future to go ‘beyond’ these frozen opposite terms that petrify our reasoning and morality, i.e., beyond good and evil.

destructive instinct, a soul, an inner world that will refine, expand and extend itself and acquire profundity.

In the first essay of *Genealogy*, Nietzsche focuses on how morality dominates its own values over the life of the human subject while simultaneously it creates the subject, the soul itself through “guilt/sin, punishment/conscience”. Nietzschean genealogy attempts not only to give a different, alternative analysis of culture, but also exemplifies the possibility of a challenging historiography that does not claim an epistemologically privileged position, and inspires other alternative investigations which deny the universality of grand narratives.<sup>138</sup> Thence, Nietzsche is also concerned with showing all *forms* which morality reveals and conceals itself, and thereby to display its particular and perspectival character. Now we can enter into detail of his genealogy.

### Two Types of Morals

Nietzsche describes two distinct types of morality: master (noble) morality and slave (herd) morality.<sup>139</sup> There is a moral discrimination of values either among the ruling group or the ruled one; their reception of “good” and “evil” is uncompromisingly antagonistic. Master morality (*der Herren-Moral*) belongs to the times before the “modern age” of morality, before Christianity. The master lives in a social surrounding in which other masters live; he has a relation of fight or friendship with his peers:

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<sup>138</sup> We can find a parallel view in these lines: “Hostile to the idea of an ultimate revelation of truth, and rejecting all unique and privileged interpretation ... , the method of genealogy is necessarily hostile to all codification of its own results”, Michel Haar, “Nietzsche and Metaphysical Language”, *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, ed. David B. Allison (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988 [1977]), p. 7.

<sup>139</sup> These types firstly confront us in section 45 of *Human, All Too Human*; and then they are expanded in *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 260.

The capacity for, and the duty of, long gratitude and long revenge—both only among one’s peers—refinement in repaying, the sophisticated concept of friendship, a certain necessity for having enemies (as it were, as drainage ditches for the affects of envy, quarrelsomeness, exuberance—at bottom, in order to be capable of being good *friends*): all these are typical characteristics of noble morality which, as suggested, is not the morality of ‘modern ideas’...<sup>140</sup>

The master is merely concerned with designing his own life and with giving meaning to his experiences. He calls himself and his own actions “good”, that is, of the first rank, noble, powerful, high-minded; he has the lordly right to create values and name them: “this *is* this and this”; he is, so to speak, a legislator of values, he is a value-creator, he experiences himself as one who determines values, but his own values; he is in no need of the approval of others. He considers what is harmful to him as harmful in itself; but we have to bear in mind that he does not impose his values upon the slaves, since he does not assert that these values are universal and binding for others. He honors everything as part of himself, also honors himself as one who is powerful and has power over himself. Morality of this noble type is, to use Nietzsche’s term, *self-glorification* (*die Selbstverherrlichung*).

Nietzsche explicitly exalts the typical attributes of master morality: “In the foreground there is the feeling of fullness, of power that seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of wealth that would give and bestow: the noble human being, too, helps the unfortunate, but not, or almost not, from pity, but prompted more by an urge begotten by excess of power”.<sup>141</sup> To be sure Nietzsche is aware of the incompatible and embarrassing aspect of this morality for the morality of present “modern ideas”.

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<sup>140</sup> *BGE*, 260.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

The *primary* value of the master is “good” and he creates “good” inwardly, that is, out of his valuation within his own experiences, not from a hostility to an external enemy. He has “duties” only to his peers; however in relation with the slave, his fundamental feeling for him is the *pathos of distance* (*der Pathos der Distanz*); this *pathos* indicates a feeling of “difference” that enables the master to represent himself “by himself” in contradistinction to all the low, common and plebian: it is a sentiment of creating his life within “his own resources”; the *pathos* (i) explains why the master “simply” depicts how he acts and (ii) although he names the slave “bad” (*schlecht*), how he remains to be “unconcerned with” this badness.

The master engages in his good, noble, high-stationed world of values: “The pathos of nobility and distance, (...) the protracted and domineering fundamental total feeling on the part of a higher ruling order in relation to a lower order, to a ‘below’—*that* is the origin of the antithesis ‘good’ and ‘bad’”.<sup>142</sup> In his idea, the opposition of “good” and “bad” almost amounts to the same thing with that of “noble” and “contemptible”. To tell the truth, the argument stated here does not seem to be sound and persuasive; indeed, it is not so clear how Nietzsche derives the “good” of a noble soul of the master from his social-political nobility.<sup>143</sup> Instead, he focuses on the value-creating (*wertheschaffend*) position of the master that permits him to take

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<sup>142</sup> *GM*, I, 2.

<sup>143</sup> The evidence Nietzsche gives us is no more than an etymological draft; he asserts that all designations of ‘good’ in various languages are traced back to the same conceptual transformation; his account is worth quoting at length: “Everywhere ‘noble,’ ‘aristocratic’ in the social sense, is the basic concept from which ‘good’ in the sense of ‘with aristocratic soul,’ ‘noble,’ ‘with a soul a higher order,’ ‘with a privileged soul’ necessarily developed: a development which always runs parallel with that other in which ‘common,’ ‘plebian,’ ‘low’ are finally transformed into the concept ‘bad.’ The most convincing example of the latter is the German word *schlecht* [bad] itself: which is identical with *schlicht* [plain, simple]—compare *schlechtweg* [plainly], *schlechterdings* [simply]—and originally designated the plain, the common man, as yet with no inculpatory implication and simply in contradistinction to the nobility” (*GM*, I, 4). But while writing these sentences, he is not concerned with the very process of conceptual shifts, how they occur, what kind of social contexts are at work to which these transformations correspond. In other words, Nietzsche does not need to give historically supporting evidence for his own claims; he seems to expect to be confirmed in his ‘own story and history’: these are *his* truths which are compatible with his view of ‘perspectivism’.

possession of every thing and event: the right of giving names to experiences allows him to determine the name and content of a value; a domination over language is an expression of power the master has.

On the other hand, there is the ruled, the slave over whom the master rules. He is the violated, oppressed, suffering, unfree and weary. His domain of actions and the way how he experiences his life are circumscribed by the rules of the master; so too are his values. He does not act for his own sake, since he fears; such an agency would be a violation of “order of rank” (*die Rangordnung*) and a deviation from his subjection to the command of the master. Therefore, he represses his true reactions and sentiments towards the master. What the common point in moral valuations of the slave is is a profound pessimism about the whole condition of man; he is suspicious of all the “good”, all virtues honored by the master. Instead, he respects and honors those qualities (such as pity, patience, industry, humility, assistance, mildness) that help to ease suffering, that serve as means of enduring the pressure of existence, and for that reason, slave morality essentially operates as a morality of *utility (der Nützlichkeits-Moral)*. Nietzsche concludes:

Here is the place for the origin of that famous opposition of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ [*Böse*]: into evil one’s feelings project power and dangerousness, a certain terribleness, subtlety, and strength that does not permit contempt to develop. According to slave morality, those who are ‘evil’ thus inspire fear; according to master morality it is precisely those who are ‘good’ that inspire, and wish to inspire, fear, while the ‘bad’ are felt to be contemptible.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> BGE, 260. In the original text: “Hier ist der Herd für die Entstehung jenes berühmten Gegensatzes ‘gut’ und ‘böse’: — in’s Böse wird die Macht und Gefährlichkeit hinein empfunden, eine gewisse Furchtbarkeit, Feinheit und Stärke, welche die Verachtung nicht aufkommen lässt. Nach der Sklaven-Moral erregt also der ‘Böse’ Furcht; nach der Herren-Moral ist es gerade der ‘Gute’, der Furcht erregt und erregen will, während der ‘schlechte’ Mensch als der verächtliche empfunden wird” (*KSA*, vol. 5, pp. 211-212).

This fear and repressed feelings, reactions, create *ressentiment* and it is the identifying character of slave morality; more precisely, his fundamental sentiment towards the master is *ressentiment*.<sup>145</sup> In contradistinction to master morality which is self-affirmative, the slave needs to direct his view outward (not to himself), that is, needs external stimuli so as to act and this constitutes the essence of *ressentiment*: to form an external hostile world to be a ground for the existence of slave morality and generate an object for the slave's hatred—the master. We can think that *ressentiment* of weak natures that “compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge” is a creative moment that precedes and enables the “slave revolt in morality” that engenders the birth of Christianity in two channels: a) Actually, the weak consider their suffering as uniformly shared by everyone and therefore intend to extend their values to all; and this movement creates a sense of belonging to the “herd”. b) Suffering and impotence can be made something meaningful only if they are to be situated in a more comprehensive interpretation. What the *asceticism* in Christianity achieves is, as we shall see later, precisely providing this signification.

Jews rebelled against the dominance of the noble, aristocratic values, inverting and redefining them in accordance with their own value-system. The revaluation of values begun with Jews and Christianity inherited it, and their common point was to establish the “priestly mode” of valuation: “It was the Jews who, with awe-inspiring consistency, dared to invert the aristocratic value-equation (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = beloved of God) and to hang on to this inversion with their teeth, the teeth of the most abysmal hatred (the hatred of impotence)”.<sup>146</sup> Thus the hegemony of master morality is not eternal, everlastingly

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<sup>145</sup> Nietzsche preferred to employ the French term *ressentiment* in all his writings.

<sup>146</sup> *GM*, I, 7; cf. *BGE*, 195; *A*, 24.

integral; it leaves gaps into which an opponent morality can penetrate. The radical inversion by their enemies represents an act of the most ‘spiritual revenge’; at the end of the revolt, “the masters have been disposed of; the morality of the common man has won”.<sup>147</sup> Nietzsche regards the “redemption” of the human race from “the masters”, or that everything is becoming Judaized, Christianized, mob-ized, as a success of “the slaves or the mob or the herd”. Quasi-paradoxically, Jewish hatred, that is, the most profound and sublime hatred had the power to grow equally a *new love*, a profound and sublime love. This kind of love does not spring up as the negation of Jewish hatred; “No, the reverse is true! That love grew out of it as its crown, as its triumphant crown”.<sup>148</sup> Once more, Nietzsche keeps away from the absolutism of an antithetical conception of values.

The creativity of the *ressentiment* of the slave also betrays itself not only in enabling the slave rebellion in morality, but at the same time in generating an idea of the subject. Since fears, internalized *ressentiment* and frustrations due to his negated desires leave a permanent mark on his psyche and memory, the slave cannot be open and thus trustful to himself, contrary to the self-reliance and transparency of the master. He is “neither upright nor naive nor honest and straightforward with himself” for he conceals his true feelings and masks his genuine desires and never forgets, and owing to this hindrance in this priestly form of human existence, he gets a spiritual “depth” and in parallel with it, becomes “evil”—this is, however creatively, a depth of the *evil*, a depth of the instincts of *décadence*.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> *GM*, I, 9.

<sup>148</sup> *GM*, I, 8.

<sup>149</sup> Again a central term that Nietzsche uses in French. By the term he refers to the nihilistic, reactive, ascetic, afterwordly character of Christian-Western culture that condemns all earthly, natural and vital forces and aims to “castrate” all human passions, desires and motives.

His soul *squints*; his spirit loves hiding places, secret paths and back doors, everything covert entices him as *his* world, *his* security, *his* refreshment; he understands how to be provisionally self-depreciating and humble. A race of such a men of *ressentiment* is bound to become eventually *cleverer* than any noble race.<sup>150</sup>

In this way he conceives and (mis)conceives the measure of “good”, to be patient, humble and just; he neither acts nor attacks, but leaves the requital, revenge and compensation of his weakness to God; he considers all the qualities of the master (enterprising spirit, foolhardiness, rapacity, wealth, the lust to rule, cruelty, success and so on) as “evil” and calls himself with all attributes (pity, fairness, mildness, humility, resignation, equality and like) as “good”—here the opposition of values has been inverted. Nietzsche elucidates what kind of feelings constitute the background of this inversion: “we weak ones are, after all, weak; it would be good if we did nothing *for which we are not strong enough*”.<sup>151</sup> He names this attitude as “the counterfeit and self-deception” thanks to which this weakness has clad itself in the virtue of calmness, of resignation, and presents itself *as if* it were a “voluntary” act of choice. The weakness acquires a value merely by “moralizing” itself with all “depth” as a virtue, thereby it considers itself an achievement which will be rewarded in another world. The man of *ressentiment* has needed to believe in a neutral subject—a subject who imagines that he “freely” prefers not to express himself as powerful in his acts—this is the creation of moral subject:

The subject (or, to use a more popular expression, the *soul*) has perhaps been believed in hitherto more firmly than anything else on earth because it makes possible to the majority of mortals, the weak

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<sup>150</sup> *GM*, I, 10. For him cleverness is a condition of existence while in the noble’s life, it is not an essential trait; it is a functional result of regulating unconscious instincts or it is no more than a certain imprudence.

<sup>151</sup> *GM*, I, 13. In the original text: “wir Schwachen sind nun einmal schwach; es ist gut, wenn wir nichts thun, wozu wir nicht stark genugsind” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 280).

and oppressed of every kind, the sublime self-deception that interprets weakness as freedom, and their being thus-and-thus as a *merit*.<sup>152</sup>

Just as the weakness is considered not as it is, not as a deficiency of the slave's character, but as a moral choice, so the acts of the master which betray his strength are interpreted as moral preferences; their weakness and strength are construed not as fundamental characters of their personality but as results of choices by their free will. That is why Nietzsche insistently emphasizes that the moral subject is an invention, a fictional product of a particular moral interpretation; besides, morality itself is no more than an interpretation. In fact, every morality designates its own "good" and runs it into the battle.

After these details, we can sum up what Nietzsche means by these two types of morality in a comparative manner:

-The master's morality is a *performative* morality; he does not concern himself with the difference between the actual and the prescriptive, between "is" and "ought". The fact that he conceives the slave as bad, low, liar, flatterer, petty, coward, and so on, does not bring about a prescriptive rule that commands the slave how to behave; the slave is just "contemptible" for him. However the slave's morality is *normative*; it aims to create a binding *ideal* of being moral and prompt itself to universality.

-The morality of the noble, the master, is *self-affirmative* and *active*; it does not represent itself in an oppositional relation with the values of the slave; rather, it establishes itself by its own resources. For the master, the primary act is to say "Yes" and this is an expression of his affirmative power; his primary value is "good": "[He]

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* In the original text: "Das Subjekt (oder, dass wir populärer reden, die *Seele*) ist vielleicht deshalb bis jetzt auf Erden der beste Glaubenssatz gewesen, weil er der Überzahl der Sterblichen, den Schwachen und Niedergedrückten jeder Art, jene sublime Selbstbetrügerei ermöglichte, die Schwäche selbst als Freiheit, ihr So- und So-sein als *Verdienst* auszulegen" (*KSA*, vol. 5, pp. 280-281).

conceives the basic concept 'good' in advance and spontaneously out of himself and only then creates for himself an idea of 'bad!'.<sup>153</sup> Here "bad" is a by-product, as it were a "collateral" term.

However, slave morality begins with saying "No" to all things different and outside; "No is its creative deed (...) its action is fundamentally reaction".<sup>154</sup> This is a *negative* and *reactive* type; that is to say, the slave from the outset, devises his world through negating all values belonging to the master. His primary value is 'evil'. He conceives the 'evil' as his basic concept from which he then evolves a 'good one'—himself. The reference of slave morality is not itself, it defines itself in an antagonism to the noble, powerful man, the ruler. The "good" of the other morality is precisely the one *who* is "evil" for it, for the "good" man is here interpreted in another way "by the venomous eye of *ressentiment*".<sup>155</sup>

-Thus, the content of the values "bad" and "evil" are not the opposite of the one and the same "good", for the latter is not the same concept; it is re-invented in both paradigms of these opposite moralities as their own "good"; and in the end of the struggles between the two types, the slave morality has been victorious: The slave in the priestly mode of life, replaces the non-moral conception of "good" and "bad" (*schlecht*) of the master, with his moral distinction of "good" and "evil" (*Böse*).

Consequently, both the content of the idea of "good and evil" and the ways of moral valuation are reinterpreted and appropriated by Christianity as a grand paradigm so as to guide our "modern" experiences and lives.

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<sup>153</sup> *GM*, I, 11.

<sup>154</sup> *GM*, I, 10.

<sup>155</sup> The word "who" expresses an important inference of Nietzsche: moral terms are firstly applied to attributes of man and *then* extended to actions (cf. *BGE*, 260).

## Bad Conscience: Internalization of Trauma

In the second essay of *Genealogy*, Nietzsche develops a scattered discussion on the vital component of morality, namely, “bad conscience”. This partial disorganization is not due to a lack of focus, but rather to the complex character of the multi-layered concepts, guilt, punishment, justice and law, mercy, bad conscience, cruelty and so on. Here, to be sure, to give a coherent account of the text is not our aim; instead, we will confine ourselves to the creation of the subject in its moral commitments through certain psychic-ideological processes. This creation is realized under a cruel and violent pressure but it is also an artistic performance. This fact is valid not only for bad conscience, but also for the “good” conscience of the sovereign, of free man. Nietzsche draws attention to “a long history and variety of forms” behind the concept of “conscience”.

The possibility of a social life is ensured through acquirement of certain properties of man: an active *memory*, the capacity to make promises and a self that must be able to think causally, to anticipate distant eventualities, to calculate and compute. First of all man himself must be calculable, regular and in Nietzsche’s words “he is to be able to stand security for *his own future*, which is what one promises does!”.<sup>156</sup> What makes social life possible is the mutual obligations men learn to undertake and the ability to perform them, add to this, there must be a regularity and uniformity of their actions and reactions. To make promises requires both a sense of responsibility in a man, and presupposes its existence. At the end of the long tremendous labor, the sovereign individual emerges—a man who is liberated from the morality of custom, is autonomous, supramoral, and has his own

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<sup>156</sup> *GM*, II, 1.

independent, protracted will and the right to make promises. The mastery of this emancipated man over himself affords him mastery over circumstances, nature; he honors his peers who are strong enough to make promises, and also he chastens the weak who have no capacity to promise and break their word. Thus Nietzsche sees the strength of responsibility as a distinctive mark, a privilege not everyone is able to have; and he associates it with his conception of “conscience”:

The proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and over fate, has in his case penetrated to the profoundest depths and become instinct, the dominating instinct. What will he call this dominating instinct, supposing he feels the need to give it a name? The answer is beyond doubt: this sovereign man calls it his *conscience*.<sup>157</sup>

In those cases where promises are made, forgetfulness is voluntarily abrogated; men must recall what they promise and undertake; in this case, an active operation of “memory” is needed. It pursues and controls the acts and responsibilities of the will. Hence, memory ensures a continuity for the obligations in social relations, but in return it is itself developed through the social-moral rites that impose the demands and prohibitions of social existence over the slaves of momentary desire; that is to say, throughout a long history (in Nietzsche’s term, during man’s “entire *prehistoric* labor”) mankind has employed the most fearful instruments (the cruelest rituals, the most dreadful sacrifices, the most repulsive mutilations) to acquire a memory, in order to dominate the brutal, basic instincts. Behind memory and conscience we encounter the deepest level systems of bloody cruelties (e.g., religious practices):

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<sup>157</sup> *GM*, II, 2. In the original text: “Das stolze Wissen um das ausserordentliche Privilegium der *Verantwortlichkeit*, das Bewusstsein dieser seltenen Freiheit, dieser Macht über sich und das Geschick hat sich bei ihm bis in seine unterste Tiefe hinabgesenkt und ist zum Instinkt geworden, zum dominirenden Instinkt: — wie wird er ihn heissen, diesen dominirenden Instinkt, gesetzt, dass er ein Wort dafür bei sich nöthig hat? Aber es ist kein Zweifel: dieser souveraine Mensch heisst ihn sein *Gewissen*” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 294).

“Man could never do without blood, torture, and sacrifices when he felt the need to create a memory for himself”.<sup>158</sup> From which it follows that the responsible man, with the aid of his memory, states his precise “I will not’s” in accordance with his promises and thanks to the prudence of his commitments, comes “to reason”, a sense of right and wrong.

By the same token, man must acquire a sense of guilt, an awareness of distance between right and wrong, between “is” and “ought”, because memory imposes the criteria derived from the experiences of his long and pathetic past upon how he conducts his acts. These experiences stamp themselves on the memory (“only that which never ceases to *hurt* stays in the memory”<sup>159</sup>) and constitute, in part, a binding measure obtained from past injuries. What does Nietzsche say about the relation between the awareness of guilt and punishment? About how the “bad conscience” comes into the world? He formulates his answers through a long path and associative notes. We are going to pick out the relevant elements of his central assertions, so as to turn to the point, namely, to the bad conscience as a constructive component of the moral subject.

Nietzsche locates the conscience of the weak against the conscience of the strong man and defines the former as the gravest and uncanniest illness—man’s suffering of man, of himself. He provides a brilliant metaphor so as to depict the emergence of “bad conscience” as a product of a “forcible sundering from his animal past”, of—in a psychoanalytical term—*cultural privation*: when man entered social

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<sup>158</sup> *GM*, II, 3. In the original text: “Es gieng niemals ohne Blut, Martern, Opfer ab, wenn der Mensch es nöthig hielt, sich ein Gedächtniss zu machen” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 295). The fact that pain is interwoven with the past of memory sheds light on, for Nietzsche, the achievement of *mnemotechnics*,—perhaps, the most fearful and uncanny practice in the whole prehistory of man. Pain involved here is the most powerful aid to mnemonics, and determines the content of memory by making certain experiences and ideas “unforgettable”.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.* In the original text: “...nur was nicht aufhört, *weh zu thun*, bleibt im Gedächtniss” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 295).

life he found himself enclosed within the limits of society and suffered the most fundamental change to adapt to the demands of a new area of life; and under this forcible stress of change, man was compelled to contract. Nietzsche sees the bad conscience as the result of this process and likens it to the situation of sea animals when they were compelled to become land animals or perish. In the severe and unusual circumstances imposed by a “new kind of existence”, all former instincts were disvalued and suspended. This moment indicates a preliminary stage of basic trauma:

[I]n this new world they no longer possessed their former guides, their regulating, unconscious and infallible drives: they were reduced to thinking, inferring, reckoning, co-ordinating cause and effect, these unfortunate creatures; they were reduced to their ‘consciousness,’ their weakest and most fallible organ!<sup>160</sup>

The demands of social life either repress the activity of instincts or suppress them; in both cases social life compels man to the renunciation of instinctual gratifications, but in this case, since the old instincts do not disappear, nor cease to make their usual demands, they have to seek channels for new and “subterranean gratifications”. The pressure of this new life changes the direction of the instincts and turns the desires on themselves. The force needed for this operation administers the process of acquiring a depth of inner world and the development of a so-called “soul”; to put in another way, bad conscience, or soul, is a reactive result of socialization. In his well-known passage, Nietzsche describes this process:

All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward*—this is what I call the *internalization* of man: thus it was that man first developed what was later called his ‘soul.’ The entire inner world, originally as thin as if it were stretched between two

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<sup>160</sup> *GM*, II, 16. In the original text: “...sie hatten für diese neue unbekante Welt ihre alten Führer nicht mehr, die regulirenden unbewusst-sicherführenden Triebe, — sie waren auf Denken, Schliessen, Berechnen, Combiniren von Ursachen und Wirkungen reduziert, diese Unglücklichen, auf ihr ‘Bewusstsein’, auf ihr ärmlichstes und fehlgreifendstes Organ!” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 322).

membranes, expanded and extended itself, acquired depth, breadth, and height, in the same measure as outward discharge was *inhibited* (...) Hostility, cruelty, joy in persecuting, in attacking, in change, in destruction—all this turned against the possessors of such instincts: *that* is the origin of the ‘bad conscience.’<sup>161</sup>

This process of internalization accumulates a destructive energy; or more correctly man’s psychic power, in part, transfers a quantum of its energy to a destructive employment. But since the “destructive” desires have turned into the inner world itself, it exerts its influence, at last, for the sake of “compromise” with, as it were, external authority. However this compromise is not a naive and smooth agreement, but rather on the part of man, a compulsory submission for the needs of society, a hard compensation for being a part of the society. Actually, it is not a fair compromise in the usual sense of the term, rather an implicit recognition of the results of the trauma and hence a guilty awareness of the gap—the gap between what he is (a chaotic structure of instincts, subterranean desires that demand to be gratified) and what he ought to be (a new social situation imposed by social authority and its unusual demands and norms to be a moral man).<sup>162</sup> The violence of our awareness of this distance deepens the strength of the experience of being guilty and this strength is proportionally connected with the power of suppressed instinct.

At some points, it would be elucidative to read Nietzsche’s claims in parallel with Freud’s considerations. When Freud deals with the emergence of conscience, he

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.* In the original text: “Alle Instinkte, welche sich nicht nach Aussen entladen, *wenden sich nach Innen* — dies ist das, was ich die *Verinnerlichung* des Menschen nenne: damit wächst erst das an den Menschen heran, was man später seine ‘Seele’ nennt. Die ganze innere Welt, ursprünglich dünn wie zwischen zwei Häute eingespannt, ist in dem Maasse aus einander- und aufgegangen, hat Tiefe, Breite, Höhe bekommen, als die Entladung des Menschen nach Aussen *gehemmt* worden ist. (...) Die Feindschaft, die Grausamkeit, die Lust an der Verfolgung, am Überfall, am Wechsel, an der Zerstörung — Alles das gegen die Inhaber solcher Instinkte sich wendend: *das* ist der Ursprung des ‘schlechten Gewissens’” (*KSA*, vol. 5, pp. 322-23).

<sup>162</sup> Nietzsche’s stress on social determination in the constitution of conscience runs through all his writings; cf. *WS*, 52.

pursues similar Nietzschean lines. He makes out that civilization presupposes and is built up on the renunciation of instinctual gratifications and points out to the risks of this *cultural privation* which dominates all social life: “It is not easy to understand how it can become possible to deprive an instinct of satisfaction. Nor is doing so without danger. If the loss is not compensated for economically, one can be certain that serious disorders will ensue”.<sup>163</sup>

While Nietzsche defines conscience (furnished by the strong man) by its distinguishing mark, that is, “to make promise” and bad conscience by “internalization”, he calls attention to a notable point, namely, to their reciprocal and even paradoxical relation. What is this so-called bad conscience that is suppressed and made latent under the violence of the master race? These born organizers and conquerors who command, who are violent in act and bearing, are at the same time the founders of the state on earth, and this means that the establishment of norms, morals, thus an authority, society and civilization are carried out by this race as an artistic creation. Nietzsche illustrates them as “the most involuntary and unconscious artists”, and considers their agency to be the exemplification of “terrible artists’ egoism”. This master does not know what guilt, responsibility and consideration are; he is not engaged in any calculating prudence, any calculus of utility in his act. All kinds of moral utility are remote and inappropriate to his standpoint. For their measure is embodied and involved in the act of these born artists, for their criteria is presented and justified in their agency, their narcissistic spirit “knows itself justified to all eternity in its ‘work,’ like a mother in her child”. The normative and the performative overlap in an exact sense in their life and here the gap between them,

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<sup>163</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Civilization and Its Discontents”, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: The Hogart Press, 2001), 21, p. 28.

therefore the bad conscience as a product of the sense of guilt does not develop in them,<sup>164</sup> but in turn, they enable the conditions of its development. These born artists-state founders suppress the instinct of freedom of the weak and make it latent under their artistic violence; they discipline the savage and wild of the herd, the mass and in this way, they implant the bad conscience as a (social) means of control: “This *instinct for freedom* forcibly made latent (...) this instinct for freedom pushed back and repressed, incarcerated within and finally able to discharge and vent itself only on itself: that, and that alone, is what the *bad conscience* is in its beginnings”.<sup>165</sup>

Nietzsche notes that both the suppressed instinct for freedom of the weak and the instinct for domination of “those artists of violence and organizers who build states” are the same active force. This force operates as an agency to organize, form and command things around it. He specifies that this instinctual force is the most fundamental and primary force: the will to power. Since for him, the will to power is the instinct of growth and development, of promoting life, to be more precise, it is life itself, the bad conscience is the fruit of the suppression process of this basic power of life. When it is internalized, that is to say, when it turns to the inner world, it makes man the (raw)material upon which its form-giving nature vents itself. Here we encounter the fact that “the soul is precisely what a certain violent artistry produces when it takes itself as its own object”.<sup>166</sup> That the destructive force is directed towards the self itself determines the psychic structure of guilt and the bad

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<sup>164</sup> In psychoanalysis, although all terms like super-ego, conscience, sense of guilt, punishment relate to the same situation, they refer to its different aspects. The sense of guilt precedes the super-ego, therefore it comes into being before conscience.

<sup>165</sup> *GM*, II, 17. In the original text: “Dieser gewaltsam latent gemachte *Instinkt der Freiheit* (...) dieser zurückgedrängte, zurückgetretene, in’s Innere eingekerkerte und zuletzt nur an sich selbst noch sich entladende und auslassende Instinkt der Freiheit: das, nur das ist in seinem Anbeginn das *schlechte Gewissen*” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 325).

<sup>166</sup> Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories of Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 76.

conscience is raised to a new level; it gains a complexity and becomes the source of one's inner phenomena:

This secret self-ravishment, this artists' cruelty, this delight in imposing a form upon oneself as a hard, recalcitrant, suffering material and in burning a will, a critique, a contradiction, a contempt, a No into it, this uncanny, dreadfully joyous labor of a soul voluntarily at odds with itself that makes itself suffer out of joy in making suffer.<sup>167</sup>

At this juncture, once more, it would be illuminating to pursue Nietzsche's discussion under the light of the accounts given by psychoanalysis so as to consider the value of his assertions and construe their probable implications. Freud, in his *Civilization and Its Discontents*, deliberates upon the problem of conscience (and the sting of conscience) in the context of its relation with civilization. He sums up its emergence as follows: the destructive instinct is introjected and directed against the ego itself. It is taken over by a part of the ego; this special part distinguishes itself from the rest of the ego as a "super-ego" and exerts the same tendency of destruction against the ego; this cleavage deepens the tension between the two parts, and the tension which reveals itself as the need/wish for punishment is the sense of guilt. Freud adds that "civilization, therefore, obtains mastery over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city".<sup>168</sup> But what is the position of punishment in this picture? How and when is it associated with the sentiment of guilt?

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<sup>167</sup> *GM*, II, 18. It seems to be notable that Nietzsche, here, foresees the relation between cruelty and delight, pleasure—a thesis which psychoanalysis puts in a precise manner at the first quarter of 20th century: satisfaction of the instinct of destruction/aggressiveness, as the main representative of the death instinct is accompanied by an extraordinarily *narcissistic enjoyment* and more importantly, this gratification brings to the ego the fulfilment of its oldest 'omnipotence-wishes'.

<sup>168</sup> Freud, p. 123-124; cf. Sigmund Freud, "New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis and Other Works", *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: The Hogart Press, 2001), 22, pp. 109-110. Also cf. *BGE*, 229.

Nietzsche counters the view that punishment possesses the strength of awakening the sense of guilt and cites extreme rareness of the sting of conscience among criminals as an actual fact. During the past the judges and punishers were far from being aware of the psychic nature of guilt and the guilty person; they paid no heed to it. Against breaches of rules and norms, punishment does not suffice to generate guilt, on the contrary, in millenia before the history of man, punishment *hindered* the emergence and the growth of the sense of guilt in the victims; verily “the sight of the judicial and executive procedures prevents the criminal from considering his deed, the type of his action *as such*, reprehensible”.<sup>169</sup>

Throughout the greater part of human history punishment has emerged from the anger vented on the one who caused some injury (“as parents still punish their children”, says Nietzsche<sup>170</sup>); injury or harm must be paid back through the *pain* of the guilty; thus pain is put as the *equivalence* of injury. Nietzsche positions this primeval idea of equivalence within the contractual relation between *creditor* and *debtor*.<sup>171</sup>

The debtor establishes a contractual relation with the creditor so as to inspire trust in his promise to repay; through this relation, repayment is reproduced as an obligation and in the case of any breach, the debtor must compensate the harm by substituting something else that he possesses, he has control over: his body, his freedom, his life or even his bliss after death for certain religious conceptions (in Egypt, Nietzsche notes, the debtor’s corpse found no peace even in the grave from the creditor). Accordingly, debts (*Schulden*)—as the material concept in which guilt

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<sup>169</sup> *GM*, II, 14.

<sup>170</sup> *GM*, II, 4.

<sup>171</sup> In German, ‘guilt’ is *Schuld*, ‘debt(s)’ is *Schuld(en)*; ‘debtor’ is *Schuldner* and ‘innocent’ is *unschuldig*.

(*Schuld*) has its origin—are paid back not only in a literal compensation (money, land, estate) but essentially in providing recompense in the form of *pleasure*: “the pleasure of being allowed to vent his power freely upon one who is powerless (...) In ‘punishing’ the debtor, the creditor participates in a *right of the masters*: at last he, too, may experience for once the exalted sensation of being allowed to despise and mistreat someone as ‘beneath him’”.<sup>172</sup> This sensation of putting oneself in a master’s position through punishing the debtor (*Schuldner*) is not experienced as fictional, imaginary revenge, rather it manifests what constitutes the nature of pleasure: *cruelty* as an ingredient of almost every one of men’s pleasures.

Nietzsche’s inversion of terms is at work here, too. He claims that cruelty and pleasure have been intertwined and the “thirst for cruelty” manifests itself as a deeply rooted feeling even in our time. There is no festival without cruelty, nor is it possible to compensate the injured party for his sustained loss without providing a counterbalancing pleasure. We can think that here the relation seems to turn into an exchange relation: pleasure becomes the object of this exchange in both a material and spiritual sense. The debtor-guilty pays back his debt, that is, compensates for the breach of contract by providing the creditor with pleasure and enjoyment from making him suffer, from acting cruelly, since the “logic” of contractual relation gives the right to do so; that is why Nietzsche remarks that the compensation consists in a warrant for and title to cruelty. Here the guilty has been turned into an object of cruelty in punishment, an occasion for the pleasure of the punitive part and finally a body for the experience of suffering. And this pain will play its role here through stamping itself on memory (see above pp. 78-80); and punishment is just at this stage included in the creation of guilt.

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<sup>172</sup> *GM*, II, 5.

Punishment gives rise to an increase of fear, a control over the desires and prudence; “punishment *tames* men, but it does not make them “better”” and insofar as injury from punishment “makes one prudent it also makes one bad”.<sup>173</sup> Prudence does not involve a sense of guilt, an awareness that one has done wrong. Thus punishment imposed against the violation of norms does not by itself suffice to create the feeling of guilt; for this to be possible, pain-suffering must be firmly connected with guilt, in other words one must experience pain as the *equivalent* of guilt, thus, as something to “be deserved”.

As a parallel process, the hurtful force of animal instincts made inward is injected into the psychic nature of guilt, and deepens and heightens it. This inner experience is provided through a *mechanism of self-punishment* under the suppressive demands of social life, of authority. In this way, authority has ceased to be “external”, it has transferred to the inner world, gained permanence and concealed its primeval existence. Inner control has been set up in one’s psyche. Now the human will itself undertakes voluntarily the demand of keeping man under *surveillance* in society;<sup>174</sup> it becomes its own “guardian” by turning on itself: that authority is projected inwards and adopted as an object of self-discipline is the result of the performance of ideology.

Freud notes that there are two sources for the feeling of guilt: (i) instinct is denied due to the dread of external authority;<sup>175</sup> however (ii) with the dread of the super-ego, this renunciation is not sufficient since the wish persists (Nietzsche, too, remarks that the old instincts do not renounce to make their usual demands). As soon as the

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<sup>173</sup> *GM*, II, 15; cf. *WP*, 397.

<sup>174</sup> Cf. *GM*, III, 16. Foucault will elaborate this practice as an ‘effect of power’ in modern disciplinary systems.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. *WS*, 52.

authority is internalized by the development of a super-ego, a great change takes place: any difference between doing evil and wishing (intention) to do it ceases to operate, hence comes the sense of guilt, the need for punishment, “since nothing can be hidden from the super-ego, not even thoughts”. In this way, “a threatened external unhappiness (...) has been exchanged for a permanent internal unhappiness, for the tension of a sense of guilt.”<sup>176</sup> This ideological process culminates in the *moralization* of the concepts of guilt, debt, duty and punishment, out of which the stringent commandments of the priestly religion, Christian asceticism is constructed.

These concepts as involved in bad conscience are turned back against the debtor, until the “irredeemable debt” engenders the irredeemable penance: *eternal* punishment. Also they are turned back against the creditor, too; this orientation leads to the paradoxical remedy of Christianity: “God himself sacrifices himself for the guilt of mankind, God himself makes payment to himself, God as the only being who can redeem man from what has become unredeemable for man himself—the creditor sacrifices himself for his debtor, out of love (can one credit that?), out of love for his debtor!”<sup>177</sup> In this way, Nietzsche associates the terms, the debtor-the creditor, with their “moralization” under the Christianized ascetic ideal. The relation of the first two—the creditor and the debtor—is now raised to a new level and takes the form “the mortal human-God”.

Actually, Nietzsche believes that the advent of the maximum god, the Christian God, was accompanied by the maximum feeling of guilty indebtedness

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<sup>176</sup> Freud, p. 128.

<sup>177</sup> *GM*, II, 21. In the original text: “Gott selbst sich für die Schuld des Menschen opfernd, Gott selbst sich an sich selbst bezahlt machend, Gott als der Einzige, der vom Menschen ablösen kann, was für den Menschen selbst unablösbar geworden ist — der Gläubiger sich für seinen Schuldner opfernd, aus *Liebe* (sollte man's glauben? —), aus Liebe zu seinem Schuldner!” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 331).

(*Das Schuldgefühls*) on earth. We have to note that Freud states the same point in writing that when people (say, those of Israel) were subjected to many misfortunes caused by God, they were never shaken in their faith in God. “Instead, they produced the prophets, who held up their sinfulness before them; and out of their sense of guilt they created the over-strict commandments of their priestly religion.”<sup>178</sup> This ideological experience culminates in what Nietzsche calls, the creation of “guilt before God”—the idea as an instrument of “self-denial”.

To be sure, this mechanism is ensured through the change of direction of cruelty. Beside seeing the suffering of others, one directs one’s will towards pleasure at one’s *own* suffering. It is precisely this cruelty turned against oneself by which man “allows himself to be persuaded” to self-denial, self-mutilation, to desensualization, decarnalization, contrition, to penitence, vivisection of the conscience.<sup>179</sup> “Guilt before God” provides a site for fabricating a new relation with God in which man apprehends his desires and instincts as a form of guilt, as hostility, as revolt against the “Father” and he sees in God the utmost “antithesis” of his animal instincts and thus he devalues and denies his own nature and actuality; his self-torture without end grows up on the grounds of the *immeasurability of punishment and guilt*. In this way, he voluntarily makes himself believe the idea that there is no possibility of compensation for his guilt. Nietzsche associates this cruelty with a *madness* of the will:

The *will* of man to find himself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for; his *will* to think himself punished without any possibility of punishment becoming equal to the guilt; his *will* to infect and poison the fundamental grounds of things with the problem of punishment and guilt so as to cut off once and for all his own exit from the labyrinth of ‘fixed ideas’; his *will* to erect an ideal—

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<sup>178</sup> Freud, p. 127.

<sup>179</sup> *BGE*. 229.

that of the 'holy God'—and in the face of it to feel the palpable certainty of his own absolute unworthiness.<sup>180</sup>

Actually, “permanent internal unhappiness” as mentioned by Freud, is at the same time an over-abundant pleasure gained at one’s own suffering: “This pleasure in affliction, attributed earlier to the creditor, thus becomes, under the pressure of the social contract, an internalized pleasure, the joy of persecuting oneself.”<sup>181</sup> Just as there is pain involved in punishment and instinctual renunciation in the bad conscience, so there is also an experience of pleasure in it. This joy of suffering locates itself in the root of the bad conscience. In fact, punishment produces a site for the fabricating activity and pleasure of the will. The internalization of punishment and thereby the bad conscience becomes an *active* agent; “as the womb of all ideal and imaginative phenomenon” it creates a new ideal, a new beauty, a culture.

Thence, we can infer that bad conscience cannot be totally negative, restrictive and prohibiting, on the contrary, it also brings to light new affirmations of morality. Paradoxically, morality emerges at the expense of self-denial, self-sacrifice, of being a sick animal;<sup>182</sup> but these contradictory concepts themselves suggest a new kind of culture. The bad conscience has led to the loss of a powerful, joyous, wild vitality of semi-animal man, but it was also a precondition for further developments. That is why Nietzsche signals the bad conscience to be “an illness as pregnancy is

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<sup>180</sup> *GM*, II, 22. In the original text: “...der *Wille* des Menschen, sich schuldig und verwerflich zu finden bis zur Unsühnbarkeit, sein *Wille*, sich bestraft zu denken, ohne dass die Strafe je der Schuld äquivalent werden könne, sein *Wille*, den untersten Grund der Dinge mit dem Problem von Strafe und Schuld zu inficieren und giftig zu machen, um sich aus diesem Labyrinth von ‘fixen Ideen’ ein für alle Mal den Ausweg abzuschneiden, sein *Wille*, ein Ideal aufzurichten — das des ‘heiligen Gottes’ —, um Angesichts desselben seiner absoluten Unwürdigkeit handgreiflich gewiss zu sein” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 332).

<sup>181</sup> Butler, p. 75.

<sup>182</sup> Nietzsche explains this process of man’s loss of his vital existence for the sake of social existence as “the *morbid softening* and moralization through which the animal ‘man’ finally learns to be *ashamed* of all his instincts” (*GM*, II, 7; my italics).

an illness”.<sup>183</sup> For instance, he specifies that the conditions of the moral value of the “unegoistic” was provided by only the will to “self-maltreatment”; in other words, selflessness or self-denial has paved the way for the “altruistic” values.

This “generic” relation will engage the attention of Freud. We can say that both thinkers share the same pessimistic (perhaps “realistic”) point of view about altruism. Freud deals with this point in his considerations about the “cultural super-ego”—a new concept to indicate the authority of any given epoch of civilization.

In Freud’s view, culture/civilization calls up every possible means so as to set up barriers before the aggressive instincts and keeps their manifestations under control: its methods for inducing mankind to identifications, the limitations on sexual life or its ideal command for “loving one’s neighbour as oneself”, and so on. The last one is especially noteworthy: Freud draws a parallel between the super-ego of an individual and the “cultural super-ego”. The cultural super-ego sets up its high standard and ideals and their breach is punished with anxiety of conscience; in other words, just as while the super-ego imposes its restrictions over the individual, it disregards the difficulties and resistance in the way of obedience, so the cultural super-ego ignores the incapacity of man’s ego over the instinctual strength of his *Id*. This attempt to develop a moral ideal that defends civilization against the greatest hindrance, namely, against human aggressiveness, is exemplified in its most recent demand, that is, in the commandment, “Love thy neighbour as thyself”.

Freud’s response to the command is immensely clear and realistic: “The command is impossible to fulfill (...) Civilization pays no attention to all this; it merely admonishes us that the harder it is to obey the precept the more meritorious it

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<sup>183</sup> *GM*, II, 19.

is to do so.”<sup>184</sup> This precept could not confine itself to a threatening demand to obey, to be selfless, in return for this, it should also provide pleasure.

Similarly, Nietzsche asserts that “...that is the nature of the *delight* that the selfless man, the self-denier, the self-sacrificer feels from the first: this delight is tied to cruelty”.<sup>185</sup> But this delight of cruelty should be transformed into “having a virtue” and sublimated to a different “curative” level—the level of morality. Freud has aptly called attention to the same point. “Ethics is thus to be regarded as a therapeutic attempt—as an endeavour to achieve, by means of a command of the super-ego, something which has so far not been achieved by means of any other cultural activities”.<sup>186</sup>

Unfortunately, morality does not suffice to resolve the problem, since the desire, the instinct is never renounced. According to Freud, although morality deals with an issue which is the most sensitive point in every civilization, yet it remains to be a practise that “preaches in vain”: “‘Natural’ ethics, as it is called, has nothing to offer here except the narcissistic satisfaction of being able to think oneself better than others. At this point the *ethics based on religion* introduces its promises of a better after-life”.<sup>187</sup> In which case, the self-commands of conscience work as a site of “gratification” itself to the extent that conscience prohibits desire and directs one’s satisfaction towards a better heavenly life that can be attained by the renunciation of earthly joys. This kind of renunciation, too, produces a feeling of being satisfied—a pleasure.

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<sup>184</sup> Freud, p. 143.

<sup>185</sup> *GM*, II, 18.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143 (Italics are mine).

In psychoanalytic point of view, it is precisely the prohibition of the instinctual craving due to anxiety and a turning back of instinctual desire upon itself that constructs conscience as a psychic phenomenon; and in return, conscience reproduces this mechanism of prohibition by demanding new renunciations. This circularity furnishes conscience with a dynamism; this bidirectional formation has been depicted by Freud; he says,

that conscience (or more correctly, the anxiety which later becomes conscience) is indeed the cause of instinctual renunciation to begin with, but that later the relationship is reversed. Every renunciation of instinct now becomes a dynamic source of conscience and every fresh renunciation increases the latter's severity and intolerance.<sup>188</sup>

Hence, while the instinct forced into renunciation carries on and upholds prohibition, in return, prohibition sustains the instinct. In this way, conscience is constituted as a psychic structure of *negative* narcissism due to "self-beratement",<sup>189</sup> since as is well known, "man's suffering of man, of himself" expresses that this "declaration of war against the old instincts" *cathects* the bad conscience with a narcissistical force. That is precisely what is involved in the *will to nothingness* which has taken its direction from the ascetic ideal. Man does not reject suffering, he desires it; and even providing a meaning for suffering, he pursues it. The real problem is not suffering as such, but the senselessness of suffering.

The ascetic ideal of Christianity (in Freud's words "the ethics based on religion") offered mankind sense. It reinterpreted suffering under the perspective of guilt and ultimately of sin. To be sure, the interpretation of this ideal brought new, fresh pains, more inward, more life-destructive, deeper suffering, however all these

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<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>189</sup> Nietzsche writes that "only the bad conscience, only the will to self-maltreatment provided the conditions for the *value* of the unegoistic" (cf. *GM*, II, 18).

were established with a definite idea that was adopted with the voluntary consent of man: suffering is interpreted as something that is deserved, something for which man alone is to blame himself: “But all this withstanding—man was *saved* thereby, he possessed a meaning (...) he could now *will* something; no matter at first to what end, why, with what he willed: *the will itself was saved*”.<sup>190</sup>

Broadly speaking, we can say that every morality endeavors to offer a meaningful connection between individual life and a more comprehensive world order, since the individual needs to make sense of his identity and acts by situating himself within a more comprehensive narrative, within a greater picture. But when the world, in itself, does not provide such kind of a significant whole, morality-religion intervenes and commits itself to fabricate this encompassing narrative.

Here the steps of its method are well-known: the world as given to sense-experience is denigrated and devalued to be mere appearance and unreal. Reason invents a cosmic order, a God-like order working through realizing a purpose, an aim. Now, the guilty-individual is provided a meaning for his pain in a grand scenario; the evil/guilt/sin is punished and at the same time is comprehended as necessary for a greater good.<sup>191</sup> This greater good means promises of an afterworld by the ascetic ideal/priest (in Nietzsche’s expression), a better after-life by a religious ethics (in Freud’s view); “the priest rules through the invention of sin”.<sup>192</sup> The ascetic ideal allows the production of a world of sense for man and it does this through, despite everything, saving the will itself.

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<sup>190</sup> *GM*, III, 28. In the original text: “Aber trotzallem — der Mensch war damit *gerettet*, er hatte einen *Sinn*, (...) er konnte nunmehr Etwas *wollen*, — gleichgültig zunächst, wohin, wozu, womit er wollte: *der Wille selbst war gerettet*”(KSA, vol. 5, pp. 411-412).

<sup>191</sup> Poole, pp. 123-124.

<sup>192</sup> *A*, 49.

Thanks to the will, asceticism, paradoxically, resignifies the suffering as an active desire of the will—“*a will to nothingness*, an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life; but it is and remains a *wille!* (...) man would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will”.<sup>193</sup> Indeed, this passage seems to imply the same psychic phenomenon to which Freud refers as a negative narcissism in libidinal activity. Libidinal energy cannot be suspended in vain, it must be cathected to an object, however negatively nourished.

Consequently, it is precisely Christianity that invents and presents the greater encompassing story which transforms man’s suffering into an invaluable picture of “virtue”<sup>194</sup> which preaches “equality before God”. It means, for Nietzsche, “equality in weakness”; thus, weakness turns to be a virtue, as he writes that “our virtues are conditional on, are provoked by, our weakness”.<sup>195</sup> The road from cruelty to virtue, to morality is longer and more complicated than has been thought and it deserves to be analyzed in depth. Obviously, it requires another genealogical investigation, but Nietzsche has suggested some insightful hints, however synoptical, for a probable enterprise of scrutiny.

The indispensable condition that prepares the ground of a moral order is that a collective authority (say, society or state) subjects all individuals by ceasing their isolated mode of existence and integrating them into a union; this is executed by forcible norms and practices; in this sense morality rests on an “implicit” force.

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<sup>193</sup> *GM*, III, 28 (cf. *WP*, 390). In the original text: “...einen *Willen zum Nichts*, einen Widerwillen gegen das Leben, eine Auflehnung gegen die grundsätzlichen Voraussetzungen des Lebens, aber es ist und bleibt ein *Wille!* (...) lieber will noch der Mensch *das Nichts* wollen, als *nicht* wollen” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 412).

<sup>194</sup> Probably Nietzsche would consider this virtue as something ‘negative’: “I do not like negative virtues—virtues whose very essence it is to negate and deny oneself something” (*GS*, 304; cf. *A*, 23).

<sup>195</sup> *TI*, IX, 37.

Nietzsche draws a preliminary sketch to indicate the steps of “shifts” in our value judgments in an earlier writing:

Morality is preceded by *compulsion*; indeed, it is for a time itself still compulsion, to which one accommodates oneself for the avoidance of what one regards as unpleasurable. Later it becomes custom, later still voluntary obedience, finally almost instinct: then, like all that has for a long time been habitual and natural, it is associated with pleasure — and is now called *virtue*.<sup>196</sup>

Intrinsically, cruelty, despite the drive behind it, culminates in yielding a high culture; a cultural world has behind it brutal experiences and barbaric experiences.

Therefore a civilization is a refined and sophisticated system so that all its disciplinary practices (surveillance, exclusion, control, penal codes, repressive executions and so on) have resonances of rationalized cruelty in their genealogical emergence, and Nietzsche was well aware of the fact that our moral-religious system has in its roots the persecuting practices of primordial tyranny, for without cruelty man could not be disciplined: “Almost everything we call ‘higher culture’ is based on the spiritualization of *cruelty*, on its becoming more profound: this is my proposition. That ‘savage animal’ has not really been ‘mortified’; it lives and flourishes, it has merely become—divine”.<sup>197</sup> In a complementary way, spiritualization not only results in the repression of the wild, animal nature of man, but also, in an active and positive performance of its “form-giving” agency, creates a new product, a different type of man, furnished a fresh nature: “the existence on earth of an animal soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself, was

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<sup>196</sup> *HH*, 99; also see, *WS*, 190. In the original text: “Der Moralität geht der *Zwang* voraus, ja sie selber ist noch eine Zeit lang *Zwang*, dem man sich, zur Vermeidung der Unlust, fügt. Später wird sie *Sitte*, noch später freier Gehorsam, endlich beinahe *Instinct*: dann ist sie wie alles lang *Gewöhnte* und *Natürliche* mit *Lust* verknüpft—und heisst nun *Tugend*” (*KSA*, vol. 2, p. 96).

<sup>197</sup> *BGE*, 229. In the original text: “Fast Alles, was wir ‘höhere Cultur’ nennen, beruht auf der Vergeistigung und Vertiefung der *Grausamkeit* — dies ist mein Satz; jenes ‘wilde Thier’ ist gar nicht abgetödtet worden, es lebt, es blüht, es hat sich nur — vergöttlicht” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 166).

something so new, profound, unheard of, enigmatic, contradictory, *and pregnant with a future* that the aspect of the earth was essentially altered”.<sup>198</sup>

It is very likely that, this productive process is enabled by the generation of bad conscience; more precisely, the internalization of trauma constructs the bad conscience and thus the psychic nature of the subject. The introjection of punishment affords the generation of the subject. The ideological frame of this internalization is provided in a manipulative way by the ascetic ideal; still more precisely, the internalization of trauma is achieved only through an accompanying ideological justification which will bring the process to a successful conclusion. In this context, Christian asceticism—as a great web of meanings—is a pure and absolute form of ideology.

#### The Ascetic Ideal: Justification of the Subject by Ideology

The creation of the bad conscience supplies certain conditions for one to be figured as a subject, but it does not analytically suffice to explain how one becomes a “moral subject” justified by the ideology, that is, Christian asceticism. Its justification is realized through an encompassing story, in Nietzsche’s vocabulary, the ascetic ideal. Asceticism is, in its general mode of being, an ideology of nihilism that rests on *ressentiment* of the weak, depreciates all earthly things, actions and experiences, denounces desires, passions and all bodily, sensual sentiments and thereby downgrades the whole world. The ascetic mode of interpretation reduces the feeling

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<sup>198</sup> *GM*, II, 16.

of life to its lowest point, denies all values contrary to its own view and at last affirms the *will to nothingness*.<sup>199</sup>

In Nietzsche's approach, the ascetic ideal is the will to nothingness itself, however in a specific sense. It accordingly posits its valuations and supports a mode of life it sacrifices. The mode of *valuation* it situates on our worldly-life is immensely severe; it sees life as a mistake, a wrong attempt. The ascetic priest "juxtaposes it (along with what pertains to it: 'nature', 'world', the whole sphere of becoming and transitoriness) with a quite different mode of existence which it opposes and excludes, *unless* it turn against itself, *deny* itself: in that case, the case of the ascetic life, life counts as a bridge to that other mode of existence".<sup>200</sup> Thus earthly, natural existence (the only kind one has, for Nietzsche) does not have an inner value by itself, it has value merely as a means to something else that actually expresses its negation.

The ascetic hatred of life is motivated by the resentment of the weak who suffers; and asceticism is an attempt to employ "the *whole* pack of savage hounds in man" in the service of its attack on all noble, life-promoting values. Nietzsche urges that this priestly mode of valuation is not a coincidental instance but "one of the most widespread and enduring of all phenomena". Its assertion is so comprehensive that it systematically condemns the earth as the ascetic planet.

Nietzsche is obviously aware of the immense extension of its "reactive force" penetrating into all life-cells. While doing so, the ascetic ideal establishes its own

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<sup>199</sup> Badiou considers the will to nothingness as "death drive"; see Alain Badiou, *Ethics, An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (Verso: London and New York, 2001), p. 33-34.

<sup>200</sup> *GM*, III, 11. In the original text: "...der asketischen Priester: dasselbe wird (samt dem, wozu es gehört, 'Natur', 'Welt', die gesammte Sphäre des Werdens und der Vergänglichkeit) von ihnen in Beziehung gesetzt zu einem ganz andersartigen Dasein, zu dem es sich gegensätzlich und ausschliessend verhält, *es sei denn*, dass es sich etwa gegen sich selber wende, *sich selbst verneine*: in diesem Falle, dem Falle eines asketischen Lebens, gilt das Leben als eine Brücke für jenes andre Dasein" (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 362).

mode of life; its values and parameters signify that a deep, monstrous “will to power” is at work. The ascetic life “here rules a *ressentiment* without equal, that of an insatiable instinct and power-will that wants to become master not over something in life but over life itself, over its most profound, powerful, and basic conditions; here an attempt is made to employ force to block up the wells of force”.<sup>201</sup> In actual fact, the ascetic denial of life involves an affirmation of another sort of life designed with reference to “redemption”—an imaginary salvation. However in order to tend to another life, one is convinced to renounce the joys and beauties of one’s present mundane life. Instead, asceticism supplies a new type of enjoyment:

Here physiological well-being itself is viewed askance, and especially the outward expression of this well-being, beauty and joy; while pleasure is felt and sought in ill-constitutedness, decay, pain, mischance, ugliness, voluntary, self-mortification, self-flagellation, self-sacrifice.<sup>202</sup>

This depiction, to be sure, seems paradoxical; however what we face is that the object of pleasure is radically changed and placed into suffering, into the feeling of having decreased capacity for life.<sup>203</sup> However the displacement of pleasure does not suffice to console the sufferer; there must be something different in the ascetic ideal that ties the weak (and the mean, the mediocre) to its mode of valuation. The position that is contrary, even hostile to life, for Nietzsche, is merely appearance; its real nature could not, so far, have been understood, and thereby it has hidden its

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<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.* In the original text: “Denn ein asketisches Leben ist ein Selbstwiderspruch: hier herrscht ein Ressentiment sonder Gleichen, das eines ungesättigten Instinktes und Machtwillens, der Herr werden möchte, nicht über Etwas am Leben, sondern über das Leben selbst, über dessen tiefste, stärkste, unterste Bedingungen; hier wird ein Versuch gemacht, die Kraft zu gebrauchen, um die Quellen der Kraft zu verstopfen” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 363).

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> Nietzsche describes this state of mind in various passages: “...offensive creatures filled with a profound disgust at themselves, at the earth, at all life, who inflict as much pain on themselves as they possibly can out of pleasure in inflicting pain—which is probably their only pleasure” (*GM*, III, 11).

“deceptive” character. Nietzsche gives us his first hint about the ascetic priest; despite appearances to the opposite, this priest must be life-affirming:

It must be a necessity of the first order that again and again promotes the growth and prosperity of this *life-inimical* species—it must indeed be in the *interest of life itself* that such a self-contradictory type does not die out.<sup>204</sup>

Therefore, the ascetic denial of life does not—and cannot—place itself outside life everlastingly, although it develops a life-devaluing interpretation towards life in a total and unconditional way. Its attitude to renounce all vital instincts turns to pretence and deception; asceticism waits for certain favourable conditions by which it will intervene in the total loss of desire for life—the lowest point of life.

Nietzsche points out that the real nature of the ascetic ideal could not, hitherto, be grasped truly. That it is a specific, distorted interpretation, that it is a misunderstanding must not mislead one into placing its source and function: “*the ascetic ideal springs from the protective instinct of a degenerating life* which tries by all means to sustain itself and to fight for its existence (...) life wrestles in it and through it with death and *against* death; the ascetic ideal is an artifice for the *preservation* of life”.<sup>205</sup> This is the second hint he gives us about the real position of asceticism towards life: it consists of a protective interpretation and arrangement, however in a “negative” discourse. On the one hand, the masses of the ill-constituted, underprivileged, unfortunate, jealous, who are full of resentment, suffer because of themselves, of their lives and their repressed inner world (of instincts); thus they negate their basic desires to survive and this state of mind indicates an inner

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<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.* In the original text: “Es muss eine Necessität ersten Rangs sein, welche diese *lebensfeindliche* Species immer wieder wachsen und gedeihen macht, — es muss wohl ein *Interesse des Lebens selbst* sein, dass ein solcher. Typus des Selbstwiderspruchs nicht ausstirbt” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 363).

<sup>205</sup> *GM*, III, 13. In the original text: “...*das asketische Ideal entspringt dem Schutz- und Heil-Instinkte eines degenerirenden Lebens*, welches sich mit allen Mitteln zu halten sucht und um sein Dasein kämpft; (...) das Leben ringt in ihm und durch dasselbe mit dem Tode und *gegen* den Tod, das asketische Ideal ist ein Kunstgriff in der *Erhaltung* des Lebens” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 366).

destruction, so to speak, a nihilistic *introversion*. At this stage the ascetic priest supplies an interpretation of “alleviation” to deaden their pain.

On the other hand, the weak do not only suffer, nor weaken their vital powers, but also question the conditions of their resistance in living and strive to eradicate their belief and trust in life.

It is evident that they endeavour to convince those (who are different, strong) to perceive life in the same ascetic way. In this sense, the ascetic ideal becomes an expansive, invasive ideology. Hence here ideology in the form of the ascetic ideal works in a dual mechanism. Now let us deal with it more closely.

*The First Aspect of the Ascetic ideal:* At first, the ascetic priest makes his appearance on the scene when the conditions of his “positive” intervention have matured. He endeavors to be an instrument “for the creation of more favorable conditions for being here and being man”. This priest, this “apparent” opponent to life, takes power—as the shepherd—over the whole herd that suffers, seeks to ease suffering without knowing its reason; and at last he employs all his power and means to give a signification to suffering. Nietzsche elucidates his point, derived from two hints already stated above, that the ascetic priest conducts his practice in order to organize a powerful desire for living in the herd; thus, “this ascetic priest, this apparent enemy of life, this *denier*—precisely he is among the greatest *conserving* and yes-creating forces of life”.<sup>206</sup> The ascetic priest figures himself as a remedy for human illness because he is aware that this illness has a prolific, pregnant nature:

Certainly he has also dared more, done more new things, braved more and challenged fate more than all the other animals put together: he,

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<sup>206</sup> *GM*, III, 13. In the original text: “...dieser asketische Priester, dieser anscheinende Feind des Lebens, dieser *Verneinende*, — er gerade gehört zu den ganz grossen *conservirenden* und *Jaschaffenden* Gewalten des Lebens” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 366).

the great experimenter with himself, discontented and insatiable, wrestling with animals, nature, and gods for ultimate dominion.<sup>207</sup>

Man, with (and because of) his restless energies that never leave him in peace, deepens his illness to the extent that this very sickliness, his nausea, weariness, and disgust with himself prepare, in a violent burst, the conditions for a new stage of his creativity and productivity. In this way, “the No he says to life brings to light, as if by magic, an abundance of tender Yeses; even when he *wounds* himself, this master of destruction, of self-destruction—the very wound itself afterward compels him *to live*—”.<sup>208</sup> How does the ascetic ideal achieve this?

The priest of this ideal owes his ability to deaden suffering to his recognition of illness (“he must be sick himself”); his art of *anaesthesia* enables him to establish dominion over the suffering. He brings salves with him, but at the same time he has acquired an external standpoint, keeping a certain distance to pain. Thanks to this distance, he sets up his strategy towards courses of illness: “...before he can act as a physician he first has to wound; when he then stills the pain of the wound *he at the same time infects the wound*”.<sup>209</sup> The curative treatment of the ascetic priest is only to combat suffering, not the *cause* that gives rise to suffering; to put the point more clearly, the priest does not concern himself with the real background of illness, he focuses on the symptoms or effects of illness, namely, suffering. The fundamental procedure of his cure is to deaden unendurable pain by means of a more violent emotion and to “drive it out of consciousness”. It should be noted that it is hard to call this procedure real medication, actually it is an ideological masking of real sickness and its repression in the depths of the unconscious.

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<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> *GM*, III, 15.

The cure of the ascetic priest, indeed, consists of interpreting suffering in terms of guilt, and punishment that is deserved. These terms are transferred to the sick person's reception of his own pain and thus provide a framework in which he experiences what he feels. Like an animal shut up in a cage, the sick man wishes, with a deep sadness, to be someone else; "but there is no hope of that. I am who I am: how could I ever get free of myself? And yet—I *am sick of myself!*". This is the lowest point a man can reduce himself to and Nietzsche—who claims that he is "the first psychologist"—diagnoses man's suffering *of man, of himself*, as the gravest and uncanniest illness.<sup>210</sup> The sick person seeks for a reason, a hint that explains his suffering and at last, he takes the first hint from the priest as to the reason of his suffering. He is inculcated that "he must seek it in *himself*, in some *guilt*, in a piece of the past, he must understand his suffering as a *punishment*".<sup>211</sup> To explain suffering in reference to "a piece of the past" means to *criminalize* the history of the sufferer and to poison his life with an inner feeling of debt, redemption. It also implies a life one lives in a wrong way. The ambiguity of "a piece of the past" expands the sphere of guilt. Thence, the sufferers operate on their past and present; "they tear open their oldest wounds, they bleed from long-healed scars".

This process constantly accumulates *ressentiment*, the most dangerous explosive, in the sick herd. The priest defends "his herd" against anything that makes sick, even against itself. He cannot allow anarchy and ever-threatening disintegration within the herd; he must take measure against this explosive so that it does not blow up the herd. For all these reasons, "the priest *alters the direction of ressentiment*".<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Cf. *GM*, II, 16, above.

<sup>211</sup> *GM*, III, 20.

<sup>212</sup> *GM*, III, 15.

To put it more clearly, the ascetic priest supplies a cause, an object, more precisely a subject, an “agent” to whom the sufferer vents his feelings. Nietzsche enacts this “ideological shift” in a form of dialogue:

‘I suffer: someone must be to blame for it’—thus thinks every sickly sheep. But his shepherd, the ascetic priest, tells him: ‘Quite so, my sheep! someone must be to blame for it: but you yourself are this someone, you alone are to blame for it—you *alone are to blame for yourself!*’<sup>213</sup>

Here, we face not only the alteration of the direction of *ressentiment*, but also, thanks to it, the organization of the herd through the instinct of weakness employed by the priest. The development of communal life, to which the sick feels himself a member in a relation of “belonging”, raises him above his personal experiences in his displeasure of himself and directs him towards a new search for an organization of the herd. This organization is an expression of a new interest: the herd provides the conditions for all the sick to cope with their profound feeling of weakness.

In effect, that the herd (as a social totality) is constructed in the way described by Nietzsche is completely open to dispute. A historical analysis of the material formation of social unities must be more complex and must occur in various unforeseen circumstances. For the leading motives that compel people to compose social structures vary from time to time in history, and it is immensely questionable to generalize them as unchangeable factors and project them to history. Nietzsche is, yet, not concerned with the historical factors in social formation, but rather, as

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<sup>213</sup> *Ibid* (cf. *TI*, IX, 34). In the original text: “‘Ich leide: daran muss irgend Jemand schuld sein’ — also denkt jedes krankhafte Schaf. Aber sein Hirt, der asketische Priester, sagt zu ihm: ‘Recht so, mein Schaf! irgend wer muss daran schuld sein: aber du selbst bist dieser Irgend-Wer, du selbst bist daran allein schuld, — *du selbst bist an dir allein schuld!*’” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 375).

compatible with the task he sets for himself, he focuses on the “psychological pattern” of the lasting motives and impulses in human agency.<sup>214</sup>

As a matter of fact, the priest is aware of this nature of the human psyche and he plays with the natural inclination of the sick to “shake off” their weakness: “the ascetic priest divines this instinct and furthers it; wherever there are herds, it is the instinct of weakness that has *willed the herd* and the prudence of the priest that has *organized it*”.<sup>215</sup>

Nietzsche carries the discussion a step further and emphasizes that to the extent that asceticism aims at combating depression by merely relieving the sickness (instead of curing it), the main practice of the priest is and remains to be the *exploitation* of the sense of guilt. In the hands of the priest, the feeling of guilt takes the form of *sin*—the priestly name of “bad conscience”. Nietzsche concludes that “we possess in it the most dangerous and fateful artifice of religious interpretation (...) from now on he is like a hen imprisoned by a chalk line. He can no longer get out of this chalk circle: the invalid has been transformed into ‘the sinner’”.<sup>216</sup>

Nietzsche insists that we have to keep away from the sight of “the sinner” whose gaze has always been fixed on the same object, on guilt. The sin determines all the paradigms in which one experiences one’s own agency. Furthermore, the sin gives permanence to the trauma, to the feeling of guilt and locates it in the soul under the threatening surveillance of a divine discourse: “God looks at the heart!” In this way, through “sinfulness”, morality wraps itself into the guise of religiosity and the

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<sup>214</sup> Actually, this comprehension of the herd and the term, the ‘herd’ itself as a conceptualization indicates a crucial problem that seriously damages Nietzschean genealogical analysis. We shall expand on this point in the last chapter.

<sup>215</sup> *GM*, III, 18, italics are mine; cf. *GS*, 116.

<sup>216</sup> *GM*, III, 20; cf. *TI*, VII, 2; *WP*, 397.

“kingdom of God” begins. It seems that Nietzsche formulates his attack on asceticism in two points:

(i) The ascetic ideal transforms the control of the authority over the weak into self-discipline through which the former perpetuates its existence in an everlasting and secure way. Nietzsche, once more, elucidates what the aim of this ideological tyranny is:

To render the sick to a certain degree *harmless*, to work the self-destruction of the incurable, to direct the *ressentiment* of the less severely afflicted sternly back upon themselves (‘one thing is needful’)—and in this way to *exploit* the bad instincts of all sufferers for the purpose of self-discipline, self-surveillance [*die Selbstüberwachung*], and self-overcoming.<sup>217</sup>

(ii) So as to achieve self-mastery as a guardian over his will and desire, man must deny and, if possible, annihilate all his desires, passions and affects. This is the task the ascetic sets for himself. Since all the feelings, actions and experiences of man are interpreted in terms of “guilt”, “sin”, “sinfulness”, “depravity” or “damnation” by the ascetic ideal, its religious, *anti-natural* morality turns to be a “meta-code” that condemns the instincts of life<sup>218</sup> and all vital and natural facts (inner or outer) are denigrated before the godlike spirituality: “Once the concept of ‘nature’ had been invented as the opposite of ‘God’, ‘natural’ had to become a synonym of ‘reprehensible’: this whole world of fiction is rooted in the *hatred* of the natural (of reality!)”<sup>219</sup>

Nietzsche calls the curative practice of Christian asceticism *castration* (*Verschneidung*) or *castratism* for it fights passions with excision. However, he sees this practice as an acute form of folly: “...to attack the passions at their roots means

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<sup>217</sup> *GM*, III, 16.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. *TI*, V, 4; *GS*, 326.

<sup>219</sup> *A*, 15.

to attack life at its roots: the practice of the Church is *hostile to life*".<sup>220</sup> The demand for the annihilation of desires necessitates a long, painful war that merely results in the increase of the *feeling of displeasure*—for a desire can never be destroyed, nor is it satisfied by means of the ascetic promise of “redemption”.

According to Nietzsche, the ascetic ideal employs, at least three strategies of cure to combat the sense of displeasure. The first strategy is to reduce the feeling of life to its lowest point; that is to say, to abolish will and desire so that they do not disturb one’s repose of deepest sleep: “no love; no hate; indifference; no revenge; no wealth; no work; one begs; if possible, no women, or as little as possible (...) The result, expressed in moral-psychological terms, is ‘selflessness,’ ‘sanctification’; in physiological terms: hypnotization”. He likens this technique to *hibernation* in certain animals, “the minimum metabolism at which life will still subsist without really entering consciousness”.<sup>221</sup> It aims at a sort of hypnotic sense of nothingness, at the absence of suffering.

Nevertheless his analogy must not mislead us. Christian ideology, as ideology does in general, does not restrict itself to creating a temporary hypnotization, but, as Nietzsche shows, it centers on an enduring, *systematic*, imaginary interpretation that deludes the individual about the fundamental conditions of his willing, of his agency.<sup>222</sup>

In social situations in which one cannot construct oneself as an agent, Christianity creates a systematic need for illusion that masks the conditions in

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<sup>220</sup> *TI*, V, 1; cf. II, 11, and *BT*, “Attempt at a Self-Criticism”, 5.

<sup>221</sup> *GM*, III, 17. In the original text: “...ein Minimum von Stoffverbrauch und Stoffwechsel, bei dem das Leben gerade noch besteht, ohne eigentlich noch in's Bewusstsein zu treten” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 379).

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *GS*, 347.

question and provides an imaginary sense of agency and the “feeling of power”.<sup>223</sup> That is why Christian ideology supplies an interpretation that evaluates the weakness of the slave/the sick not as an impotence of his personality but as a voluntary moral choice sanctified as “merit” (see above, pp. 75-76); whereby it satisfies the *ressentiment* of the slave. Now weakness turns into power: once more, values are reversed by the ascetic morality in accordance with the need for illusion in a concrete situation in which one cannot experience and express oneself as an agent.

The second technique much more common than this hypnotization of all sensitivity is *mechanical activity*, or in other words, “the blessings of work”. In this strategy, the ascetic ideal takes the mind of the sufferer off his suffering, whereby it directs all his concern towards activity—to the extent that nothing else but activity finds room in his consciousness. We can recognize mechanical activity in its various aspects “such as absolute regularity, punctilious and unthinking obedience, a mode of life fixed once and for all, fully occupied time, a certain permission, indeed training for ‘impersonality’, for self-forgetfulness, for ‘*incuria sui*’”<sup>224</sup>

The third technique that is more highly valued and associated with mechanical activity consists of prescribing a *petty pleasure*. The most widespread form of this remedy for depression is the pleasure of *giving* pleasure; to be sure, this technique is accompanied by an ideological function of being satisfied: the felicity of “slight superiority” involved in doing good, giving, relieving, praising, helping and rewarding is the most effective tool to alleviate the “inhibited” individual. Here, Nietzsche states that historically, this prescription was organized as a *regime* in

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<sup>223</sup> Mark Warren, “Nietzsche’s Conception of Ideology”, *Theory and Society*, vol. 13, no. 4 (Jul., 1984), 1984, pp. 553-555.

<sup>224</sup> *Lack of care of self*, *GM*, III, 18.

which associations for mutual aid, institutions for the poor, and for the sick evolved among the lowest strata as the material embodiment of this ideological cure.

At this juncture he draws attention to a crucial point: “by prescribing ‘love of the neighbor’ (see above p. 82), the ascetic priest prescribes fundamentally an excitement of the strongest, most life-affirming drive, even if in the most cautious doses—namely, of the *will to power*”.<sup>225</sup> The will to power as the basic drive underlying all agency, governs the activity of the ascetic ideal itself even in its reactive valuation of life. To be more precise, even in its denial of life and its conception of God as the opposite concept to life, the ideal forms a value judgment on the part of life; of *what* life? “of declining, weakened, weary, condemned life”.<sup>226</sup>

In actual fact, we can say that these strategies demonstrate one of the distinguishing dimensions of ideology, for Nietzsche’s accounts provide many hints for some inferences. He writes that when the ascetic priest combatted the suffering of the lower classes, of work-slaves or prisoners, “he required hardly more than a little ingenuity in name-changing and rebaptizing to make them see benefits and a relative happiness in things *they formerly hate*”.<sup>227</sup> This consideration has a brilliant insight which allows us to reaffirm that ideology reproduces itself when it turns the polarity of the valuation of the mass upside down. This is not a simple exploitation of the sense of displeasure and depression, but an *articulation* of a probable antagonism to a paradigm so that opposite values no longer threaten it, on the contrary they prop it up, with their very position being resignified/rebaptized. If ideology appropriates

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<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>226</sup> *TI*, V, 5.

<sup>227</sup> *GM*, III, 18; italics are mine. In the original text: “...so bedurfte es wenig mehr als einer kleinen Kunst des Namenwechsels und der Umtaufung, um sie in verhassten Dingen fürderhin eine Wohlthat, ein relatives Glück sehn zu machen” (*KSA*, vol. 5, pp. 382-383).

things that can otherwise turn against it, so as to *affirm* its truth and warrant its claims, then it achieves its purpose. This articulation is one of the fundamental operations of ideology.

Nietzsche notes that all these techniques of medication constitute “innocent” means in the struggles with displeasure. He underlines especially the “guilty” means employed by the priest. According to Nietzsche, they all have one common aim: to produce an *orgy of feeling* using the *enthusiasm* that lies in all strong sentiments; in comparison to others, this is the most influential strategy for deadening paralyzing pain. The ascetic priest appeals to all paths that lead to this goal; he employs, without discrimination, every strong affect that can explode in a violent way: “anger, fear, voluptuousness, revenge, hope, triumph, despair, cruelty”.<sup>228</sup> As already mentioned above, these excesses of feeling do not resolve sickness, on the contrary through turning the violence involved in these affects inward, they make the sick sicker.

This kind of cure itself is “guilty” for Nietzsche. It does not really cure the sickness, rather it exploits the sense of guilt and places it at the heart of punishment as a pay: “Every such orgy of feeling has to be *paid* for afterward”. Then, as we know, suffering is reinterpreted in the form of “sin”; the sick is turned into a “sinner”; all the feelings of the sick (who seeks a remedy, a meaning for his pain) are transformed into the feelings of the sinner; and finally all orgies of feeling step into the service of “sinfulness” and constitute its sentimental background: we see “everywhere the sinner breaking himself on the cruel wheel of a restless, morbidly lascivious conscience”.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> *GM*, III, 19.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

Unlike the other techniques of the cure, here we see that reinterpretation of suffering does not aim to deaden unhappiness by preventing pain from entering into consciousness. On the contrary it sets appropriate conditions to demand suffering instead of keeping it at bay—suffering becomes something consciously, voluntarily wished by this incurable sinner who cries for redemption. However, this consciousness itself has been paralyzed, distorted and castrated. In a passage Nietzsche makes clear the end of the story:

The old depression, heaviness, and weariness were indeed *overcome* through this system of procedures; life again become *very* interesting: awake, everlastingly awake, sleepless, glowing, charred, spent and yet not weary—thus was the man, ‘the sinner,’ initiated into *this* mystery (...) one no longer protested *against* pain, one *thirsted* for pain; ‘*more* pain! *more* pain!’ the desire of his [the ascetic priest’s] disciples and initiates has cried for centuries.<sup>230</sup>

In this way, all painful orgy of feeling, the secrets of the “torture chamber”, the ingenuity of invented hell are exploited in the service of the ascetic sorcerer; the first stage has been completed; he has won victory; and now his kingdom begins.

Is this a real cure? Does it suffice to heal the sick? Or more accurately, does it really aim to do this? Nietzsche does not accept the curative techniques the ascetic ideal preaches, nor does he believe that such kind of a cure can annihilate the real “cause” of the sickness.

On the one hand Nietzsche is convinced that while Christianity, like all other great religions, has fought against a certain weariness and heaviness, it acquired a refinement and ingenuity “in guessing what stimulant affects will overcome, at least for a time, the deep depression, the leaden exhaustion, the black melancholy of the physiologically inhibited”.<sup>231</sup> In actual fact, this melancholy is a more general and

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<sup>230</sup> *GM*, III, 20.

<sup>231</sup> *GM*, III, 17.

historical problem that seizes on large masses of people. Although in certain periods, the *feeling of physiological inhibition* dominates them, they do not distinguish its nature and effects; otherwise expressed, “owing to their lack of physiological knowledge, they do not diagnose it as such”. In this situation, morality and religion not only mask the conditions that engender this inhibition, but they also shift the sphere of the problem and substitute it for a moral framework; now “its ‘cause’ and remedy are sought and tested only in the psychological-moral domain”.<sup>232</sup> Nietzsche thinks that the *moralization* of the problem is enabled by religion and in turn it constantly reproduces religion.

On the other hand, although he acknowledges the proficiency of the ascetic ideal in developing a repertoire of palliatives and narcotics for consolation, Nietzsche unhesitatingly takes it as, so to speak, a “pseudo-remedy”. For him, the physiological cause of the sickness has to be unmasked and analyzed in its own terms and its own sphere without any ideological twist.

As a complementary remark, we have to say that Nietzsche cognizes human physiology not as an isolated domain but as something working in a firmly mutual articulation with psychology, as something mingled with and penetrable by the latter. While discussing the effect of anaesthesia that the sick cannot help desiring to relieve his pain, Nietzsche indicates this “interpenetration” as follows: “This alone, I surmise, constitutes the actual physiological cause of *ressentiment*, vengefulness, and the like: a desire to *deaden pain by means of affects*”.<sup>233</sup> To be sure he does not counter a psychological approach which endeavors to analyze the real nature of physiological inhibition and its psychic counterparts in its own realm of study. He

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<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> *GM*, III, 15.

objects to all kinds of psychology that do not recognize the specific character of symptoms and particularly the physiological aspects of an illness which manifests itself “as such”. A psychology which insists on disregarding the autonomous existence of physiological depression and on hiding it through transferring the problem to its own distorting moralized frame purposely misses the real solution, true remedy.<sup>234</sup>

Nietzsche was fully aware of the fact that all enterprises which aim to abolish desires, passions, to inhibit affects, cravings, lusts, to repress instincts are doomed to failure. To destroy the desires in order to avoid their unpleasant consequences amounts to the same thing as “plucking out” teeth so that they will no longer hurt. It follows from this that the cure of Christian asceticism is a “castration” of all powers of the will that make up our life:

The church fights passion with excision in every sense: its practice, its ‘cure,’ is *castratism*. It never asks: ‘How can one spiritualize, beautify, deify a craving?’ It has at all times laid the stress of discipline on extirpation (of sensuality, of pride, the lust to rule, of avarice, of vengefulness).<sup>235</sup>

Most probably, Nietzsche thinks that the annihilation of desires is impossible; that is why he suggests no way to really cure the suffering, save an abstract, artistic approach as “aestheticising a desire” and leaves it as a problem for modern times.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> For his more detailed elaborations about the ‘mutual articulation’ between the psychological sphere and the physiological one in man’s life, see *GM*, III, 21; *TI*, VI, 6; *A*, 51.

<sup>235</sup> *TI*, V, 1 (cf. *WS*, 37 and *WP*, 383). In the original text: “Die Kirche bekämpft die Leidenschaft mit Ausschneidung in jedem Sinne: ihre Praktik, ihre ‘Kur’ ist der *Castratismus*. Sie fragt nie: ‘wie vergeistigt, verschönt, vergöttlicht man eine Begierde?’ — sie hat zu allen Zeiten den Nachdruck der Disciplin auf die Ausrottung (der Sinnlichkeit, des Stolzes, der Herrschsucht, der Habsucht, der Rachsucht) gelegt” (*KSA*, vol. 6, p. 83).

<sup>236</sup> Nietzsche glorifies the interpretation that Greeks made about passions; he places the Greeks’ mode of evaluation in an opposition to Judaeo-Christian doctrine. In fact, he thinks that the spiritualization of passions is achieved and exemplified by their practices: “... the Greeks directed their idealistic tendency precisely toward the passions and loved, elevated, gilded, and deified them. Evidently, passion made them feel not only happier but also purer and more divine” (*GS*, 139). However the

It is very likely that the priest as the ideal castrate of God invites all people to this castrated and condemned life at issue; but to achieve this purpose he has to invade the lives of those who do not adopt the ascetic valuation.

*The Second Aspect of the Ascetic ideal:* As is known, all men of *ressentiment*, the unhappy ones, have inexhaustible outbursts against the fortunate ones. If so, then how do they fulfill their purpose of taking revenge on the strong, happy men? Here we are faced with a mechanism of, as it were, “reidentification” the ascetic ideal employs. The strong are encompassed by the ideology of the weak; they are expected to grant the nihilistic logic of the ascetic ideal, and thereby they poison their inner world and weaken their own will to power. The states and attitudes of the strong towards the weak is defamed, denigrated and branded with evil terms.<sup>237</sup> The sick enclose the healthy with an ideological discourse which addresses their conscientious feelings. Nietzsche makes clear when their discourse would gain its victory: “Undoubtedly if they succeeded in *poisoning the consciences* of the fortunate with their own misery, with all misery, so that one day the fortunate began to be ashamed of their good fortune and perhaps said one to another: ‘it is disgraceful to be fortunate: *there is too much misery!*’”<sup>238</sup>

It is hard to construe this expression as something that inspires mercy towards the weak. The ascetic ideology hails the strong, fortunate strata, demanding not their empathy, but their repentance. On the part of the fortunate, the establishment of the ascetic ideal, at the same time, governs the ideological process of transition from great pity for man to disgrace of being fortunate, healthy and strong. When the strong

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problem he now engages in (and answers ambiguously) is in what way and in which forms ‘modern’ man achieves the same gratification.

<sup>237</sup> *WP*, 345.

<sup>238</sup> *GM*, III, 14.

is compelled to the position that he comes to be ashamed of his happiness, he gets into the orbit of the ideology in which he experiences his life in terms of *nausea* at himself.

Indeed, he lives in spite of his real conditions, against himself: this can be counted as a specific *self-alienation* (*der Selbst-Entfremdung*). He is alienated from his real feelings, values and experiences; otherwise expressed, he becomes a man of conviction, a “believer” in the tenets of the ascetic morality. As a believer, he ceases to belong to himself becoming part of a morality that preaches altruistic values, selflessness. To be sure, in the end, strong, fortunate man of the previous periods turns to be an ascetic, self-sacrificed “hermit” in modern times.

Nietzsche, as a fundamental lack, does not explain how the ideology of the lowest, of the sick is adopted by the strong; to be sure, his account has certain indications that may probably help to form an analysis, however these are very inadequate. Broadly speaking, it is not clear for what reasons people adopt and sustain an ideology which is unfamiliar, remote and even contrary to their historical positions and interests.

We can remark that Nietzsche thinks that the ideology of the weak, the herd, the failures, constitutes a network of all practices for “subordination”, for “subjection”: “here the web of the most malicious of all conspiracies is being spun constantly—the conspiracy of the suffering against the well-constituted and victorious, here the aspect of the victorious is *hated*. And what mendaciousness is employed to disguise that this hatred is hatred!”<sup>239</sup> The ascetic hatred of life does not content itself with masking its hatred or with hiding the existence of the different perspective of the strong; this would be a defensive approach. These hopelessly sick

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<sup>239</sup> *GM*, III, 14.

people depreciate all features of the strong so that they condemn one to have those features, thereby they *monopolize* their moral values and declare them alone as good, just, superior:

They walk among us as embodied reproaches, as warnings to us—as if health, well-constitutedness, strength, pride, and the sense of power were in themselves necessarily vicious things for which one must pay some day, and pay bitterly: how ready they themselves are at bottom to *make* one pay; how they crave to be *hangmen*.<sup>240</sup>

The monopolization of this morality can be read as an enterprise for acquiring a status of *universality*. The ascetic mode of valuation, indeed, presents itself not as one type of morality beside which many other types are possible, but exclusively as sole morality, more precisely, as morality itself; it resists the possibility of the existence of different types of morality: “it says stubbornly and inexorably, ‘I am morality itself, and nothing besides is morality’”.<sup>241</sup>

Since Christian morality posits itself as a system of redemptional means for sickness, it needs sickness; therefore “to make sick” is its ultimate, secret aim. “Nobody is free to become a Christian: one is not ‘converted’ to Christianity—one has to be sick enough for it”.<sup>242</sup> In this process, it always evaluates all the painful experiences of people under cover of the religious interpretation it provides: it rationalizes suffering in life and it aims to “justify” itself as a unique, sole, monstrous mode of valuation so that it does not allow any other interpretation.<sup>243</sup> That is, the

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<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*; cf. *WP*, 283.

<sup>241</sup> *BGE*, 202 (cf. *A*, 32). In the original text: “...sie sagt hartnäckig und unerbittlich ‘ich bin die Moral selbst, und Nichts ausserdem ist Moral!’” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 124).

<sup>242</sup> *A*, 51.

<sup>243</sup> In a more comprehensive context Foucault writes that “if interpretation is the violent or surreptitious appropriation of a system of rules, which in itself has no essential meaning, in order to impose a direction, to bend it to a new will, to force its participation in a different game, and to subject it to secondary rules, then the development of humanity is a series of interpretations. The role of genealogy is to record its history”; for a different reading of Nietzsche’s genealogy see Michel

ascetic doctrine cannot content itself with merely rationalizing the unhappiness of the lower strata, it also strives to establish its predominance over all people regardless of their position or sentimental power. By asserting its predominance and “absolute superiority of rank” over all other power, it covers up its particularity, its value-laden standpoint, its perspectival stance. We see the doctrine in a brutal, stubborn struggle for universality against other probable systems of valuation and what is more it claims, as it were, an “eternality” that goes beyond all space and time.<sup>244</sup>

The ascetic ideal has a *goal*—this goal is so universal that all the other interests of human existence seem, when compared with it, petty and narrow; it interpretes epochs, nations, and men inexorably with a view to this one goal; it permits no other interpretation, no other goal; it rejects, denies, affirms, and sanctions solely from the point of view of *its* interpretation.<sup>245</sup>

When we construe the statement “it permits no other interpretation”, we have to take an important point into account; it seems that the ascetic ideal does not accept any rival doctrine, nor does it regard an alternative way of interpretation as possible; Nietzsche underlines the theoretical domination of the ascetic ideal in his later writings: “such a doctrine is also incapable of contradicting: it does not even comprehend that there are, that there *can* be, other doctrines; it cannot even imagine

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Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard, Sherry Simon (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 139-164. For an instructive investigation about the conceptualization of Nietzschean genealogy by Foucault see Michael Mahon, *Foucault's Nietzschean Genealogy: Truth, Power, and the Subject* (Albany: State University of New York, 1992).

<sup>244</sup> In one of his succeeding books, Nietzsche grounds his view about this transcendental position on its distance to (in his vocabulary, hatred of) *every* reality, on its aversion to every concept of time and space, to all that is solid, concrete (cf. *A*, 29).

<sup>245</sup> *GM*, III, 23 (cf. *A*, 26, 44; *WP*, 317). In the original text: “Das asketische Ideal hat ein *Ziel*, — dasselbe ist allgemein genug, dass alle Interessen des menschlichen Daseins sonst, an ihm gemessen, kleinlich und eng erscheinen; es legt sich Zeiten, Völker, Menschen unerbittlich auf dieses Eine Ziel hin aus, es lässt keine andere Auslegung, kein andres Ziel gelten, es verwirft, verneint, bejaht, bestätigt allein im Sinne *seiner* Interpretation” (*KSA*, vol. 5, pp. 395-396).

a contradictory judgment”.<sup>246</sup> However, that this doctrine comprehends itself as such does not make its self-reflection a true idea. On the contrary, this monopolistic tyranny is impossible and illusory.

We should bear in mind that Nietzsche appears to be conscious of this point, though in an ambiguous way. Speaking in general terms, I should point out that the sphere of values can hardly be dominated by one doctrine; the world of social values presents a complicated picture in which various and opposite systems fight for mastery. Even in a situation where a certain doctrine triumphs over its rivals, permeates into all socio-cultural life and determines all the details of our mode of valuation, nevertheless this ideological hegemony cannot be absolute, ultimate, complete and integral. In the ideological struggle for hegemony, all victories are transitory, all balances are susceptible destabilization, all positions can be displaced, all “truths” (or “faiths” held to be true) are open to attacks by rival views.

In other words, a dominant ideology that has gained its ascendancy over life is lacking in totality, uniformity; it cannot spread over all practice, actions, and experiences in a monolithic way. It is partial, fragmentary, contradictory, “porous”, so to speak; and as the sovereign doctrine leaves gaps, other ideologies fight to creep into these gaps; in this way these gaps/contradictions constitute the most “delicate fields” in which opposite systems of valuations severely struggle with each other and gain a certain position. Throughout the struggle parties employ various instruments; and we can find some hints that imply a parallel thought in Nietzsche’s mind. In its need and fight for power Christianity especially employs “concepts, doctrines, symbols with which one tyrannizes masses and forms herds”<sup>247</sup> and in order to represent itself before the herds as the one and only, it undertakes “transcendent”

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<sup>246</sup> A, 32.

<sup>247</sup> A, 42.

teaching, promises “salvation of soul”, preaches that “the world revolves around *me*” and converts the *ressentiment* of the masses to its chief weapon against all noble, high-spirited, happiness on earth. Hence the ascetic doctrine has striven to find and attack the weak points of the preceding moral ideology.

Nietzsche was probably aware that an ideology can be weakened and at last eliminated only through an attack of the rival ideology from the outside, by employing parallel notions that serve as counterparts to the former’s notions. We have a certain reasonable ground in his writings to think in that way:

In my ‘Genealogy of Morals’ I offered the first psychological analysis of the counter-concepts of a noble morality and a morality of *ressentiment*—the latter born of the No to the former: but this is the Judaeo-Christian morality pure and simple. So that it could say No to everything on earth that represents the ascending tendency of life, to that which has turned out well, to power, to beauty, to self-affirmation, the instinct of *ressentiment*, which had here become genius, had to invent *another* world from whose point of view this affirmation of life appeared as evil, as the reprehensible as such.<sup>248</sup>

This passage expresses that a moral ideology does not restrict itself to “reversing” the net of values posited by the previous ideology, but it sets up its own system: this is the invention of another world over which the former mode of valuation no longer rules, it ceases to *dominate*, yet it does not cease to exist “totally”.

Nietzsche believes that the claim of the ascetic ideology for universality and supra-historicity rests, also, on the ideological formation of its agent, the priest and the role he plays; he totally divides racial, social, historical differences: “...consider how regularly and universally the ascetic priest appears in almost every age; he belongs to no one race; he prospers everywhere; he emerges from every class of society”.<sup>249</sup> Thus asceticism, owing both to the universal content of its aim and to the

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<sup>248</sup> A, 24.

<sup>249</sup> GM, III, 11.

universal context of its agent presents itself as a doctrine which is no longer a “doctrine” in the sense of a specific teaching of ideas that represents particular interests, values and concerns: as is well-known, ideology never displays its “ideological character”; that is to say, it introduces itself as something that has already-always existed, as commonsensical, universal, eternal:

If eternal means, not transcendent to all (temporal) history, but omnipresent, trans-historical and therefore immutable in form throughout the extent of history, I shall adopt Freud’s expression word for word, and write *ideology is eternal*, exactly like the unconscious.<sup>250</sup>

What can be inferred from all the above-mentioned clues is that Nietzsche does not give a direct and satisfying explanation about how and with which mechanisms and strategies the strong, well-constituted, fortunate, noble men are convinced to adopt the new morality of the slave and are incorporated into it, about what kind of power-struggles, pressures and resistances occur during the establishment of the new ideology; save that he reveals that the slave ideology changes their psychological relation to social experience. It fills the psychological need to give a meaning to their new experiences.<sup>251</sup> However, it still remains to be unanswered why the noble, strong people feel the (psychological) need to change and replace their own morality with another, contrary ideology that belongs to a divergent, remote, even contrary life. Here, as elsewhere, Nietzsche seems to disregard this gap.

As has been said, Christianity creates a fictive world and this world of pure fiction is grounded on hate of all things that are natural, of reality itself, for reality

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<sup>250</sup> Althusser, p. 109.

<sup>251</sup> Warren defends that when Nietzsche considers psychological function as an aspect of ideology, society does not drop out of the picture: “For Nietzsche for psychological needs are often *systematically* reproduced by concrete social situations. *Ressentiment* is not a natural psychological attribute, but a psychological effect of the social condition of slavery”; see Warren, pp. 554-555. However that “society does not drop out of the picture” does not mean that Nietzsche conceptualizes and incorporates it as an indispensable, constructive component in/throughout his analysis.

gives rise to a profound annoyance, a displeasure. As we have seen, Nietzsche, as a general account, maintains that the Christian doctrine serves the psychological role of rationalizing the pain of the weak by providing a systematical illusion of their reception of their real, actual conditions. However, insofar as this illusion allows its fiction to be systematical, enduring, immutable facts, it substitutes its fictive “reality” for reality; in other words, it itself becomes “reality”.

At this very juncture we think that Nietzsche expresses, however implicitly, one of the fundamental aspects of ideology: “Who alone has good reason *to lie his way out of reality*? He who *suffers* from it. But to suffer from reality is to be a piece of reality *that has come to grief*”.<sup>252</sup> In other words, Christian ideology directs people towards an imaginary reality (in which, for instance, people accept the inevitability of pain and they no longer oppose<sup>253</sup>). To lie his way out of reality is to enter into an imaginary reality. This imaginary world produces an ideological representation in which one experiences one’s relation to the real conditions of life in a distorted way.

The main distinctive mark of ideological representation is to construct one’s relation to one’s real situation upon *imagination*. Throughout the whole text of *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche describes the structurally *imaginary character* of the world Christianity creates and sustains against reality. The world that the Christian religious moral ideology sets up is entirely a world of imagination that incorporates people in

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<sup>252</sup> A, 15. In the original text: “Wer allein hat Gründe sich *wegzulügen* aus der Wirklichkeit? Wer an ihr *leidet*. Aber an der Wirklichkeit leiden heisst eine *verunglückte* Wirklichkeit sein” (KSA, vol. 6, p. 182).

<sup>253</sup> Asceticism interpretes suffering as a necessary cost and then articulates it into its moral paradigm as a virtue, as a merit, so that one no longer protests it, rather glorifies it; this articulation is itself a necessary operation of ideology: “There is no trick that enables us to turn a poor virtue into a rich and overflowing one; but we can reinterpret its poverty into a necessity so that it no longer offends us when we see it and we no longer sulk at fate on its account” (GS, 17).

its regime of interpretation, that is, in its causes, effects, beings, its science, psychology, teleology, and so on.

Obviously, these indications shed light on the appropriation of the ascetic valuation by the weak, but once more, do not elucidate the issue, that is, how and why the strong, the fortunate adopt the ascetic ideology, by which mechanism a morality (say, a noble one) is replaced by another morality (say, slave morality). Nietzsche seems not to be concerned with this replacement; in a relevant passage, he merely writes that “Christianity was a victory, a nobler outlook perished of it”,<sup>254</sup> but leaves the issue unsettled.

In the succeeding sections of *Genealogy*, Nietzsche discusses whether a contrary ideal to the ascetic ideal is possible, or more concretely, whether science can be the opposite of the ascetic ideal. Nietzsche’s answer is immensely clear: being an opposite ideal aside, science is the latest and noblest form of the ascetic ideal.<sup>255</sup> The scientific discipline is the heir to the tradition of Christian confession. His striking considerations about the status of science in modern times and its relation to the ascetic ideal can be summarized as follows:

- Science is not a self-reliant and self-sustaining activity that locates itself against the ascetic ideal; on the contrary, it cannot create values, but it needs an ideal of value, a power in creating value to serve it to believe in itself. Nietzsche defends that science without any presupposition is no longer possible; in other words science rests on a “faith”, a value (ascribed to truth), an ideal, thus a philosophy “so that

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<sup>254</sup> A, 51.

<sup>255</sup> GM, III, 23.

science can acquire from it a direction, a meaning, a limit, a method, a *right* to exist”.<sup>256</sup> What is that faith?

- Nietzsche’s “men of knowledge”, his “heroic, free, very free spirits”, these Nay-sayers and outsiders of today are unconditional on one point: unconditional will to truth. In fact, in their faith in truth they are more rigid and unconditional, uncritical than anyone. He criticizes positivist conception in the scientific realm, and writes that it expresses a fixing on the factual, mere facts, a sort of fatalism of *petits faits*<sup>257</sup> so that, as a complementary attitude it rejects all interpretation and all that have the essence of interpreting (of forcing, adjusting, omitting, inventing, and so on). This unconditional will to truth that underlies these men’s attitude is, for Nietzsche, their faith in the ascetic ideal, even if as an unconscious imperative: “it is the faith in a *metaphysical* value, the absolute value of *truth*, sanctified and guaranteed by this ideal alone (it stands or falls with this ideal)”.<sup>258</sup>

- Hence this correlative relation between science (i.e., its positivist conception) and the ascetic ideal rests upon the same metaphysical faith in “correlation” established between the truth and God, that is faith in the godlike nature of truth held by even Nietzsche’s godless friends: “even we seekers after knowledge today, we godless ones and anti-metaphysicians still take our fire, too, from the flame lit by a faith that is thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also the faith of Plato, that God is the truth, that truth is divine”.<sup>259</sup> Science has a prior conviction that sacrifices all other convictions to itself: the ultimate need is truth,

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<sup>256</sup> *GM*, III, 24.

<sup>257</sup> *Small facts*.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*; cf. *WP*, 1 and *GS*, 347.

<sup>259</sup> *GS*, 344.

in relation to which everything else has merely second-rate value. This standpoint which implies that nothing is more important than truth is firmly connected with the ascetic ideal's denigration of our natural, vital drives, feelings and motives. Posed in this way, science constructs a *world* in which nothing is demanded more than truth and thus attributes a moral value to it and thereby to itself, so that all practices, inferences are ranked in relation to this supreme value, truth in that world. Nietzsche reckons this approach as affirming "another world" than our world of life, nature, and history.

Life, by itself, has no value; it gets values through us and to the extent that we create values; this means that life acquires meaning by our valuation and interpretation of facts. However since all interpretive activity involves inventing, falsifying, error, deception, illusion, and so on, the unconditional will to truth denies the very nature of life and contrasts life with the world of its inferences, methods, logical fabrications. To sum up, science extends its faith in the divine truth over all practices in life just as the ascetic ideal extends its faith in divinity over the whole system of values in life. To put it more correctly, positivism claims for science the same godlike standpoint of reality held by Christian metaphysics.

- Thus, science and the ascetic ideal are necessarily *allies*; their common ground, namely the "overestimation of truth" is supported by another "physiologically" common foundation: to *impoverish* life through debilitating vital powers (affects, desires, and so on); in Nietzsche's words, "the affects grown cool, the tempo of life slowed down, dialectics in place of instinct, seriousness imprinted on faces and gestures (seriousness, the most unmistakable sign of a labored metabolism,

of struggling, laborious life)”.<sup>260</sup> But at this moment a pivotal question comes to the fore: on what basis can the criticism of the will to truth be offered? Nietzsche insists that the will to truth requires *justification*, the lack of justification causes a gap in every philosophy, because philosophers are unaware of this point and because the ascetic ideal rules over all philosophy

... because truth was posited as being, as God, as the highest court of appeal—because truth was not *permitted* to be a problem at all. Is this ‘permitted’ understood?—From the moment faith in the God of the ascetic ideal is denied, a *new problem arises*: that of the *value* of truth. The will to truth requires a critique—let us thus define our own task—the value of truth must for once be experimentally *called into question*.<sup>261</sup>

If this is the case, if a critique of the value of truth is necessary, in the name of what can it be realized? Is not the enterprise to make truth a problem, to call it into question executed in order to attain truth itself? A critique of this kind, paradoxically, aims to acquire truth, the value of which it questions; more precisely, a critique of the unconditional will to truth cannot keep away from this will, on the contrary it reproduces its “unconditionality” once more. Even a genealogical analysis to decipher the interpretive and partial perspectival nature of the ascetic ideal has to be realized in the name of truth.

To the problem posed here, Nietzsche suggests an indirect answer, however in prophetic terms. He claims that “truthfulness” as the identifying character of

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<sup>260</sup> *GM*, III, 25. This remark does not express Nietzsche’s final view concerning science; in his later works he designates science as “the wisdom of the world” against which ‘faith’ is the veto (*A*, 47), as “the sound conception of cause and effect” (*A*, 59). He glorifies Greeks and Romans because he believes that “all the presuppositions for a scholarly culture, all scientific *methods*, were already there; the great, the incomparable art of reading well had already been established—that presupposition for the tradition of culture, for the unity of science; natural science, allied with mathematics and mechanics, was well along on the best way—the *sense for facts*, the last and most valuable of all the senses, had its schools and its tradition of centuries” (*A*, 59) It seems that Nietzsche attempts to redefine science on the basis that affirms the relevance of the “testimony of the senses” (*TI*, III, 3); for an attentive and detailed discussion on this issue, see Clark, pp. 95-117.

<sup>261</sup> *GM*, III, 24.

master morality has been saved and appropriated by Christian morality and now it is represented in a refined form in “atheism”.<sup>262</sup> Atheism works without any element of the ascetic ideal; it does not rest on ideals of any kind save *its will to truth*. For that reason, it is not the opposite of the ascetic ideal, but rather it constitutes one of its latest stages, of its intrinsically terminal form: “it is the awe-inspiring *catastrophe* of two thousand years of training in truthfulness that finally forbids itself the *lie involved in belief in God*.”<sup>263</sup> Nietzsche thinks that “self-overcoming” (*Selbstaufhebung*) is the law of the nature; and all great things destroy themselves through an act of self-overcoming. Here the self-overcoming of Christian morality is performed by resting upon one of the forces it has cultivated, namely, truthfulness: it eventually turned against morality.<sup>264</sup> Nietzsche concludes the discussion with a hopeful prediction that one can read as a prophecy:

In this way Christianity *as a dogma* was destroyed by its own morality; in the same way Christianity *as a morality* must now perish, too: we stand on the threshold of *this* event. After Christian truthfulness has drawn one inference after another, it must end by drawing its *most striking inference*, its inference *against* itself.<sup>265</sup>

To be sure, this prediction (perhaps a wish) seems immensely naive; if Christian ideology will perish, under which conditions shall this be realized? Will it happen

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<sup>262</sup> This involvement does not merely express that an ideology, with its certain elements, perpetuates its existence under the dominion of the prevailing ideology, but also that these elements have gradually been adopted and appropriated by the latter.

<sup>263</sup> *GM*, III, 27.

<sup>264</sup> *WP*, 5.

<sup>265</sup> *GM*, III, 27. In the original text: “Dergestalt gieng das Christenthum *als Dogma* zu Grunde, an seiner eignen Moral; dergestalt muss nun auch das Christenthum *als Moral* noch zu Grunde gehn, — wir stehen an der Schwelle *dieses* Ereignisses. Nachdem die christliche Wahrhaftigkeit einen Schluss nach dem andern gezogen hat, zieht sie am Ende ihren *stärksten Schluss*, ihren Schluss *gegen* sich selbst” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 410). Nehamas seems to defend this Nietzschean position saying that “perhaps, that is, asceticism will be undermined from within” (*Ibid.*, p. 132); in fact it is possible to find some sections where Nietzsche allows for explanations of this kind. See the following passage from *Daybreak*: “there are even cases in which morality has been able to turn the critical will against itself, so that, like a scorpion, it drives its sting into its own body” (*D*, P. 3).

under the pressure of the destructive blows of opposite world views or due to an inner necessity? If the latter is the case how can this necessity be construed?

To be sure, Nietzsche concedes that an “edifice” like Christianity cannot be ruined all at once; nevertheless, plainly he conceives the elimination of Christian morality by its inner, forcible motive as a logical moment of its ideological development, thus a cultural phenomenon. He considers the conditions that enable destruction of this sort in terms of the level of “ideas” so that truthfulness, thanks to making an inference against itself, becomes a determining force in ending Christian ideology: “this will happen, however, when it poses the question ‘*what is the meaning of all will to truth [der Wille zur Wahrheit]?*’ ”.<sup>266</sup>

Nietzsche appears to take the problem as a cultural fact; he supposes that the end of Christianity must be something that will occur by reason of the intrinsic phases of its intellectual, cultural life. Can it be seen as a *reflective* issue that is resolved in an act, a “movement” in consciousness towards a higher position? However he attaches great importance to the encompassing value resulting from “problematizing” the will to truth: “what meaning would *our* whole being possess if it were not this, that in us the will to truth becomes conscious of itself as a *problem?*”. And lastly, it seems that Nietzsche imagines an antagonism and its “overcoming” which occurs within the cultural boundaries to be something which has or acquires a force for transforming all life and history and for starting a tremendous change that closes a phase of history and starts a new cultural epoch: “As the will to truth thus gains self-consciousness—there can be no doubt of that—morality will gradually *perish* now: this is the great spectacle in a hundred acts

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<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

reserved for the next two centuries in Europe—the most terrible, most questionable, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles”.<sup>267</sup>

As a matter of fact, to problematize the will to truth implies questioning all the qualities attributed to it by our valuation, that is, the godlike, divine status one assumes it to have is an invention we fabricate. Perhaps, what a genealogist undertakes to be a task is to liberate the truth of its moral commitments and this enterprise is a part of Nietzsche’s grander project, namely, removing the moral interpretation of the world. It will thereby be possible to discard the *moral* value of truth. Intrinsically, in the background of his objection to the moral commitment to truth lies his central *formulation* sustaining his attack against the moral mode of evaluation that is taken as “given”,<sup>268</sup> as “unconditional”: all seeking for knowledge is motivated and framed by moral valuation; in his own words, “the pretended pure drive after knowledge in all philosophers is dictated by their moral ‘truths’—is only apparently independent—”.<sup>269</sup> This picture is complemented by his standpoint which asserts that morality is/becomes the highest, supreme value<sup>270</sup> and that everything is grasped under the light of moral value, of being *morally* determined. Posed in this way, we are impelled to pursue how he construes morality itself as a “problematic”, locating it in a broader picture.

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<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> Cf. *BGE*, 186; *WP*, 269.

<sup>269</sup> *WP*, 346.

<sup>270</sup> *WP*, 336 and 401.

## Morality as a Problematic

But he who wants to dissect has to kill; yet only for the sake of better knowledge, better judgement, better living...

*Wanderer and His Shadow*

Nietzsche's fundamental objection to moral ideology is that mankind is harmed through morality and it "castrates" all things that make one what one is. For morality becomes a comprehensive ideology and it permeates and invades through all life to the extent that "everything of value in man, art, history, science, religion, technology" is compelled to be proved as conditioned, Nietzsche stresses that morality has to be "problematized". But what he means by "making problematic" seems somehow ambiguous and controversial.

In fact, at first sight, Nietzsche's approach to morality oscillates between two different positions, and this point can also be found in the general plan of his analysis presented in some fragments.<sup>271</sup> On the one hand, he criticizes "morality in general" as a condition of life and growth, as a historical structure that coincides with the needs and demands of one's social life.<sup>272</sup> He suggests that it must be read as a symptomatology, as a sign-language (*die Zeichensprache*) that betrays the conditions of value-systems within a society.

On the other hand, he specifically opposes a certain mode of morality and condemns particular moral evaluations; here he is no longer an impartial and

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<sup>271</sup> Cf. *WP*, 266.

<sup>272</sup> *WP*, 256.

objective critic, but rather an advocator of explanations made from a definite perspective. That he calls himself “the first immoralist”<sup>273</sup>—who aims to translate denatured moral values back into their nature, i.e., into their natural “immorality”—makes this oscillation more intricate. We will examine his analysis of morality in order to see the whole picture in which his genealogical considerations can be truly placed.

Nietzsche, following his “great teacher Schopenhauer’s” tracks, is concerned with the *value* of morality, questions the values of moral values themselves and makes their critique his principal task. As is known he writes: “for that there is needed a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which they grew, under which they evolved and changed” and he adds a sentence which manifests that at times he incorporates two different epistemic positions already stated into a unified, integral plan as if they are no longer incompatible with each other: “morality as consequence, as symptom, as mask, as tartufferie, as illness, as misunderstanding; but also morality as cause, as remedy, as stimulant, as restraint, as poison”.<sup>274</sup>

He thinks that morality is conditioned by historical needs; and for that reason, it is a scheme produced from within a net of particular demands, interests and therefore it cannot be confined into one, universal code; instead it is multiform and has various meanings: “so we modern men are determined (...) by *different* moralities; our actions shine alternately in different colors, they are rarely univocal—and there are cases enough in which we perform actions *of many colors*”.<sup>275</sup> In these

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<sup>273</sup> *EH*, “The Untimely Ones”, 2.

<sup>274</sup> *GM*, P, 6 (cf. *WP*, 263). In the original text: “Moral als Folge, als Symptom, als Maske, als Tartufferie, als Krankheit, als Missverständniss; aber auch Moral als Ursache, als Heilmittel, als Stimulans, als Hemmung, als Gift” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 253).

<sup>275</sup> *BGE*, 215; cf. *GS*, 116.

many colors, he asserts that morality is an expression of the conditions of life, more precisely, it is, like philosophy, religion, science, art, a form through which the basic motive of life, the *will to power*, exercises its strength.

Mankind has acquired its present moral conception through a long history. A moral mode of valuation is constituted on “virtues”, and these are essentially formed by the fears and hopes of a community. In the beginning, they were “drives” which worked as a communal reflex against what seemed dangerous to the survival of the community, as means for its preservation; and then they were promoted to the honorary status: “virtue”. These strong drives promoted to virtues (like enterprising spirit, severity, hardness, foolhardiness, vengefulness, rapacity, the lust to rule and so on) also determined the measure of what is immoral: all drives that are threatening for the utility of the community, i.e., all opposite values. Here there can be no room for altruistic valuation, no morality of “neighbor love” (*der Nächstenliebe*). Nietzsche designates this stage as *extra-moral* (*aussermoralische*).

However, in a later phase in which the society is structured as a firm unity and established on a secure ground, the network of all values undergoes a radical change and the balance of power struggles produces a new paradigm in accordance with the situation of new needs and interests; new perspectives of valuation arise. In this peaceful state, previous drives are regarded to be destructive in a fearful way so that the highest drives are considered as things that “snap” the spine of the society. Therefore they are defamed, depreciated, and “are now experienced as doubly dangerous, since the channels to divert them are lacking, and, step upon step, they are branded as immoral and abandoned to slander. Now the opposite drives and

inclinations receive moral honors; step upon step, the herd instinct draws its conclusions”.<sup>276</sup>

In conclusion, this herd morality declares itself to be morality itself, not merely one type beside other types (it also has attained dominance in Europe today; in that sense modern morality is herd animal morality, for Nietzsche). What here constitutes the new moral perspective is, once more, *fear* as the mother of morals.

We know that at times, leaving this “speculative anthropology”, he presents herd morality organized and glorified by Christianity as a “concrete” instance of this second stage and designates it to be the most dangerous illness, the greatest calamity in mankind’s history: under its interpretation, for a long time, morality has ceased to be “the expression of the conditions for the life and growth of a people”, now it is “no longer its most basic instinct of life, but become abstract, become the antithesis of life”.<sup>277</sup> This representation, so far, expresses the general outline of his analysis on which all the details of his refined considerations rest. Posed in this way, Nietzsche, with the implications involved in his scheme, allows us to make further complementary inferences:

1- Drives considered to be good, right or necessary are not to be felt so for their own sake, but for their utility and accordance to the standards of society.<sup>278</sup> The value of a moral value is not derived from within itself; “nothing is valuable ‘in itself’”; equally, there is no action that is, in itself, good or bad; it is exactly devoid of value.<sup>279</sup> The value of certain qualities does not reside in them but it is ascribed on

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<sup>276</sup> *BGE*, 201.

<sup>277</sup> *A*, 25.

<sup>278</sup> Cf. *WP*, 284, 255.

<sup>279</sup> Cf. *WP*, 260, 292, 353.

them from the outside according to their consequences that correspond to advantages for society or humanity.

2- The transformation of a drive to the level of “virtue” is realized by the *external* intervention of an interpretation made in society in a way that it becomes a tradition, a custom which commands obedience.

For Nietzsche, the relation of commandment-obedience works as the constitutive element *in all* religio-moral ideologies: “In things in which no tradition commands there is no morality (...) What is tradition? A higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands what is *useful* to us, but because it *commands*”.<sup>280</sup> Indeed, a custom need not serve any use in order to set up a dominance over the individual, in this sense, its value of utility may be dubious; however, irrespective of its content, just by its function in sustaining one’s unconditional obedience to the established rule, it has a certain indispensable value *as such*. This does not merely indicate the irrational, arbitrary structure of customs, but also underlines the great principle that initiates civilization: “any custom is better than no custom”.<sup>281</sup>

3- Obedience to rule or to an authority requires “sacrifices”: man is kept away from his real needs and desires, and puts his own properties into the service of life that moral tradition sanctions; he leaves his true nature, unique self: “Sacrifice and selflessness as distinguishing, unconditional obedience to morality, and the faith that one is everyone’s equal before it”.<sup>282</sup> Morality itself is an “ideology of sacrifice” designed to impel one to stand against one’s real nature and real capacity that distinguishes one from others; it presupposes a homogenization.

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<sup>280</sup> *D*, 9.

<sup>281</sup> *D*, 16; cf. *HH*, 96.

<sup>282</sup> *WP*, 275, cf. *D*, 9.

In this way, each person becomes ordinary and resembles the others; the conditions of existence for exceptional, rare, extraordinary individual have almost been destroyed. Morality addresses the instinctual dispositions of the individual towards the herd, that is, the “sense of community” within his psychic nature; or more correctly, morality is herd instinct itself in the individual. This obedience is secured through a long compulsion, by employing both ruthless and intelligent methods.

4- That morality is conditioned and thus relative to historical interests implies that its struggle for rule occurs around the establishment of a tyranny over nature and life: “the curious fact is that all there is or has been on earth of freedom, subtlety, boldness, dance, and masterly sureness, whether in thought itself or in government, or in rhetoric and persuasion, in the arts just as in ethics, has developed only owing to the ‘tyranny of such capricious laws’”.<sup>283</sup> This compulsion is the prerequisite for social organization and, to be sure, for humanity.

As we have seen in *Genealogy*, in the history of civilization, certain systems of punishment and surveillance, religious bans, commitments, moral sanctions, obligations derived from the relation between debtor-creditor, cultural inhibitions, and so on, impose definite forms on native powers, drives and desires. However this compulsion creates the most favorable conditions for the development of a socio-cultural world:

What is essential ‘in heaven and on earth’ seems to be, to say it once more, that there should be *obedience* over a long period of time and in a *single* direction: given that, something always develops, and has developed, for whose sake it is worth while to live on earth; for example, virtue, art, music, dance, reason, spirituality—something transfiguring, subtle, mad, and divine.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> *BGE*, 188.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*

Hence the fight for power aims at obedience; it sets up its tyranny through the ideological imperative of morality over humanity (“You shall obey—someone and for a long time: *else* you will perish and lose the last respect for yourself”), not addressed to the individual, but to people, races, ages, classes.

In actual fact, owing to the means of morality, tyranny tames one’s passions, trains the inner world to discharge its emotional energy in conformity to rule, disciplines one’s mode of thought, compels thinking to narrow schemes, constraints perspectives into a specific table of values, implants limits for one’s horizon; to sum up, it *educates* the spirit. In this context, Nietzsche states one of his central formulations, asserting that here, morality works on “teaching the *narrowing of our perspective*, and thus in a certain sense stupidity, as a condition of life and growth”.<sup>285</sup> This point, in a coherent way, runs throughout all his writings unremittingly.

5- Morality is needed in the struggle to prevail over nature and to tyrannize over one’s “wild” animality. In this process, he lays stress on a point that is, again, one of his leitmotives: “Expressed in a formula, one might say: *every* means hitherto employed with the intention of making mankind moral has been thoroughly *immoral*”.<sup>286</sup>

Indeed, all development in morality was made possible by immoral means and for immoral ends; otherwise expressed, the ascendancy of moral values has been carried out with the assistance of immoral forces and affects; because morality, in its battle against the basic instincts of life, has always employed brutal strategies such as

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<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.* In the original text: “...welche die *Verengerung* der *Perspektive*, und also in gewissem Sinne die Dummheit, als eine Lebens — und Wachstums-Bedingung lehrt” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 110).

<sup>286</sup> *TI*, VII, 5. For relevant remarks in his other works where he argues the same point, see also *WS*, 44; *D*, 97; *WP*, 272, 311, 315, *passim*).

repression, inhibition, cruelty, unjust sanctions, punishment, suffering, revenge, *ressentiment*, i.e., the greatest immoral practices. Recall, says Nietzsche that, to make morality necessitates the unconditional will to the contrary; this seems a specific instance of his general thesis on all victory in general: “The victory of a moral ideal is achieved by the same ‘immoral’ means as every victory: force, lies, slander, injustice”.<sup>287</sup> Nietzsche claims that neither philosophers, nor priests, neither teachers of doctrines, nor activists of morals ever doubted their *right* to employ immoral tools, to tell lies. In this sense, he says that morality is not only a special case, or an instantiation of immorality but also, in more general terms, it is a *form* of immorality.

6- Morality has been a useful error and to the extent that it served the preservation of life, it was necessary as well. Nietzsche thinks that we have to express gratitude for achievements of morality up to now, but today, that is, in the age of nihilism, “it is only a *burden* which may become a fatality! Morality itself, in the form of *honesty*, compels us to deny morality”.<sup>288</sup> The moral interpretation of the world has lost its credentials, and its God-like order, its authority that gives sense, value and an aim to our lives has disappeared. This loss or failure brings about nihilism. Morality, now, as the ideology of self-denial, of self-annihilation, as the denigration of life-sustaining drives, as the antithesis of life, bans all the forces on the basis of which life and development exist. That is why Nietzsche argues that the destruction of morality is a precondition for liberating life.

But how is it achieved? When we recall that an ideological discourse frames our conceptual horizon and shapes our comprehension of the world and of ourselves,

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<sup>287</sup> *WP*, 306.

<sup>288</sup> *WP*, 404; emphasis added.

how and to what extent is it possible to realize a radical criticism while remaining within the prevailing paradigm that is expected to be questioned?

Nietzsche assuredly, acknowledges this issue; in the book with which he later states that his “campaign against morality begins”,<sup>289</sup> he writes on the “sense for custom” acquired from the previous experiences it frames, as follows: “this feeling is a hindrance to the acquisition of new experiences and the correction of customs: that is to say, morality is a hindrance to the creation of new and better customs: it makes stupid”.<sup>290</sup> In fact, the problem of overcoming the obstacle (morality) changes in time, and in his mature period, he will elucidate his formulation: the point is not destroying a particular mode of moral valuation any more; the overcoming of morality requires locating oneself beyond “good and evil”, beyond all pseudo-antithetical values, not replacing a moral ideal (say the ascetic ideal) with others that reproduce its life-inimical forces in other forms and masks, but on the contrary, drying up the marsh that produces metaphysical conception.<sup>291</sup>

Liberation from the moral valuation of life necessitates an overall reevaluation of all values and this project is fulfilled by his “free spirits”, “new philosophers” equipped with “a *will* which is a kind of cruelty of the intellectual conscience and taste”.<sup>292</sup> Their aim should be to translate the individual back into his natural world, to recognize the basic text of “natural man” contrary to the morality that would

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<sup>289</sup> *EH*, “The Dawn”, 1.

<sup>290</sup> *D*, 19.

<sup>291</sup> Deleuze interpretes that one should annihilate the *place* of any ideal which involves the same force, the same will to truth that needs and sustains the same concept of truth; or else the conditions of existence of *metaphysics* are kept intact: “We do not replace the ascetic ideal, we let nothing of the place itself remain, we want to destroy the place, we want another ideal in another place, another way of knowing, another concept of truth, that is to say a truth which is not presupposed in a will to truth but which presupposes a *completely different will*.” Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 99.

<sup>292</sup> *BGE*, 230.

*unself* man (*Die Entselbstungs-Moral*) and glorify this “selflessness”. Nietzsche, in his inquiry about morality, presents certain considerations that indicate how it is possible to move beyond the moral mode of interpretation of the world and life, and to lead to a new “place” in which “morality is not attacked, it is merely no longer in the picture” .<sup>293</sup> In order to grasp how moral interpretation drops out of the picture, we must see the place to which morality addresses itself; otherwise expressed, where does moral discourse speak and penetrate?

Morality does not confine itself to covering one’s inner world with a cloth prepared outside by tyrannical procedures; there must be more refined techniques by virtue of which it obtains a power in a firm, secure, and permanent basis. Indeed moral ideology, as ideology always does, devises itself as a positive, permissive, even encouraging, inspiring and conducive system. In order to reach the status of the reigning moral order, moral ideology is to take root in the depths of the human psyche; that is, it attains its power over “forces” which operate at the *subrational* level of the psychic nature. It seems that Nietzschean genealogy works by resting on this supposition among others, and Nietzsche embraces it as an essential part of his account.

Indeed, he rests the relation of commanding-obeying that is central to ideology upon the spiritual “disposition” of the herd man, because nothing but the need for obedience has been exercised and cultivated for a long period; so that “it may fairly be assumed that the need for it is now innate in the average man, as a kind of *formal conscience* that commands: ‘thou shalt unconditionally do something, unconditionally not do something else,’ in short, ‘thou shalt.’ This need seeks to

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<sup>293</sup> *EH*, “The Dawn”, 1. In the original text: “Die Moral wird nicht angegriffen, sie kommt nur nicht mehr in Betracht” (*KSA*, vol. 6, p. 330).

satisfy itself and to fill its form with some content”.<sup>294</sup> Morality essentially operates on this *inherited* herd instinct of obedience.

By the same token, for Nietzsche, the fact that obedience entails and in turn reproduces a certain ignorance, a narrowing of perspective, a limiting horizon, a gaze of some nook, deliberate exclusion, a contentment with the dark, an inner denial of this or that thing, a refusal to let it approach—all are motivated by the needs of the “drives of the spirit”, and what is more, “all of which is necessary in proportion to a spirit’s power to appropriate, its ‘digestive capacity,’ to speak metaphorically—and actually ‘the spirit’ is relatively most similar to a stomach”.<sup>295</sup> Hence, the education of the spirit by moral ideology is to be carried out through mobilizing forces of drives in the service of the power of the spirit.

In Nietzsche’s view, ideology draws upon our inner inclinations, penetrates into our sense impressions in part, colors our world,<sup>296</sup> and draws up the content of our experiences imposing its conceptualizations upon our mind. If “spirit” is something that commands effort to be master both within and around itself, then an attempt to displace morality entails a profound understanding of the composition of the human psyche and the way in which moral evaluations employ the needs and capacities of the will in the spirit:

The spirit’s power to appropriate the foreign stands revealed in its inclination to assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the manifold, and to overlook or repulse whatever is totally contradictory—just as it involuntarily emphasizes certain features and lines in what is foreign, in every piece of ‘external world,’ retouching and falsifying the whole to suit itself. Its intent in all this is to incorporate new ‘experiences,’

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<sup>294</sup> *BGE*, 199. In the original text: “...darf man billig voraussetzen, dass durchschnittlich jetzt einem Jeden das Bedürfniss darnach angeboren ist, als eine *Art formalen Gewissens*, welches gebietet: ‘du sollst irgend Etwas unbedingt thun, irgend Etwas unbedingt lassen’, kurz ‘du sollst’. Dies Bedürfniss sucht sich zu sättigen und seine Form mit einem Inhalte zu füllen” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 119).

<sup>295</sup> *BGE*, 230.

<sup>296</sup> *WP*, 260.

to file new things in old files—growth, in a word—or, more precisely, the *feeling* of growth, the feeling of increased power.<sup>297</sup>

In this sense, as we cited above, he writes that the forcible feeling of the spirit for morality becomes an obstacle to the production of new interpretations and the attainment of new experiences just for its disposition to articulate what is new into its old scheme and whereby to ensure growth.

In this context, I can claim that the destruction of morality is an enterprise hard to accomplish, because both morality and an opposite movement against it apply to the *same* dispositional ground. Indeed, an ideology which has a claim for universal and binding truths and wants to be domineering, strives to *structure* one's inner world through its needs and forces; ideology encompasses one's spiritual features and presses all drives into its service. It “works” on the depths of the psychic nature of the individual; human spirit is the *place (topos)* in which ideological (either moral or religious) processes “take place”.

I think that a critique of moral ideology with an irreconcilably opposite idea, has to refer to the *same* spiritual disposition in which morality itself springs up, grows and holds; hence it has to attack the natural, spiritual basis of morality *without being itself transformed into ideology*. How is such an enterprise possible, or can it be possible? When we try to follow the steps of Nietzsche's resolution, we encounter that the composition of his analysis consists of two interpenetrable segments.

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<sup>297</sup> *BGE*, 230. In the original text: “Die Kraft des Geistes, Fremdes sich anzueignen, offenbart sich in einem starken Hange, das Neue dem Alten anzuähnlichen, das Mannichfältige zu vereinfachen, das gänzlich Widersprechende zu übersehen oder wegzustossen: ebenso wie er bestimmte Züge und Linien am Fremden, an jedem Stück ‘Aussenwelt’ willkürlich stärker unterstreicht, heraushebt, sich zurecht fälscht. Seine Absicht geht dabei auf Einverleibung neuer ‘Erfahrungen’, auf Einreihung neuer Dinge unter alte Reihen, — auf Wachsthum also; bestimmter noch, auf das *Gefühl* des Wachsthums, auf das Gefühl der vermehrten Kraft” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 167).

## A critical inquiry of morality

Nietzsche claims that so far nobody has ventured a real critique of moral valuation. In his opinion, a “science of morals” has not been truly established so far. All philosophers who deal with the study of morality believe that they can furnish a “rational ground” for morality regardless of whether they have the *right* to take morality as something “given” or not. Posed in this way, in all “science of morals”, until now, the problem of morality, or the suspicion that there was anything *problematic* here, was lacking; their attempt to supply a rational ground results in reproduction of morality itself. What they do is

merely a scholarly variation of the common *faith* in the prevalent morality; a new means of *expression* for this faith; and thus just another fact within a particular morality; indeed in the last analysis a kind of denial that this morality might ever be considered problematic—and certainly the very opposite of a examining, analysis, questioning, and vivisection of this very faith.<sup>298</sup>

Philosophers have done nothing more than projecting their presuppositions into the moral domain. The same is true for the historians of morality. They share the popular, commonsensical superstition of a Christian morality and in accord with it, they criticize tenets of this or that particular morality. However, in so far as they never ask themselves the vital question, “what is the value of moral values?”, “from where is this value arisen?”, they go on to preserve the moral domain. They do not criticize the domain of morality, but rather false morality, as it were, so-called false opinions about its origin and its metaphysical terms, assumptions; “and then suppose that they have criticized the morality itself. But the value of a command ‘thou shalt’

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<sup>298</sup> *BGE*, 186.

is still fundamentally different from and independent of such opinions about it and the weeds of error that may have overgrown it”.<sup>299</sup>

In other words, to uncover the erroneous tenets of morality does not suffice to falsify and to criticize morality as it is, because its value arises from the conditions of existence and requirements of life that it tries to meet. Morality motivates faith and justifies itself through it, since it acknowledges that one needs faith in order to grow, to cling to a “firm hold” that makes one “blessed”. Therefore even if an element of faith for a morality is refuted at different times, it will continue to exist, since the need to consider it “true” will remain unchanged: “Even if a morality has grown out of an error, the realization of this fact would not as much as touch the problem of its value”.<sup>300</sup>

Behind this consideration lies a thought that is substantial to Nietzsche’s general philosophy: falsity, untruth, illusion, delusion or error—all are necessary and indispensable for our life; they all belong to the structure of nature, to the general economy of life.<sup>301</sup> Culture or civilization has been established owing to them; if they are removed, humanity should also be removed; to renounce false opinions bring on a denial of life. In *The Gay Science*, he writes that “the conditions of life might include errors”,<sup>302</sup> and a few years later, on the same lines, he clarifies his claim and says that the falseness of a judgment cannot be regarded as an objection, a refutation

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<sup>299</sup> *GS*, 345.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> This assertion constitutes a leitmotif of Nietzschean thinking and reveals his inspiring insight concerning the complicated economy of life and its *libidinal* character (*GS*, 1; *BGE*, 23; *EH*, “Why I Am a Destiny”, 4). for an original interpretation of Nietzsche’s texts in this context see Henry Staten, *Nietzsche’s Voice*, (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1990).

<sup>302</sup> *GS*, 121; cf. *WP*, 493.

for it, “the question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-cultivating”.<sup>303</sup> Then he goes a step further:

One can refute a judgment by proving its *conditionality*: the need to retain it is not thereby removed. False values cannot be eradicated by reasons any more than astigmatism in the eyes of an invalid. One must grasp the need for their existence: they are a consequence of *causes* which have nothing to do with *reasons*.<sup>304</sup>

The passage supplies two basic points which are central to his critique of morality and can be generalized to his critique of “ideology”.

1- Our moral judgments, values and actions are conditional and particular; they have always existed in the specific conditions of man, people, races and ages, and this conditionality is not confined to the historical circumstances of a creature’s life construed in a narrow sense; “all virtues are physiological *conditions*: particularly the principal organic functions considered as necessary, as good. All virtues are really refined *passions* and enhanced states”.<sup>305</sup> Our virtues have evolved from old drives (love of mankind from the development of the sexual drive, for instance), are conditioned and demanded by our weakness, our fears.

In fact, Nietzsche is convinced that our morality as a particular interpretation of the world is a symptom (a product) of *decadence* and the latter is intertwined with physiological decay to the extent that it becomes impossible to distinguish moral

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<sup>303</sup> *BGE*, 4.

<sup>304</sup> *WP*, 262; emphasis added. In the original text: “Man kann ein Urtheil widerlegen, indem man seine Bedingtheit nachweist: damit ist die Nothwendigkeit, es zu haben, nicht abgeschafft. *Die falschen Werthe* sind nicht durch Gründe auszurotten: so wenig wie eine krumme Optik im Auge eines Kranken. Man muß ihre Nothwendigkeit, *dazusein*, begreifen: sie sind eine *Folge* von Ursachen, die mit Gründen nichts zu thun haben” (*KSA*, vol. 13, 16 [83], p. 515).

<sup>305</sup> *WP*, 255. In the original text: “Alle Tugenden physiologische *Zustände* namentlich die organischen Hauptfunktionen als nothwendig, als gut empfunden. Alle Tugenden sind eigentlich verfeinerte *Leidenschaften* und erhöhte Zustände” (*KSA*, vol. 10, s. 24 [31], p. 662). This recurring theme occupies Nietzsche in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: “Once you suffered passions and called them evil. But now you have only your virtues left: they grew out of your passions ... in the end all your passions became virtues and all your devils, angels” (*Z*, I, 5).

degeneration from physiological degeneration: “the former is merely a symptom-complex of the latter; one is necessarily bad, just as one is necessarily ill”;<sup>306</sup> even in consideration of symptoms, namely, misleading forms in systems of belief,<sup>307</sup> moral values are “illusory values compared with physiological values”.<sup>308</sup> It follows from this that what is the *moral-ideological* (both virtue and vice) is conditioned by material-physiological impulses; the former is added to the latter.<sup>309</sup>

Nietzsche, in the same context, denies altruistic moral valuation that implants self-denial and self-sacrifice, imposes one to divest of one’s most vital instincts and self-interests, and levels and equates all before authority. Unegoistic morality instigates hatred of egoism against oneself (as with Christianity) or against another, the privileged (as with socialism); and in that sense it is motivated under the predominating influence of revenge and of the feelings of self-preservation, from which values such as solidarity, cooperation, equality, love of neighbor arise. Hence behind the punishment of egoistic values lies an instinct of self-preservation on the part of the underprivileged. In other words, so-called unegoistic values are developed

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<sup>306</sup> *WP*, 334. Recall that Foucault underlines the decisive importance of the ‘body’ in Nietzsche’s historical analysis of the subject: “Effective history (...) shortens its vision to those things nearest to it—the body, the nervous system, nutrition, digestion, and energies; it unearths the periods of decadence”, see Foucault, p. 155.

<sup>307</sup> Danto argues that moral judgements together with their imaginary status are sustained and stabilized into mythologies and mythologies into systems of belief., Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005 [1965]), p. 121.

<sup>308</sup> *WP*, 392.

<sup>309</sup> According to some authors the term ‘physiology’ has at least three meanings in Nietzsche’s writings: (i) physiology as dealing with the primarily biological and vital processes of living organisms; (ii) physiology which provides the foundation or unconscious forms of men’s understanding of themselves (cf. *BGE*, 11); and (iii) physiology as a process of struggle for power in individuals and societies (*BGE*, 13-14). These three distinctive definitions are taken from Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, “Artistische decadence als physiologische decadence: Zu Friedrich Nietzsches später Kritik am späten Richard Wagner”, *Communicatio Fidei: Festschrift für Eugen Biser*, ed. Horst Bürkle and Gerhold Becker (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1983), cited by Claudia Crawford, “Nietzsche’s Physiology of Ideological Criticism”, *Nietzsche as Postmodernist: Essays Pro and Contra*, ed. Clayton Koelb (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 162-163.

against the higher, rarer, stronger, against the *order of rank* between not only men, but also moralities.<sup>310</sup>

If this is the case, if unegoistic morality is made up for the interests of the weak, then it is created through “immoral fights” for domination over morals; and to conclude, “the cult of altruism is a specific form of egoism that regularly appears under certain physiological conditions”.<sup>311</sup> Despite this fact, every altruistic morality posits the “general happiness” or “welfare” as an ultimate ideal and thereby it figures itself as “unconditional” and addresses itself to everybody as a “general good” hiding its conditional, particular and immoral basis, its fundamental motives.

Nietzsche’s objection is that the claim of “one” morality for all is damaging and dangerous; to say “what is right for one is fair for the other” is totally immoral and serves to rasp the “necessary” differences of rank between men and between moralities. Moralities speak in an unconditional position and they generalize where one must not generalize: “‘Good’ is no longer good when one’s neighbor mouths it. And how should there be a ‘common good’! The term contradicts itself: whatever can be common always has little value”.<sup>312</sup> The discourse of all moralities which addresses themselves to humanity in an unconditional position, for the sake of general welfare is always deceitful, totalizing and monolithic.

2- Secondly, the passage taken from *The Will to Power* cited above implies another aspect of the issue: morality/ideology imposes a different mode of thinking so that it justifies itself through an imaginary causality. To be more precise, ideology

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<sup>310</sup> Nietzsche asserts that an order of rank is and should be preserved among things, among our valuations; the order of rank of the evaluations in the world expresses a differential level according to which a people, a society, a human being lived and valued (*BGE*, 224, also cf. 219, 257).

<sup>311</sup> *WP*, 373.

<sup>312</sup> *BGE*, 43; cf. 198.

creates its own *rationale*. If one wants to introduce a new kind of comprehension of morality, one has to push it into historical, more correctly, genealogical thinking, so that one grasps decisive motives in the emergence of a morality and segregates incidental consequences. This attempt will and must involve the destruction of the body of “*imaginary causalities* hitherto believed in as the foundations of customs”.<sup>313</sup> When tradition becomes “holy”, morality gains an “unquestionable” status, and prohibits *causal*, critical thinking and induces one to think in a *moral*, imaginary system: “Wherever one has not yet been capable of *causal* thinking, one has thought *morally*”.<sup>314</sup> Nietzsche thinks that there is an inversely proportional relation between causal and moral thinking: “In the same measure as the sense for causality increases, the extent of the domain of morality decreases”.<sup>315</sup> For that reason, he defends that critical, liberating thought must be recovered and maintained against moral interpretation.

Ideology centers itself on a special mode of *rationality* that substitutes its imaginary, fictitious notions for critical approaches. “Faith” as the foundational article of moral ideology means not *wanting* to know what is true; instead morality demands one to believe in its imaginings, in the “reality” of its imaginary scope. Here “truth” amounts to nothing, it does not “touch” or “contact with” reality because the real itself turns out to be an illusion: “Moral judgments, like religious ones, belong to a stage of ignorance at which the very concept of the real, and the

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<sup>313</sup> *D*, 10.

<sup>314</sup> *WP*, 327; cf. 271.

<sup>315</sup> *D*, 10.

distinction between what is real and imaginary, are still lacking; thus ‘truth,’ at this stage, designates all sorts of things which we today call ‘imaginings’”.<sup>316</sup>

On the other hand, the dominance of the moral paradigm is rendered possible by our need to believe in what is imaginary, by our disposition to require factitious causes (“sin”, “payment for unpleasurable feelings”; or “good conscience”, “trust in God”, “obedience to authority” for pleasurable feelings). Therefore, the moral paradigm of a culture is adopted by man in so far as it suits his inner *pathological* nature; and in turn, his diseased nature reinforces the ascendancy of his moral regime. In this very context, Nietzsche firmly associates morality with social psychology: “Morality and religion belong altogether to the *psychology of error*: in every single case, cause and effect are confused; or truth is confused with the effects of *believing* something to be true”.<sup>317</sup>

In another work, he returns to the same issue and makes a long list of components that build up the imaginary order of Christianity. The decisively important point here is that Christianity, like all ideological edifices, “fabricates” its own psychology and does this by means of the sign language of the *religio-moral idiosyncrasy*. All these imaginary, pseudo articles do not have any explanatory power, they merely reproduce its fiction in an unending way. So far as they are not correct explanations, but a particular (*mis*)*interpretation* of the world, they have been considered as “symptoms, a language of sign”. So construed, they cannot be analysed

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<sup>316</sup> *TI*, VII, 1. In the original text: “Das moralische Urtheil gehört, wie das religiöse, einer Stufe der Unwissenheit zu, auf der selbst der Begriff des Realen, die Unterscheidung des Realen und Imaginären noch fehlt: so dass ‘Wahrheit’ auf solcher Stufe lauter Dinge bezeichnet, die wir heute ‘Einbildungen’ nennen” (*KSA*, vol. 6, p. 98).

<sup>317</sup> *TI*, VI, 6. Leiter asserts that Nietzsche explicates the morality associated with Christianity not in terms of some supernatural forces, but in terms of *psychological* mechanisms (*ressentiment*, internalized cruelty and the will to power) and that this approach shows that genealogy is a distinctively *naturalistic* history; see Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 172.

on the basis of their immediate, literal contents; on the contrary, as long as they are “apprehended” truly, they can be utilized for developing a fruitful channel to penetrate into the inner operations of ideology. Nietzsche underlines the necessity of organizing an inquiry that rests on a radically efficient method to construe moral articles:

Semeiotically, however, they remain invaluable: they reveal, at least for those who know, the most valuable realities of cultures and inwardnesses which did not know enough to ‘understand’ themselves. Morality is mere sign language, mere symptomatology: one must know what it is all about to be able to profit from it.<sup>318</sup>

Ideology is not an erroneous article of faith, but an imaginary representation of real, actual feelings and actions in a systematic manner. Nietzsche’s enterprise is that if an ideological paradigm constitutes a *sign-language*, invents its specific *idiosyncrasy* and justifies itself within a *psychology*, then symptomatology is bound to attack the heart of the phenomena; namely the forces and conditions that produce symptoms, and enable one to interpret them.

#### The elements of Nietzsche’s “resolution”

Actually, within the limits of Nietzsche’s concern, it is hard to see a concrete “resolution” in the strict and literal sense of the term. Since we are concerned with his critique of ideology and thereby the construction of the subject as an essential category of ideological practices, we shall close the chapter with a discussion about the elements of his critique that do not provide a resolution but imply an alternative and liberating conception to give meaning to our new experiences in the future, and

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<sup>318</sup> *TI*, VII, 1. In the original text: “Aber es bleibt als *Semiotik* unschätzbar: es offenbart, für den Wissenden wenigstens, die werthvollsten Realitäten von Culturen und Innerlichkeiten, die nicht genug *wussten*, um sich selbst zu ‘verstehn’. Moral ist bloss Zeichenrede, bloss Symptomatologie: man muss bereits wissen, *worum* es sich handelt, um von ihr Nutzen zu ziehen” (*KSA*, vol. 6, p. 98).

to pave the way for a true resolution. If resolution indicates an alternative, well-organized, positive ethical doctrine, Nietzsche does not offer any “good” morality of such kind that his followers can adopt and propagate.

At times Nietzsche calls himself an “immoralist” and here immoralism can be considered not as an opposite position against some particular types of morality, but as a position that repudiates all metaphysical references, and locates itself beyond the mode of moral evaluations. However in the years that follows, his approach becomes more complicated and harder to subsume under a specific category. The historians of morality (he refers especially to English historians) proceed from a misguided premise in such a way that,

they affirm some consensus of the nations, at least of tame nations, concerning certain principles of morals, and then they infer from this that these principles must be unconditionally binding also for you and me; or, conversely, they see the truth that among different nations moral valuations are *necessarily* different and then infer from this that *no* morality is at all binding. Both procedures are equally childish.<sup>319</sup>

This remark clearly rules out any probable commentary that locates him in a relativist position. On the contrary he argues that if one wants to capture the gist of morality as an ideology, one should move beyond the limits of institutions, practices, that is, the bounds of the spirit and climate of one’s own time; one should leave behind one’s particular environment and the considerations derived from it, and should focus on other peoples, ages and past experiences. One can catch a sight of the real problems of morality merely by comparing many moralities. On the other hand, in so doing, Nietzsche’s critique is not directed towards the concrete content of particular moralities and moral actions, but the motives in moral ideologies that impose norms to which our actions have to conform, have to obey.

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<sup>319</sup> *GS*, 345.

To put it more precisely, he focuses on the interpretive context in which man devises moral values that turn into “norms”, and on the historical context in which the mode of interpretation produced by our motives is assessed to be ascending or descending for life: Has the mode of interpretation “hindered or furthered human prosperity?”.<sup>320</sup> Moral evaluation is nothing but a way of interpreting, an *exegesis* (*die Auslegung*). What is the value of our moral evaluations and moral tables? They emerge from within, for and in relation to life, that is, the will to power. They are created under the impulses of the will to power; so conceived, it reveals the degree of forces cathected on it. He adds that “the exegesis is a symptom of certain physiological conditions, likewise of a particular spiritual level of prevalent judgments: Who interprets?— Our affects”.<sup>321</sup>

We know that the affects—as factors that belong to the conditions of life and as determining elements that are presented in the “general economy of life”—are instances of the will to power; posed in this way, his remark cited above becomes clearer: “The will to power *interprets* (...) In fact, interpretation is itself a *means* of becoming master of something”.<sup>322</sup> This is the primary point that one who wants to pave the way for constituting a typological analysis of morals as a “science of morals”, should take notice of. What is required by such an analysis is “to collect material, to conceptualize and arrange a vast realm of subtle feelings of value and differences of value which are alive, grow, beget and perish—and perhaps attempts to present vividly some of the more frequent and recurring forms of such living

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<sup>320</sup> *GM*, P, 3.

<sup>321</sup> *WP*, 254. As mentioned above, Owen construes that Nietzsche’s doctrine locates the will to power as the *affective (or erotic) structure of reason* or alternatively, as the *architectonic interest of our affective constitution*; and he defends that this doctrine provides a way of thinking about “how our cognitive interests are constituted and ranked in terms of their affective character”, Owen, pp. 44-45.

<sup>322</sup> *WP*, 643; the last emphasis added.

crystallizations—all to prepare a *typology* of morals”.<sup>323</sup> The preparation should serve as an “elaboration” of the doctrine of the development of the will to power. This is the first element of his approach towards, if any, a probable resolution.

Nietzsche reminds us that various types of morals, art, knowledge, concepts, and other cultural patterns are “means” through which man enhances his life; the means of formulas, forms, categories or signs enable one to reduce the chaotic multiplicity to a manageable schema. However an essential error is repeated here, Nietzsche says that man conceives the means as measures of value, instead of employing them as instruments for rendering the world calculable and meaningful. He adopts the means for their own sake and thereafter turns them into aims disregarding that they are merely means produced conditionally in a historical context: “a certain species of man treats the conditions of its existence as conditions which ought to be imposed as a law, as ‘truth’, ‘good’, ‘perfection’: it tyrannizes— It is a form of faith, of instinct, that a species of man fails to perceive its conditionality, its relativity to other species”.<sup>324</sup> In this way man transforms the means of life into standards of life, measures of things; ultimately what is done is making “absolute” something “conditioned”.<sup>325</sup>

In that context, morality must be read as a symptom that (when questioned mercilessly) betrays forces which produce table of values and conceal the existence of a dreadful, pre-moral means behind the holiest names and attitudes. As has been seen above, this *symptomatology*, i.e., the study to recognize “in what has been

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<sup>323</sup> *BGE*, 186.

<sup>324</sup> *WP*, 354. Likewise, for Nietzsche science (as “the transformation of nature into concepts for the purpose of mastering nature”, *WP*, 610) falls into the category of ‘means’.

<sup>325</sup> *WP*, 584. In the original text: “Bedingtheit zu verabsolutieren” (*KSA*, vol. 13, s. 14 [153], p. 336).

written so far a symptom of what has so far been kept silent” constitutes the second element of the critical solution he deliberates.<sup>326</sup>

The question concerning the way in which moral judgments and values are designed calls for a specific inquiry which strives to unfold the strands of multi-layered concepts that penetrate our moral judgments and the mode in which we experience the world surrounding us. Such an inquiry attempts to pick out the multifarious strands that have been linked to each other to form a unity and compose the concept. In Nietzsche’s mind, in such a firm unity, various strands cannot be separated, discriminated and thus defined, because in the unity, they are not visible any more, they cease to be strands, their historical roots disappear. Thus if a critical inquiry intends to elucidate what is, in fact, involved in the concept and under what conditions its meanings have evolved and changed, it has to turn to history, to the period in which the meanings were not interwoven so firmly, consequently it will become possible to pursue them in a disentangled manner. This methodological leitmotif constitutes Nietzsche’s starting point; his discussion on punishment, one of his fundamental concepts, presents an exemplification of the model of his analysis.

Punishment, like other institutions, cannot be explained in terms of its present function; in other words, the present work of an institution cannot be projected backwards to capture the cause of its origin and its origin does not provide a “true” explanation of its existence.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Note that Vattimo asserts that the notion of genealogy does not represent Nietzsche’s conclusive response for his critical attempt in respect of truth and interpretation of “symptoms”; see Gianni Vattimo, *Dialogue with Nietzsche*, trans. William McCuaig (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006 [2000]), p. 59.

<sup>327</sup> From his earlier writings on, Nietzsche condemns all traditional histories of morality which maintain that “what stands at the beginning of all things is also what is most valuable and essential”

By the same token, the utility or purpose of a thing (of an organ, an institution, a custom, a law, a political usage, an artistic or religious form) means nothing concerning its origin or the reason why it originated: “the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie worlds apart”.<sup>328</sup> Values, institutions and practices, like moral ones, emerge in various historical developments, not in a necessary and rational way but under complex, contingent and even irrational struggles of power. These practices and institutions are not various manifestations of a pure, unchanging, permanent origin. They have not been designed for the current purposes, utilities and employments. Instead, they have undergone changes in various evaluations in accordance with the new historical needs of the general system of each period, as in the case of the slave. The slave has reversed the values of “good and evil”, redirected *ressentiment* towards a moral rebellion, reinterpreted the feeling of guilt-punishment and turned the instinct inwards. All these values and institutions were put into the service of Christianity, transposed and appropriated in the fabrication of a new ideal. Nietzsche claims:

[W]hatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it; all events in the organic world are subduing, a becoming master, and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous ‘meaning’ and ‘purpose’ are necessarily obscured or even obliterated.<sup>329</sup>

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and thereby glorify the origin (*WS*, 3); he calls this conception ‘metaphysical after-shoot’ (also cf. *D*, 37, 44).

<sup>328</sup> *GM*, II, 12.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.* In the original text: “...dass etwas Vorhandenes, irgendwie Zu-Stande-Gekommenes immer wieder von einer ihm überlegenen Macht auf neue Ansichten ausgelegt, neu in Beschlag genommen, zu einem neuen Nutzen umgebildet und umgerichtet wird; dass alles Geschehen in der organischen Welt ein *Überwältigen, Herrwerden* und dass wiederum alles Überwältigen und Herrwerden ein Neu-Interpretieren, ein Zurechtmachen ist, bei dem der bisherige ‘Sinn’ und ‘Zweck’ nothwendig verdunkelt oder ganz ausgelöscht werden muss” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 313).

In all that follows, a historical approach must try to unfold those layers of “meanings” that are obscured and superimposed one on the other in a coincidental manner, so as to construct a continuous sign-chain; “the entire history of a ‘thing’, an organ, a custom can in this way be a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations whose causes do not even have to be related to one another but, on the contrary, in some cases succeed and alternate with one another in a purely chance fashion”.<sup>330</sup>

In accordance with this methodic point, Nietzsche writes that meaning is a fluid element in historical changes and thence the concept “punishment” possesses not one, certain, precise meaning but a whole synthesis of “meanings”. Since it has been employed for the most various aims, its history has a complex process that crystallizes and concentrates into a unity—it is a concept that is hard to disentangle and analyze, and totally *indefinable*. If today the reasons of punishment are not explicitly known, it is because all the repertoire of meanings semiotically condensed into the concept throughout history, makes definition impossible. Hence Nietzsche adds that “only that which has no history is definable”. When he points out a long list of the various ways in which the “same” penal procedure has been employed, this list, once more, demonstrates how the meaning is contingent, supplemental, haphazard and how it has been interpreted, shifted, adapted to totally different ends. In the long run, the concentration of overlapped meanings comes into being and eludes our attention, masking its multi-layered history of emergence.

Nietzsche’s account of “sin-sinfulness” proceeds along the same lines. As has been discussed above, the notion “sin”, just as the other highest notions (guilt, debt,

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<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*

free will, soul, redemption, eternal life, and the like), is invented under the account of the ascetic ideology: “If, for example, it makes men happy to believe that they have been redeemed from sin, it is not necessary, as a condition for this, that man is, in fact, sinful, but merely that he feels sinful”.<sup>331</sup> Here “instincts of weakness” are preserved within its moralization. One’s acts are esteemed as wrong, desires are interpreted as deviance, or inclinations are degraded as animal on the basis that they all confirm natural impulses—all are subsumed under the category of “sin” because of the life-devaluing interpretation of the ascetic doctrine. Nietzsche formulates the presupposition he proceeds on in considerably clear terms: “... man’s ‘sinfulness’ is not a fact, but merely the interpretation of a fact, namely of physiological depression”.<sup>332</sup> As is known, this view can only be significant under his fundamental proposition which claims: “*there are no moral phenomena, there is only a moral interpretation of these phenomena. This interpretation itself is of extra-moral origin*”.<sup>333</sup> This assertion should be read under the light of his larger thesis which is against positivism: there are no facts, “facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations”.<sup>334</sup> Just as every activity of signification (art, science, religion, traditional philosophy, and so on), morality may merely be an interpretation of facts in a definite standpoint, more correctly a *mis*interpretation.

Hence if one intends to find out the shifts and recomposition in an interpretive field, one should disentangle the layers of meanings and of concepts

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<sup>331</sup> A, 23.

<sup>332</sup> GM, III, 16.

<sup>333</sup> WP, 258. In the original text: “...es gibt keine moralischen Phänomene, sondern nur eine moral<ische> Interpretation dieser Phänomene. Diese Interpretation selbst ist außermoralischen Ursprungs” (KSA, vol. 12, s. 2 [165], p. 149).

<sup>334</sup> WP, 481. In the original text: “...gerade Thatsachen giebt es nicht, nur Interpretationen” (KSA, vol. 12, s. 7 [60], p. 315).

taking their state of constant fluctuation into account, since the moral domain is invariably figured in accordance with ever-changing conditions. Meaning is always historical and for just the same reason it necessitates the “sense of historicity”. This point carries our discussion a step further, to a new point of view.

If a type of analysis can show that the ideology through which we become a subject and within which we experience ourselves and the world is conceptually constituted by an arrangement of strands in particular form, then one can infer that it can be, entirely for analytical aims, reconstructed in a retrospective way, backwards, towards the past. To be sure one cannot change the past by action or will; will is impotent towards what was happened in the past; as Zarathustra says “the will cannot will backwards; and that he cannot break time and time’s covetousness, that is the will’s loneliest melancholy”.<sup>335</sup> On the other hand, Nietzsche asserts that one can lay one’s will into things by reinterpreting them; likewise, one can reframe the past by reorganizing one’s comprehension into a new perspective and project this perspective into the future. Here, we can see that the organization of ingredients (strands) of ideology in the past is regarded to be *contingent*; and seen in this way, it becomes possible to find in his approach, an occasion to *rewoven* them into a different form in/for the future.<sup>336</sup> So conceived, Nietzsche’s enterprise seems to introduce an opportunity for totally liberating our conception from everything produced within

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<sup>335</sup> Z, II, 20. In the original text: “Nicht zurück kann der Wille wollen; dass er die Zeit nicht brechen kann und der Zeit Begierde, — das ist des Willens einsamste Trübsal” (*KSA*, vol. 4, p. 180).

<sup>336</sup> For a similar emphasis on the possibility of tying these strands in alternative ways and of constituting a position without the tie to the ascetic interpretation see Maudemarie Clark, “Nietzsche’s Immoralism and the Concept of Morality”, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche’s Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Richard Schacht, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 15-34; also Geuss points out the contingent unity of separate strands of meanings provided by an interpretation, and defends that genealogy differs from tracing a ‘pedigree’ in main aspects and that the whole point of *Genealogy* is to reveal the historically contingent character of conjunction of a number of diverse lines of development, see Raymond Geuss, “Nietzsche and Genealogy”, *Morality, Culture, and History: Essays on German Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 1-28.

ideology. A critical, deliberate and cold standpoint which enables man to sustain a delicate “distance” to the *ideological* is accomplished merely by *genealogy*. This is the third element of his “solution”.

However the question remains the same: can all these considerations be taken to be parts of a solution? Who undertakes a task when ideology employs every means to rule out the possibility of reflection and criticism? Nietzsche finds the agent of the solution in his “free spirits”, “genuine philosophers”, “men of the future” who know the absolute necessity for a radical liberation from decadent values and furnish themselves a capacity to overcome the ideological barriers erected by their decadent, nihilistic age. Nihilism is an expression of the devaluation of the highest values by themselves; it is rooted in a particular mode of interpretation, the Christian-moral one. Contrary to its previous victorious ages, the Christian moral interpretation of the world has now failed to present a meaningful frame of reference that guides our lives, and thereby has led to a total loss of meanings, purposes or ends in modern life:

The feeling of valuelessness was reached with the realization that the overall character of existence may not be interpreted by means of the concept of ‘aim,’ the concept of ‘unity,’ or the concept of ‘truth.’ Existence has no goal or end; any comprehensive unity in the plurality of events is lacking: the character of existence is not ‘true,’ is *false*. One simply lacks any reason for convincing oneself that there is a *true* world. Briefly: the categories ‘aim,’ ‘unity,’ ‘being’ which we used to project some value into the world—we *pull out* again; so the world looks *valueless*.<sup>337</sup>

Hence, the meaningful reference on which our valuations are centered, does not exist any more; that “everything lacks meaning”, the untenability of one interpretation of the world leads to the conclusion that all interpretations of the world are false. The primary appearance of nihilism is pessimism. Nietzsche demands his free spirits to

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<sup>337</sup> *WP*, 12 – A.

locate themselves beyond the moral mode of thinking, beyond good and evil, to treat the illusion of moral judgment as beneath them, to create their own ideal and their own “new” values.

These values will not be unconditionally absolute and universal, but contingent and particular, and what is more, they will be the result of their will. Man “puts his will into things” on the one hand, for becoming what he is, thus for creating himself; “we (...) *want to become who we are*,—the new, unique, incomparable ones, who give themselves their own laws, who create themselves!”,<sup>338</sup> on the other, he should strive to produce a new perspectival interpretation of the world, thus creating the standpoint through which he appropriates and makes sense of the world—this is “the *creation of our own new tables of what is good*”.<sup>339</sup> The fundamental act of Nietzsche’s “free spirit” is creation: the creation of the self and the world we live in. What must we understand by this God-like creation of the world?

His reasoning seems to go as follows: life has, in itself, no value, to put in another way “life is no argument”. The question of its value is an inaccessible issue if one situates oneself *outside* life; it acquires value through our creation of values under the perspective of a particular system of interpretation that we regard to be reasonable, logical, adequate, and so on (“life itself evaluates through us *when* we establish values”<sup>340</sup>). The world we live in is not divine, rational, merciful, moral or just *per se*; it is merely ungodly, inhuman, immoral. In accordance with the context of our needs, we have arranged it, by positing lines, planes, causes, effects, form and content, without which we could not endure life. By means of the interpretive context

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<sup>338</sup> *GS*, 335.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.* In the original text: “die *Schöpfung neuer eigener Gütertafeln*” (*KSA*, vol. 3, p. 563).

<sup>340</sup> *TI*, V, 5.

that we attribute to the world, it acquires an order, a meaningful organization: “the value of the world lies in our interpretation (...) previous interpretations have been perspective valuations by virtue of which we can survive in life, i.e., in the will to power, for the growth of power”.<sup>341</sup> In this way, the creation of the self and the world becomes a matter of the agency of the will; in other words, they are made possible on the condition of the strength of the will.

Actually, that the world has no value does not mean that our lives have no value, that they are valueless, but that the world, *per se*, is neutral in terms of value-laden concepts, is devoid of commitments based on values, norms, imperatives. This motto invites the individual to create his interpretive activity to form his own values. Incapacity to perform this interpretive activity belongs to nihilism. One who although cannot accept the “meaningless” of the world, cannot possess the strength to perform the interpretive activity to create a meaning, to lay his *will* into things, inevitably adopt an illusory faith that values and meanings are *already* involved in the world, i.e., there is a *will* in them already, on the basis of the judgments he has received from the traditions of previous ages: “It is a measure of the degree of strength of will to what extent one can do without meaning in things, to what extent one can endure to live in a meaningless world *because one organizes a small portion of it oneself*”.<sup>342</sup> Here, the organization of the world is, once more, figured as a matter of the formative agency of the will.

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<sup>341</sup> *WP*, 616.

<sup>342</sup> *WP*, 585-A. In the original text: “Es ist ein Gradmesser von *Willenskraft*, wie weit man des *Sinnes* in den Dingen entbehren kann, wie weit man in einer sinnlosen Welt zu leben aushält: *weil man ein kleines Stück von ihr selbst organisirt*” (*KSA*, vol. 12, s, 9 [60], p. 366 ).

Nietzsche believes that the basic form of the will is the will to power, the latter is figured as the constitutive principle of the world, of life.<sup>343</sup> Every increment of power brings about new horizons and perspectives that enrich and enhance our life; and new interpretations sustain life through recognizing it *as it is*. In its very essential nature, life is “appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one’s own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation”;<sup>344</sup> and these traits, “in themselves” are not “good” or “bad”, they are devoid of all values, they express what they are without committing themselves to any value-laden context. Their “value”, if anything, lies in the fact that they merely exist.

The free spirit affirms this fact and makes it his basic proposition: no value, no “ought to be” beyond existence. He recognizes that life is in “constant flow”, he affirms the world in its total emptiness, hardness in which merely power struggles occur; and thereby he comprehends existence in its eternal “meaninglessness”. What amounts to the same thing, the free spirit adopts a pivotal insight: “Let us think this thought in its most terrible form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale of nothingness: ‘*the eternal recurrence*’”.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> As is known, Nietzsche’s ambiguous remarks about the status of the will to power leads to a serious oscillation in his thinking; on the one hand he takes it as the primary form of ‘organic’ life (cf. *BGE*, 36, 259; *WP*, 681), on the other he *extends* its scope to all things regardless of whether they are organic or not (cf. *WP*, 634-636, 1067).

<sup>344</sup> *BGE*, 259. In the original text: “Leben selbst ist *wesentlich* Aneignung, Verletzung, Überwältigung des Fremden und Schwächeren, Unterdrückung, Härte, Aufzwingung eigener Formen, Einverleibung und mindestens, mildestens, Ausbeutung” (*KSA*, vol. 5, p. 207).

<sup>345</sup> *WP*, 55 (cf. *Z*, III, 13). In the original text: “Denken wir diesen Gedanken in seiner furchtbarsten Form: das Dasein, so wie es ist, ohne Sinn und Ziel, aber unvermeidlich wiederkehrend, ohne ein Finale ins Nichts: ‘die ewige Wiederkehr’” (*KSA*, vol. 12, s. 5 [71/6], p. 213). The term Nietzsche uses in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is “eternal return” (*die ewige Wiederkunft*); later he also refers to “eternal recurrence” (*die ewige Wiederkehr*). For a summary of chief interpretations in which the notion has been explained, see Carol Diethe, *Historical Dictionary of Nietzscheanism* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1999), pp. 92-93.

In such a world without any ultimate meaning or purpose, without God, the eternal recurrence expresses the lack and unnecessary of any external justification for existence; what exists substantiates itself through existing, it verifies itself without appealing to what ought to be; here the cleavage between “is” and “ought” does not exist any more.

The free spirits work upon this world defined to be neutral; they exert their own interpretations, but abstain from imposing them upon life like a dress so as to cover the skin of things; contrary to traditional ideologists, they know and ascertain the particular, partial, perspectival character of these (also their own) interpretations.<sup>346</sup> In this recognition and in being conscious of the battles of powers in the world, they create their own ideal, laws, and concepts, taking the essentials of life into account. Now, life evaluates through the values posed within the interpretation of the free spirits, of genuine philosophers of the future in Nietzsche’s terms:

*Genuine philosophers, however, are commanders and legislators: they say, ‘thus it shall be!’ They first determine the Whither and For What of man, and in so doing have at their disposal the preliminary labor of all philosophical laborers, all who have overcome the past. With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their ‘knowing’ is *creating*, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is—*will to power*.<sup>347</sup>*

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<sup>346</sup> Note that the Nietzschean notion of perspectivity is firmly tied to the epistemic status of ‘truth’; he writes that “there is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective ‘knowing’” (*GM*, III, 12). Zupančič claims that the question of truth should be considered in the context of this thesis. She opposes relativist or skeptical positions towards Nietzsche’s statement, and writes: “Does this simply mean that all our knowledge is always descriptive, that there is no truth in the strong sense of the word?—No: it means, rather, that truth is a perspective. It exists neither beyond all perspectives nor as an impossible sum of all perspectives; it exists *as perspective*”, Alenka Zupančič, *The Shortest Shadow: Nietzsche’s Philosophy of the Two* (Massachusetts: MIT, 2003), p. 112. For an informative discussion on perspectivism see also, Tracy B. Strong, “Text and Pretexts: Reflections on Perspectivism in Nietzsche”, *Political Theory*, vol. 13, no. 2 (May 1985), pp. 164-182.

<sup>347</sup> *BGE*, 211. In the original text: “*Die eigentlichen Philosophen aber sind Befehlende und Gesetzgeber: sie sagen ‘so soll es sein!’*, sie bestimmen erst das Wohin? und Wozu? des Menschen und verfügen dabei über die Vorarbeit aller philosophischen Arbeiter, aller Überwältiger der Vergangenheit, — sie greifen mit schöpferischer Hand nach der Zukunft, und Alles, was ist und war,

That it is figured in a prescriptive way should not mislead us, because their interpretation follows the natural features of life. This interpretation will not be opposite or hostile to life, but it will fabricate itself to be compatible with the basic processes of life. It is not found out by reasonable procedures, but invented by the capacity of the will. In an age that weakens the will, the concept of “greatness” entails being by oneself and different, standing alone and independent, having the strength of the will, hardness, and the capacity for long-range decisions.

Hence Nietzsche’s actual philosopher “shall be greatest who can be loneliest, the most concealed, the most deviant, the human being beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, he that is overrich in will”.<sup>348</sup> We should point out that this description presents a picture in which the free individual incorporates all God-like attributes within himself; in other words, he, *qua* agent of “creation”, embodies the status of “artist-God”, so to speak. This *redeeming* man, this creative spirit of the future will redeem humanity both from the prevailing ideology and from all that has been bound to grow out of it, all nihilistic domain. Here Nietzsche’s tone evokes a sermon for liberation: “this bell-stroke of noon and of the great decision that liberates the will again and restores its goal to the earth and his hope to man; this Antichrist and antinihilist; this victor over God and nothingness—*he must come one day*”.<sup>349</sup>

The creation cannot be arbitrary or totally subjective. Reality is not a mere result of the will; on the contrary, it is the material precondition for the agency of the will. Nietzsche does not disregard the existence of the world; he is very conscious

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wird ihnen dabei zum Mittel, zum Werkzeug, zum Hammer. Ihr ‘Erkennen’ ist *Schaffen*, ihr Schaffen ist eine Gesetzgebung, ihr Wille zur Wahrheit ist — *Wille zur Macht*” (KSA, vol. 5, p. 145).

<sup>348</sup> BGE, 212.

<sup>349</sup> GM, II, 24.

that the independent position of the world restricts our theories, breaks our accounts, violates our fictive intellectual constructs—in sum it *resists* our interpretations. What is more, in certain cases, it produces an opposition against our interpretive agency and penetrates into the scheme of our concepts and table of values, working as a *destabilizing component*.

Nevertheless, he seems to be convinced that the tensional opposition of the world against the will can be resolved, and therefore, he formulates the notion of the eternal recurrence: the will, in its creative activity, shall allow the essentials of life, of the world, and thereby it will affirm it in such a way that it is as we want it to be forever. The recognition of the world by our will as it is without subtraction, exception or selection, as a becoming in its constant circulation without goal, satiety or weariness amounts to a *Dionysian* affirmative relation to existence, to the world<sup>350</sup>—the world of the eternally self-creating and the eternally self-destroying. In this way the will says “Yes” to the fruitful soil of existence:

I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*.<sup>351</sup> let that be my love from henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. *Looking away* shall be my only negation! And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer.<sup>352</sup>

As stated above, Nietzsche’s free spirits undertake the task, firstly to create the future, and secondly to redeem the past through transforming all “it was” into “But so did I will it! So shall I will it” by the creative will. This is what he calls

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<sup>350</sup> In the “Attempt at a Self-Criticism” that was added to *The Birth of Tragedy* in the new edition of 1886, Nietzsche, once more, attacks to religio-moral conception defining it as “a will to negate life”; and claims that his own instinct “aligned itself with life”. He defines his philosophical position as purely *artistic* and calls it *Dionysian*.

<sup>351</sup> *Love of fate*. For the term, also see *NCW*, “Epilogue”, 1; *EH*, “Why I Am So Clever”, 10; *WP*, 1041.

<sup>352</sup> *GS*, 276.

‘redemption’; and this alone *Zarathustra* teaches man to call redemption.<sup>353</sup> With regard to the creation of the future, an *artistic* comprehension is at work here.

Nietzsche points out that in our conception, what things are *called* has priority in such a way that what they *are* is overlooked. Names, concepts, values, all schemas overlay things like a dress, however foreign to their nature, skin. All this representation of the thing substitutes for the thing itself. It is transferred from generation to generation, until it becomes a part and then the very body of the thing; what was at first appearance turns into the essence in the end.<sup>354</sup>

Nietzsche claims that to reveal this origin and this delusion is not sufficient to annihilate the “manufactured” world, nor can such an inquiry be esteemed as a critique of it. To do this, one should create, in the long run, new “things” by creating new “names”, “estimations” and “probabilities”, hence “we can destroy only as creators”.<sup>355</sup> If this is the case, the man of the future should furnish himself with a capacity and a genuine determination to carry out the task of artistic creation.

However, at this juncture, one should ask if the free spirit is expected to create himself and the world, how he constitutes the conditions for the very act of creation; if he affirms life and gives it value through his own table of values, with which faculties and capacities he is endowed. This question leads us to the problem of the *construction of the subject*: how and in which circumstances is the agent of the future constructed? And what is more, what kind of basis do Nietzschean genealogical tenets provide for the emergence of the subject, or do they provide any possibility when one takes his conceptualization of the *herd* into account?

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<sup>353</sup> Cf. *Z*, II, 20 and III, 12/3.

<sup>354</sup> For a similar illustrative account of the “concept” and “reality” see *TL*, 1.

<sup>355</sup> *GS*, 58.

## The Impasse

In order to deal with the problem of the subject, we should return to the genealogy involved in Nietzsche's speculative anthropology. Nietzsche presents us with a scene in which the individual is constructed through ideology (morality) either as a master who has a noble character or as a slave who belongs to the herd. What does the free spirit experience in this scene? How does he "acknowledge" himself and the other(s)? The free individual creates himself in such a way that his will dominates over other parts of his self; creation of the self, for Nietzsche, will be a result of the master will without need for any external component.

At this juncture, it would be illuminating to make a comparative reading in order to understand what is lacking in Nietzsche's concept of society. The probability that Nietzsche was aware of Hegel's view about mastery and servitude, and what is more, that he developed his genealogical account of the relation of master-slave in a deliberate opposition to Hegel's approach, seems worthy of consideration. For our purposes, we will confine ourselves to the relevant text from his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, namely, "Lordship and Bondage", and pursue the arguments of Hegel's conception of master and slave.<sup>356</sup>

Hegel defines man as self-consciousness; what forms a being to be "I" and makes him different from the object, from the non-I, is his conscious *desire* (*Begierde*); man reveals himself—to himself and the others—through desire. But for there to be human desire as distinct from animal desire, it should be directed not

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<sup>356</sup> Here I am indebted to Kojève's and Hyppolite's commentaries on Hegel's thoughts. I have drawn upon their guiding remarks in addition to Hegel's own text; see Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. James H. Nichols, JR. (London: Cornell University Press, 1980); and for a profound analysis of conceptual structure of Hegel's intricate text, especially see Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1974).

towards a given object, but towards the desire of the other; otherwise expressed, desire turns out to be human, if man wants to be desired, adopted, that is, “recognized” in his value by another one. This is nothing but a desire for the “identification” of his value with the value desired and recognized by the other: one wants the other to recognize one’s value as an autonomous value: “They *recognize* themselves as *mutually recognizing* one another”.<sup>357</sup> However, here, in the notion of recognition (in Hegel’s words, the “middle term”) we encounter an inequality between the two self-consciousnesses, i.e., a splitting into two extremes which “are opposed to one another, one being only *recognized*, the other only *recognizing*”.<sup>358</sup>

Thus one’s desire is a desire for a *value* and if he wants to be recognized, he must go beyond his animal desire for survival and he should *risk* his animal life for the sake of his desire for recognition. In order to be recognized by the other, each one must risk his own life, and at the same time put the other’s life in danger; each one must will to sacrifice everything for his own infinite self-respect and the respect of the other. In such a condition, in order to be “man” in a real sense, he must impose the idea he has for himself upon the others, upon the first man he meets; and this other who has the same desire for recognition, must do the same thing. Therefore their first meeting must necessarily be a “fight” to the death; the first humanizing action occurs in the form of a fight for prestige: “Thus the relation of the two self-conscious individuals is such that they prove themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle (...) The individual who has not risked his life may well be

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<sup>357</sup> Hegel, G. W. F., *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 112.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

recognized as a *person*, but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness”.<sup>359</sup>

It must be added that this fight to the death for recognition, by its very definition, cannot result in the death of one of the adverse parties or of both, because in that case the conditions that provide for “the required significance of recognition” would disappear. Both parties must “survive” and thereby keep a “multiplicity” of their desires directed towards one another. Here the man of this fight does not kill his opponent; one leaves the other alive but subjugates him to oneself, i.e., he enslaves him. In other words, besides the multiplicity of desires, two adversaries have two essentially different behaviors. One acts with the principle “to conquer or die”; he wins and grants the life of the other. The other gives up the fight, gives way to the former and “recognizes” him (as the master) without being “recognized” by him; that is he refuses to risk his life and prefers slavery to death.<sup>360</sup>

Hence, we face two opposite forms of consciousness; autonomous consciousness that risks its life and exists purely for itself (the victor) and dependent consciousness that exists not purely for itself but also for another (the defeated): “The former is lord, the other is bondsman”.<sup>361</sup> Despite their opposed and unequal natures, both are essential components in the relation of recognition according to Hegel’s account.

But, in such a relation, a proper recognition is lacking. It is not merely the master who sees the other as his slave; the other also considers himself as such. He

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<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>360</sup> Hyppolite points out that the slave is not of the master, but of life: “he is slave because he is retreated in the face of death, preferring servitude to liberty in death”, Hyppolite, p. 173.

<sup>361</sup> Hegel, p. 115. In some translations and commentaries, as equivalents for the two terms, “master and slave” are preferred; see also, G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967).

gives up himself in favor of the master, since he does not recognize his nature independent of his master's gaze: "...the other consciousness sets aside its own being-for-itself, and in so doing itself does what the first does to it".<sup>362</sup> It is not only the master who regards himself to be master, equally the slave sees him as such, too.

However, this situation produces an unbalanced and one-sided relation of recognition; for there to be a reciprocal recognition, there must be a moment when "what the lord does to the other he also does to himself, and what the bondsman does to himself he should also do to the other. The outcome is a recognition that is partial, unilateral and unequal."<sup>363</sup> In other words, while the master regards the body of the slave as an instrument, i.e., he reduces the slave into a "thing", he uses and consumes things for his purposes and enjoyment, but he does not consider himself as slave; in turn, although the slave acknowledges the other as master, he does not treat himself as master. Hence the relation between the two is not a real recognition in an exact sense.

This recognition is problematical because the master is recognized by someone whom he has degraded and kept in a dependent animality; otherwise expressed, at the end of a life-and-death fight for recognition the master is recognized by someone whose recognition is without value for him, namely, by the slave who is nothing but an animal or a thing for him. However for there to be a satisfying recognition for the master, he must be recognized by one whom he recognizes as worthy of recognizing him. This is a vicious circle, a dead end: in the beginning, one turns to a master because of his desire directed not towards a "thing", but towards a "desire" for human recognition; in the end, he is acknowledged by a

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<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

“thing”, an “object” as it were, in Hegel’s terminology, by a dependent consciousness: “the object in which the lord has achieved his lordship has in reality turned out to be something quite different from an independent consciousness. What now really confronts him is not an independent consciousness, but a dependent one. He is, therefore, not certain of *being-for-self* as the truth of himself”.<sup>364</sup> Hence what the master gets from the slave is a faulty recognition.<sup>365</sup>

Because of the nature of the struggle, mastery is a position that necessarily destroys the conditions of carrying out the master’s desire for being a man recognized by another man. In this situation an equal and a reciprocal recognition of the others cannot be realized; the consciousness of the master is bound to remain lacking, insufficient and defective; it does not and cannot involve the awareness of the others as independent subjects; it excludes the possibility of an interactive awareness of others.

However in Hegel’s account, self-consciousness cannot be formed in isolation from the other consciousnesses, that is to say, it cannot construct itself as an independent agent of consciousness and action unless it recognizes others as independent agents. An awareness of ourselves is possible only in the awareness of others; and our existence in the consciousness of others is a decisive factor in the constitution of the self. To be more precise, the otherness of others, i.e., a sphere of intersubjective relations is an indispensable element for subjectivity.

When we read the Nietzschean description in comparison with Hegel’s account of the master-slave relation, it becomes clear that what Nietzsche disregards

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<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>365</sup> Hyppolite who emphasizes mediation as an essential moment to the positing of the “I”, writes: “The master expresses the tautology I=I, immediate abstract self-consciousness. The slave expresses the mediation essential to self-consciousness (but which the master fails to notice) and frees himself by consciously carrying out that mediation”; Hyppolite, pp. 168-171.

is exactly this intersubjective, social sphere that is actually at work in the creation of the subject. In the picture where the social is identified with the herd, and the society is designated and thus condemned as herd, it is hard to see the need for the world of intersubjective relations. Within, an undifferentiated and homogenous body of the herd, the possibility for the emergence of various forms of autonomous, independent consciousness has been ruled out: in such a conceptualization, to become what one is, is carried out at the expense of the rejection and “nonrecognition” of the existence of others. The mediation through which one gains one’s self is one of the principal moments of self-identity. Therefore, the ruling out of “otherness” amounts to the elimination of one of the substantial grounds of the process of *subjectivation* and in this situation, to posit oneself as a subject, paradoxically, paves the way for asserting oneself in the delusions of grandeur of a hermitic life,<sup>366</sup> or, as Poole aptly expresses, “the attempt to construct oneself in these circumstances can only be a futile and self-destructive gesture of megalomania”.<sup>367</sup>

In the process of subjectivation, besides the sphere of intersubjectivity, the individual is formed with an experience of the existence of an independent and external world. We become a subject in our agency towards and against the limits and conditions posed by the world; its limits threaten the scope of our “free” actions, compel us into overcoming its boundaries and in so doing, the world shapes the mode of our awareness of the conditions we live in and of our self-awareness. Accordingly, the construction of self-identity is mediated by the experience of the externality of the world and of others. This fact comes out especially with regard to

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<sup>366</sup> Cf. *HH*, 638.

<sup>367</sup> Poole, p. 130.

the first encounter of man with the repressive barrier of the external world, with the very first forbidding intervention of the world in his psychic nature.

Hegelian intersubjectivity is also supported by the assertions of psychoanalysis which formulate subjectivation as a transition to a cultural register of the family and therefore of laws, symbols and language in the social/intersubjective domain. This is the place where psychoanalytical insights should be brought into the picture to further clarify this point.

As is well-known, the fact that the human being (more accurately, the human child) identifies himself with another (the father) under the law of the society, the law of the world of civilization, and that he registers his own self through recognizing (taking into account) the others' position within the family constellation, has come up in the Oedipal phenomenon. Since one's first social identity is one's sexual identity gained within the family, the Oedipus, as the ideology of the family, designs the scene and compels the child to internalize the paternal law; and it is exactly the acceptance of the law that makes the child a "subject".

It can be observed that the power that founds the law is twofold:

(i) The *forbidden* consists of the prohibition of "incest" and by means of sexual restrictions, it enables the accession to the cultural order of the family (alliance and kinship). This order—with its laws, symbols and organization—is a cultural register in which one knows who s/he is, his/her position, "name", rights, limits, and so on, and situates herself/himself in relation to others. Without an organization of group life (in an animal promiscuity, for instance), one cannot locate oneself in a position of mutual and relative recognition. The forbidden establishes a cultural order and puts the subject in the realm of family relations by giving him/her

a position as a father, son or sister; to be sure, the name and place are tokens of “recognition”.

(ii) The *sacrifice* indicates roughly the experience of “castration”. The father “reminds” the child the law of culture (in Freud, of civilization), that is, the forbidden (the interdiction of incest) and orients the child to accept the order of “exogamy”. The prohibition of incest is represented in the sacrifice of sexual relations with the mother (or the sister); at this moment, the father intervenes in the desire of the child towards his mother. He deprives the child of the object of his desire, therefore, he “symbolically” castrates the child by separating him from his mother and finally he instigates the child to identify himself with the father, with the law of culture that he represents. In the end the child is oriented to internalizing the obligation to take a wife from another family—in accordance with the law of exchange—in order that the web of alliance may be set up. The symbolic castration of the child by the father enables, therefore, the child to recognize the paternal limitation, to name his desire and renounce it as an impossibility. His original desire is pushed back into the unconscious, and this phenomenon (the “primal repression” [*die Urverdrängung*] in the vocabulary of psychoanalysis) refers to the debt which must be paid if one is to become oneself. The healthy resolution of the Oedipal experience provides the child with a capacity to realize the self in the process of participation in the culture, in the world of the social: once more, man gains the original experience of his subjectivity in the order of intersubjective relations (here, of the Oedipus).

There is one more point to be made. The Oedipus complex constitutes a moment in which the child, through internalizing the rules, norms and limitations humanizes himself by becoming aware of the self and the others, by affirming the differences between the sexes and more importantly, his third party position in the

parental couple. The Oedipus is maintained by the cultural structures of society and as such, it is a cultural phenomenon. Its meaning and implications are inscribed within the code of the society in a way that the individual assumes them as a heritage; the individual lives this web of meanings only by “entering” into these structures and s/he is unaware of the implications, meanings and modes of operation of the institutions, symbols and language which perpetuate and reproduce the Oedipal drama.<sup>368</sup> Thus, the very ground on which the human being acts, works, and thereby discovers the scope of his/her agency entails a certain unawareness, an unconscious positioning of the real conditions that s/he finds to be pre-established. The unconscious is the condition for conscious activity.

In a different context, we see that Nietzsche’s analysis of the subject proceeds along parallel lines. One might venture to think that when he submits moral-ideological practices to a critical scrutiny, he presents us with an insightful and challenging account which resonates to evoke the assertive findings of psychoanalysis. Nietzsche decidedly opposes the idea that human agency is comprehended in terms of its reasonable background that involves a coherent agent who is conscious of all the mechanisms of his action. In his view, human activity occurs only on the basis of repression of the forces which make it possible.

We know that Nietzsche decidedly claims that human action has all characteristics of a fiction. Its assumptions (that there is a conscious human subject behind all actions and that all human activity is rationally explicable on the basis of assumptions, faiths, intentions and judgments adopted by him) are totally illusory. Behind our faiths and moral judgments, Nietzsche says, there is a historical body of pre-existing ideas, habits, previous modes of reasoning, of judging. Against those

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<sup>368</sup> For further detail, see Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. David Macey (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 78-92.

who judge “this is right” and infer “it must be done”, for conscience commands these acts and the voice of conscience determines what is moral, true and right, he states that the feeling that gives one the right to consider a judgment true and infallible has a complicated psychic history: “Your judgment ‘that is right’ has a prehistory in your instincts, likes, dislikes, experiences, and lack of experiences”.<sup>369</sup>

By the same token, our faiths, opinions or judgments (like “that is right and moral”, “in this case everybody would have to act like this”, and so on) cannot be verified by our actions; they play a role in the decision of how we should act, but they do not suffice to elucidate the mechanism of our actions; in Nietzsche’s words, “our opinions, valuations, and tables of what is good certainly belong among the most powerful levers in the involved mechanism of our actions, but that in any particular case the law of their mechanism is indemonstrable”,<sup>370</sup> because every action is unique, irretrievable, impenetrable and possible in its specific circumstances. The unknowability of action, in Nietzsche’s account, is sustained with the idea that human action makes it necessary to suspend thinking, to keep away the “true conditions” from conscious activity, from reflection.<sup>371</sup>

We should underline, as a complementary point, that the situation in which an action is realized involves, so to speak, a second experiential background that human action has been made unconscious by assuming the traditional and ancestral heritage in history. Nietzsche considers action as a simplification of an incomprehensible, complex situation that engenders it; and as expressed above (see above, pp. 8-10), human action is possible at the price of pushing consciousness back from the life that

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<sup>369</sup> *GS*, 335.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>371</sup> *TI*, VII, 1.

is called “right” by a rigorously filtered experience. In this situation, human action is and should turn out to be a *reflex*, it has to be transformed into a *perfect automatism of instinct*.<sup>372</sup> In other words, the necessary lack of conscious thinking at the moment of human agency turns to be a “structural” component of psychic forces in the agency; just as in Freud, although the unconscious elements remain out of consciousness, they nevertheless penetrate our being as a structural force; or as in Althusser, ideology is a matter of man’s *lived* relation to his real conditions of existence, and this relation appears as “conscious” on the condition that it is “unconscious”.

Actually, this necessary repression of consciousness, this lack of reflection sends us to the problem of misrecognition. Misrecognition is essentially a matter of self-misrecognition; in the situation in which the true conditions of human activity are kept out of one’s consciousness, the way one experiences the world should rest on a self-misunderstanding, an illusory image of oneself; and furnished with this imaginary self, man considers his imaginary relation to his social conditions to be a real one.

Althusser emphasizes this crucial point, defining ideology as “a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence”; thus what is “misrecognized”, or rather, “imaginary represented” in ideology is “not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live”.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> A, 57.

<sup>373</sup> Althusser, pp. 109-111.

Posed in this way, in the conceptualization of ideology, “consciousness”, with its all meanings, disappears; in fact, for Althusser, ideology has very little to do with “consciousness”, it is profoundly *unconscious*:

Ideology is indeed a system of representations, but in the majority of cases these representations have nothing to do with ‘consciousness’: they are usually images and occasionally concepts, but it is above all as *structures* that they impose on the vast majority of men, not via their ‘consciousness’. They are perceived-accepted-suffered cultural objects and they act functionally on men via a process that escapes them.<sup>374</sup>

If this is the case, if the *lived, imaginary* relation between men and the world, including history, *passes through* ideology, if men live and experience their agency *by and through* ideology, then one can infer that they “live” ideology not as a form of consciousness, a misleading prism of the world, but as their “world” itself. The imaginary cannot be taken to be false because of its subjective or delusive character, it is necessary and constitutive component of the social.

At this juncture, it is possible to observe the influence of Nietzsche’s analysis of the encompassing power of the imaginary elements in Althusser’s theory on the structure of ideology. A passage that involves a pivotal point about the imaginary structures that replace the real conditions men live in is worth quoting at length:

In Christianity neither morality nor religion has even a single point of contact with reality. Nothing but imaginary *causes* (‘God,’ ‘soul,’ ‘ego,’ ‘spirit,’ ‘free will’—for that matter, ‘unfree will’); nothing but imaginary *effects* (‘sin,’ ‘redemption,’ ‘grace,’ ‘punishment,’ ‘forgiveness of sins’). Intercourse between imaginary *beings* (‘God,’ ‘spirits,’ ‘souls’); an imaginary *natural* science (anthropocentric; no trace of any concept of natural causes); an imaginary *psychology* (nothing but self-misunderstandings, interpretations of agreeable or disagreeable general feelings—for example, of the states of the *nervus sympathicus*—with the aid of the sign language of the religio-moral idiosyncrasy: ‘repentance,’ ‘pangs of conscience,’ ‘temptation by the devil,’ ‘the presence of God’); an imaginary *teleology* (‘the kingdom of God,’ ‘the Last Judgment,’ ‘eternal life’).— This world of pure

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<sup>374</sup> Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2005 [1965]), p. 233.

*fiction* is vastly inferior to the world of dreams insofar as the latter *mirrors* reality, whereas the former falsifies, devalues, and negates reality.<sup>375</sup>

This fictional world is the very world in which men live their relation to the real world; this world “falsifies, devalues, and negates reality”, in other words, it does replace the real world, and it substitutes itself, with all its representations, images, and imaginings for the real conditions of existence. In a similar vein, Althusser states that “in ideology the real is inevitably invested in the imaginary relation, a relation that *expresses* a *will* (conservative, conformist, reformist or revolutionary), a hope or a nostalgia, rather than describing a reality”;<sup>376</sup> as for Nietzsche, it reproduces itself through promises of “redemption”, “forgiveness of sins”, “grace” and “eternal life”.

We have to note as a concluding point that it is within ideology, within this specific, ideological consciousness that men become conscious of their position in the world and manage to change their imaginary representations, their “lived” relation to the conditions. As a matter of fact, Nietzsche does not regard this necessity as a totally sad or palatable fact, on the contrary, the omission of consciousness and the existence of the will are not only necessary, but also, paradoxically, an opportunity to attain a realistic and thus liberating perspective towards the world, an occasion to seek out the ways for becoming master over our life, to form an *art* of life.

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<sup>375</sup> A, 15. In the original text: “Weder die Moral noch die Religion berührt sich im Christenthume mit irgend einem Punkte der Wirklichkeit. Lauter imaginäre *Ursachen* (‘Gott’, ‘Seele’, ‘Ich’ ‘Geist’, ‘der freie Wille’ — oder auch ‘der unfreie’); lautere imaginäre *Wirkungen* (‘Sünde’, ‘Erlösung’, ‘Gnade’, ‘Strafe’, ‘Vergebung der Sünde’). Ein Verkehr zwischen imaginären *Wesen* (‘Gott’, ‘Geister’, ‘Seelen’); eine imaginäre *Naturwissenschaft* (anthropocentrisch; völliger Mangel des Begriffs der natürlichen Ursachen) eine imaginäre *Psychologie* (lauter Selbst- Missverständnisse, Interpretationen angenehmer oder unangenehmer Allgemeingefühle, zum Beispiel der Zustände des nervus sympathicus mit Hülfe der Zeichensprache religiös-moralischer Idiosynkrasie, — ‘Reue’, ‘Gewissensbiss’, ‘Versuchung des Teufels’, ‘die Nähe Gottes’); eine imaginäre *Teleologie* (‘das Reich Gotte’, ‘das jüngste Gericht’, ‘das ewige Leben’). — Diese reine *Fiktions-Welt* unterscheidet sich dadurch sehr zu ihren Ungunsten von der Traumwelt, dass letztere die Wirklichkeit *wiederspiegelt*, während *sie* die Wirklichkeit fälscht, entwerthet, verneint” (KSA, vol. 6, p. 181).

<sup>376</sup> Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 234.

Although Nietzsche puts a special emphasis on analyzing the boundaries and circumstances surrounding the individual, he does not tend to accept that this experience of limitation is also at work for the free spirit. These limitations do not enter into the picture where the free spirit is described and glorified. He makes no reference to social restrictions in the passages where he describes the free spirit; they do not penetrate the sphere of the free spirit, nor do they circumscribe the scope of his creative agency. The free spirit is portrayed as a creative hermit who can overcome pressures and obstacles and who has the power to avoid reproducing the possible ideological presumptions of the past.

In fact, the free spirit is *inevitably* portrayed as such; the philosophical undertaking of Nietzsche calls for an agent to perform it, and it seems that it is the only solution for his philosophy to suggest a “redemption” project which can be performed only and only by a creative subject portrayed as such.

What is tragic at this point is that the conditions for the existence of the agents of the “liberation” he is obliged to offer have been ruled out by the same philosophical conception. Nietzsche, instead of turning towards a resolution of the problem of “subject(ivation)” within the framework of a conceptualization that could incorporate the free spirit, has regarded it independent from the process of subjectivation, disregarding the fact that the free spirits are also subject to the same mechanisms of the process of subjectivation. This sort of an incorporation was, paradoxically, both a requirement and an impossibility for Nietzsche’s philosophical conception. His philosophical view, in its essentials, ruled out the possibility of this very incorporation. The intellectual and cultural sovereignty of the self-sustaining and self-sufficient individual that his philosophical enterprise indispensably needs

has turned out to be a mythical impossibility due to the conceptualization of the subject of the same philosophy.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The concept of ideology is at work in Nietzsche's writings, although the term itself is almost never employed. It is mostly accepted that while Nietzsche examines the ways in which modern Western culture is composed of institutions, practices and various representations of the world (ideas, concepts, values), he indeed engages in decoding the ideological strands that have permeated all our life. Ideology first inhabits "language" as a metaphysical body of the presumptions of reason; in and through language we perceive and experience the world and we assume that the world is as we see it. Antithetical terms (reality-appearance), grammatical habits (doer-deed), the ready-made presuppositions (will, soul, subject, substance), mode of reasoning (cause-effect), imaginings of the self (free will) are formed in language, and as we put our thoughts into words we employ this web of concepts which we inherit from language.

However, to employ linguistic elements also amounts to thinking and naming things under the impositions of language; and the latter, as a form of thought, conveys its *own* metaphysics to our mode of thinking. It conveys not only its metaphysical assumptions (such as being, identity, causality, substance, and so on), but also a systematic structure, a certain fundamental scheme that is ensured by grammar. One of the basic illusions in grammatical habit is the "subject-object" duality; and in language, through an "anthropomorphic" reflection in the form of

duality, we project our concepts, names and representations on all things, on the world. In other words, one creates a “second nature” which is transferred from generation to generation until it turns into the very body of the world, nature. In the end the “individual” believes that the world is what the body of his concepts or ideas represent. Hence the real world is substituted for another fictional world of our representations, concepts, names and faiths; and their positions are inverted. This replacement of the real by imaginary representation is the essential mode of operation of ideology.

All ideologies (religious, moral or political) are nearly the same in their formal mode of operation. Ideology is always subject-centered, and involves the category of the subject as its central notion. Nietzsche was concerned with the illusory, and at times delusive representations of men furnished with the grammar of language that sees an agent, a subject where there is an agency; and he has examined how the *gap* between reality and man’s distorted images and faiths emerged. Human imaginary ideas, for him, are created within cruel, severe and even barbarian fights between several forces and this struggle results in the domination of the party which acts in accordance with the demands required by power. All meanings, images, values and faiths are created and fixed, as realizations of the will to power, in the struggle for domination. The most refined, subtle and glorified virtues have an immoral background in which they grow out of their precisely opposite, even evil counterpoints—desires, needs, fears, and so on. Thus meanings are invented and historically reinterpreted in the conditions of existence of the society.

Nietzsche, taking the historicity of meanings as a vantage point, has formed a new kind of inquiry to find out the material, contingent and floating character of values and meanings. So considered, “genealogy” is expected to be an elaborate form

of critique which aims to decipher the metaphysical reference of modern codes and norms. What genealogy attempts to show is that like all modes of evaluation, the system of modern values is a product of a particular/ideological perspective; that these modes have been fabricated from within a particular standpoint and that they hide their particular, fraudulent character. Metaphysical, moral, religious ideologies cannot work unless they present themselves as universal, unconditional and eternal narratives that give meaning and purpose to man's life.

Nietzsche has focused on the question of how ideological-metaphysical values dominate over life, and to solve the problem he negates all evasions, all hypocritical attitudes and stereotyped explanations. In a nihilistic age, he asserts, the net of all meaningful, consoling or encompassing interpretations has collapsed. Morality as a *form* of sovereign and extensive ideology has long since lost both its socially guiding power and its epistemically unquestionable privileges: nihilism indicates a decadent age in which the moral mode of interpretation of the world is no longer persuasive. The representations of morality concerning the world in which masses live, has turned out to be totally illusory, more precisely, imaginary.

Against nihilistic collapse, Nietzsche formulates his genealogy as an analysis which, moving from the *contingency* of all doctrines, however dominant, will show the possibility of various modes of alternative paradigms that are true, allowable and legitimate under a different light. This does not lead to an ordinary relativism because Nietzsche believes that some interpretations may be more plausible and genuine, providing more consistent accounts to be adopted.

Indeed, genealogy may provide a liberating approach which asserts that the creation of meanings are and will be the work of our constructive and artistic will which does not mask its perspectival character but rather demonstrates itself in its

affirmation of the life as it is. Nietzsche negates the idea of *redemption*; he thinks that we “redeem” the world by a movement of total liberation from the chains of metaphysics that preaches the idea of redemption and its executor, God. He asks for “free spirits” to start and carry on the liberating and creative movement. This hard project that aims to create new values, a new definition of the self and the world cannot be carried out by the weak, by the ordinary member of the herd; it requires a strong, noble, creative and masterful will.

Nietzsche demands the “free spirit” to undertake the task of self-creation and the creation of the world. However, for such a God-like creation of the self the free spirit does not have any means save himself; the free spirit, in Nietzschean conception, is left alone in a total solitude to create himself with his own sources. Nietzsche is not concerned with the question of whether an individual can construct himself as a self without interacting with others. It seems odd that while he describes the individual to be a fragile, transient multiplicity of drives and affects, he assigns this man of the future the very challenging task of self-creation. Here the free spirit is bound to undertake a desperate task of remaking the self.

In actual fact, the conditions that enable the individual to constitute his self through a recognition of others in an intersubjective sphere are ruled out by the exclusion of the others from the picture, and Nietzsche ignores the necessity of interaction with the social as a constitutive component of the project of remaking the self. Self-creation may be an achievement but it cannot be the achievement of the self *alone*. However, if the free spirit tends to create himself in the absence of any recognition by the others, this task should be carried out in an area encompassed and threatened by nihilistic challenge. Nietzsche intends to get rid of the destructive

attacks of nihilism by means of glorifying the capability of the free spirit, instead of seeking out the possibility of its “incorporation” into the social realm.

Nietzschean tenets leave the individual of the future either with a desperate endeavor which is to result either in deification or total breakdown. That is why madness here is not just an individual disability. His project was an invitation to reestablish values so that they could not be provided with an absolute and eternal reference any more. On the other hand, the requirements of his project to go beyond the limits of nihilism exceeded the capacity of the individual.

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