WHO IS NIETZSCHE'S ZARATHUSTRA? ON PHILOSOPHY, MORALITY, AND THE PERSIANS

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To speak the truth and to *shoot well with arrows*, that is Persian-virtue.
— Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*

I

In this essay, I argue that Nietzsche's account of the importance of the Persian prophet Zarathustra[1] contributes greatly to understanding Nietzsche's own conception of the philosopher's task. I organize this argument by identifying an apparent conflict in Nietzsche's conception of the purpose of philosophy and his understanding of the historical Zarathustra. I argue that Nietzsche has a conception of philosophy as mainly an ethical project, and that comes into conflict with the metaphysical focus of Zarathustra's teachings. I show that this conflict is only superficial and that Nietzsche's account of philosophy is not a mere rejection of Zoroastrianism. Rather Nietzsche *appropriates* and exceeds the doctrine of the historical Zarathustra.

II

In the third of his *Untimely Meditations*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," Nietzsche contrasts the Emersonian philosopher, who resembles a conflagration in that he puts everything at risk[2] with the academic philosophers whose "thoughts grow as peacefully out of tradition as any tree ever bore its apples: they cause no alarm, they remove nothing from its hinges."[3] Nietzsche, in no uncertain terms, endorses the Emersonian characterization, maintaining that university philosophy "never disturbed anybody," and that it is "praise of an old woman rather than of the goddess of truth."[4] In his intellectual autobiography, *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche reaffirms his adherence to the Emersonian characterization of the philosopher "as a terrible explosive, endangering everything."[5] He refers to it as "my concept of philosophy" and declares that it is "worlds removed from any concept that would include even a Kant, not to speak of academic 'ruminants' and other professors of philosophy."[6]

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In his book, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Walter Kaufmann argues that Nietzsche "modeled his conception of his own task largely after Socrates' apology."[7] Kaufmann also quotes a passage from Nietzsche's lectures on Plato, where Nietzsche describes Socrates as one who *disturbs*, "as a gadfly on the neck of man."[8] To clarify the significance of the Socratic features of Nietzsche's "explosive" philosopher, I wish to distinguish two different conceptions of the task of the philosopher. These conceptions differ in the way they reconcile the metaphysical contemplation of the nature of reality with ethical inquiry regarding the good life. Socrates, whose views exemplify one of these conceptions, thought that metaphysics was at the service of ethics. He approached Athenian youths, and engaged them in what may appear as a metaphysical discourse with numerous allusions to reality, truth, and other concepts in the repertoire of the metaphysician. Yet he did this to release his interlocutors from their sophistic confusion rather than to offer metaphysical theses regarding the nature of reality.[9] Such an emancipation was designed to result in the youth's well-being. Aristotle, as a representative of the philosophers opposed to the Socratic account of the relation between ethics and metaphysics, subordinated ethics to metaphysics and claimed that ethical training culminated in the perfect activity of thought thinking itself (the reflection on and categorization of thoughts). Aristotle's gods found nothing better than metaphysical contemplation,[10] and his wise men, whose superior ethical training distinguished them from the common men, participated in the activity of the gods.[11] Nietzsche's conception of the task of philosopher, as evident from the passages quoted above, is Socratic. Nietzsche, like Socrates, subjects his audience to a kind of philosophical disturbance to liberate them from their intellectual slavery and allow them to lead the good life.

In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche maintains paradoxically that the philosopher is concerned primarily with knowledge and, more specifically, with "a fundamental will of knowledge, pointing imperiously into the depths, speaking more and more precisely, demanding greater and greater precision."[12] The Nietzschean philosopher, however, would not be interested in a knowledge that is divorced from human interests and concerns. Nietzsche warns:

> Henceforth, my dear philosophers, let us be on our guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a "pure, willless, painless, timeless knowing subject;" let us guard against the snares of such contradictory concepts as "pure reason," "absolute spirituality," "knowledge in itself": these always demand that we should think of an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing *something*, are supposed to be lacking; these always demand of the eye an absurdity and a nonsense. There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective "knowing"; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity," be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of this — what would that mean but to *castrate* the intellect? (GM III, 12)

Pure, disinterested knowledge employs the notion of an absurd "eye," the perspective from outside the human condition. Adopting such a perspective castrates the intellect by denying its essential relation to the will's interpretive activity, i.e., the human agency's taking something *as* something else.[13] According to Nietzsche, it is the will's interpretive activity which produces the domain of knowable objects. Denying the will's interpretive activity is to construe human intellect as emasculated and passive, submitting to the demands of a supra-human world. The Nietzschean philosopher recognizes the centrality of the will in the pursuit of knowledge. His appeals to metaphysics, however, are merely therapeutic. Like Socrates, he uses the dogmatic theses of the metaphysicians in order to emancipate himself and others from the grip of sophistic commitments. Such a liberation allows the philosopher to know things directly, i.e., as they appear in the perspectives opened up by the exercises of the will.

If the above account of Nietzsche's conception of the task of the philosopher is accurate, then the Persians, whose virtue is encapsulated in the maxim "to speak the truth and to *shoot well with arrows*,"[14] would have to be antagonists in the Nietzschean drama. But the enigmatic Nietzsche is full of praise for Persian morality, and the protagonist of his great work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, is the fictionalized Persian prophet who advocates Nietzsche's Socratic approach to philosophy while making no secret of his Persian heritage: "... 'To speak the truth and to handle bow and arrow well' — that seemed both dear and difficult to the people who gave me my name."[15] Is Nietzsche's admiration for the Persian prophet and his metaphysical quest for truth an incoherence in his thought? I want to argue that the *inconsistency* in Nietzsche's thought between his Socratic approach to philosophy and his admiration for the Persians (exemplified by Zarathustra) is merely superficial. A clearer understanding of Nietzsche's project resolves the Persian paradox, and makes the Nietzschean relation between metaphysics and ethics more perspicuous.

III

In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche emphasizes the significance of his choice of Zarathustra as the protagonist for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*:

> I have not been asked, as I should have been asked, what the name of Zarathustra means in my mouth, the mouth of the first immoralist: for what constitutes the tremendous historical uniqueness of that Persian is just the opposite of this. Zarathustra was the first to consider the fight of good and evil the very wheel in the machinery of things: the transposition of morality into the metaphysical realm, as a force, cause, and end in itself, is his work. But the question is at bottom its own answer. Zarathustra created this most calamitous error, morality; consequently, he must also be the first to recognize it.[16]

Here, Nietzsche calls Zarathustra the first metaphysical moralist. Metaphysical morality, for Nietzsche, is the metaphysical grounding of universal ethical demands. Nietzschean ethical imperatives, as we will see, concern what ought to be done in a particular situation, and they do not derive their necessity from prescribing a way of life in accord with a metaphysically privileged description, acquired, for instance, through a revelation from a divine source. For Nietzsche, any such appeal to a metaphysically privileged standpoint is an error, and Zarathustra seems to have perpetrated the first of these errors by grounding ethics in the metaphysical interplay of good and evil: *Ahuramazda* and *Ahriman*. In this light, there is a natural temptation to conclude that Nietzsche is ironic in the choice of the name "Zarathustra" for the main representative of his immoralism.

Nietzsche also makes clear that being Persian is not incidental to Zarathustra's historical priority in the chain of metaphysical moralists. The alleged Persian pursuit of truth is what motivates Zarathustra's metaphysical approach to ethics. It is this truthfulness that is more important than his historical priority for the privileged role Zarathustra receives in Nietzsche's writings. "[W]hat is more important is that Zarathustra is more truthful than any other thinker... The self-overcoming of morality, out of truthfulness; the self-overcoming of the moralist, into his opposite — into me — that is what the name of Zarathustra means to me."[17] According to the "ironic" interpretation, this passage implies that Nietzsche chooses "Zarathustra" as his vehicle in order to allow the historical Zarathustra to compensate mankind for the Persian love of truth (a misguided metaphysical motivation) as well as the resulting moral viewpoint that inaugurated the historical reign of an error.

IV

Yet Nietzsche's appropriation of the name "Zarathustra" is not simply ironic, mainly because Nietzsche's attitude to truth and metaphysical morality is not entirely negative. Nietzsche's ambivalence towards truth becomes apparent when we consider the role of yet another truth-teller, another metaphysician, in Nietzsche's thought. In "Schopenhauer as Educator," Nietzsche praises the German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, as a teacher of whom he can boast:

> Certainly there may be other means of finding oneself, or coming to oneself out of the bewilderment in which one usually wanders as in a dark cloud, but I know of none better than to think on one's true educators. And so today I shall remember one of the teachers and the taskmasters of whom I can boast, Arthur Schopenhauer.[18]

Nietzsche's conception of philosophy is, as we have seen, Socratic: he is concerned mainly to disturb his audience, to set them on the path of inquiry into how they ought to live. For that, Nietzsche maintains that one must realize one's imperfections and seek to overcome them by following the example of an educator. The educator supplies the individual with the means of going beyond mere animality: the state in which the individual's actions are determined by maxims that promote the goal of sustaining life.

> It is already much that we should raise our head above the water at all, even if only a little, and observe what stream it is in which we are so deeply immersed. And even this momentary emerging and awakening is not achieved through our own power, we have to be lifted up—and who are they who lift us? They are those true *men*, those who are no longer animal, the philosophers, artists, and saints.[19]

Nietzsche's true men are marked by their overcoming of the animal in themselves. Such an overcoming involves ridding the self from the determination of one's actions by biological imperatives. But how do these so-called *true* men act? According to Nietzsche, these true men are saints, philosophers, and artists, and their trueness consists in their concern with metaphysical truth. Nietzsche emphasizes this point in regard to the Schopenhauerean man:

> The Schopenhauerean man voluntarily takes upon himself the suffering involved in being truthful; and this suffering serves to destroy his own willfulness and to prepare that complete overturning and conversion of his being... But there is a kind of denying and destroying that is the discharge of that mighty longing for

> sanctification and salvation and as the first philosophical teacher of which Schopenhauer came among us desanctified and truly secularized men. All that exists that can be denied deserves to be denied; and being truthful means: to believe in an existence that can in no way be denied and which is itself true and without falsehood. That is why the truthful man feels that the meaning of his activity is metaphysical, explicable through the laws of another and higher life, and in the profoundest sense affirmative: however much all that he does may appear to be destructive of the laws of this life and a crime against them.[20]

The truthful men seek eternal truths at the base of their actions. They want a super-hard ground or justification for the maxims that determine their agency. In other words, the truthful men are governed by the metaphysical impetus, the urge to get outside their skins for the sake of a privileged viewpoint. Now, much of Nietzsche's philosophical polemics are directed against such metaphysical posturing, which Nietzsche sometimes opposes vehemently. However, the tone of these polemics is at odds with Nietzsche's veneration of the so-called educators (e.g., Schopenhauer) as well as his regard for the Persians.

V

Nietzsche, despite his opposition to metaphysical ethics, does recognize that such approaches have their place in the ethical development of the individual. For Nietzsche, emulating an educator is the first stage in the development of individuals who heed the call of conscience and recognize their unexamined condition as something to be overcome and their personality as something to be formed.

> For the question is this: how can your life, the individual life, receive the highest value, the deepest significance? How can it be least squandered? Certainly only by your living for the rarest and most valuable exemplars.[21]

Following the lead of the exemplary educator[22] is decisive for delivering the individual from his animal condition. One should not interpret the notion of animal condition as excluding culture. Rather, the animal condition is the unreflective condition of acting for the sake of animalistic (biological) as well as cultural objectives. In more specific terms, it is not just sustenance and propagation of life that define the objectives of the animal stage (which one must overcome). Nietzsche also talks of the "continuation of animality" in human conduct:

> In individual moments we all know how the most elaborate arrangements of our life are made only so as to flee from the tasks we actually ought to be performing, how we would like to hide our head somewhere as though our hundred-eyed conscience could not find us out there, how we hasten to give our head to the state, to money-making, to sociability or science merely so as no longer to possess it ourselves, how we labor at our daily work more ardently and thoughtlessly than is necessary to sustain our life because to us it is even more necessary not to have leisure to stop and think.[23]

Goals such as money, honor, scientific truth, and so on, are in the same category as the biological goals, since preoccupation with them averts the ethical call, the call of conscience, and drowns it in busy work. The educators, the metaphysical people (that is, saints, philosophers, and artists), pull us out of the stagnation of average everydayness and encourage us to heed our conscience by seeking "fundamental," nonconventional truths, as the basis of our actions.

To overcome the animal in man, Nietzsche, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, prescribes that we begin by burdening the self with higher ideals. This is the camel stage in the process of self-transformation: "What is difficult? asks the spirit that would bear much, and kneels down like a camel wanting to be well loaded. What is most difficult, O heroes, asks the spirit that would bear much, that I may take it upon myself and exult in my strength."[24] In the so-called camel stage, the individual seeks to transcend unreflective existence by bearing the burden of metaphysical principles prescribed by their educators, the *true* men. Persians, for example, sought to go beyond animality by following the ideals of Zarathustra.

According to Nietzsche, the first stage in moral development (the metaphysical truth-seeking stage) is superseded by the stage in which the individual engages in the critique of such views. The "assessment of the outward world"[25] is described in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as the lion stage, the nay-saying stage in which one critically overturns the "Thou shalt."[26] The individual, in order to go beyond the metaphysical stage, engages in a critique of the legitimacy of metaphysical morality. Examples of such a critique are to be found throughout Nietzsche's work, but the most sustained and elaborate one occurs in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, where Nietzsche systematically deflates the metaphysical aspirations of Judeo-Christian morality. Nietzsche's critique, however, must be understood in relation to his account of the ethical development of the individual. It does not reject metaphysical morality as such; it only supports the effort to transcend such morality once one has elevated oneself by means of its

"truths".

Nietzsche maintains that the final stage in self-development is the child stage, and it is achieved when "the spirit... wills his own will."[27] Having overcome the metaphysical constraints on action, the person is reborn as an autonomous agent who prescribes to himself what he ought to do.[28] Nietzsche, however, ascribes an affirmative temperament to the autonomous agent who has freed himself from animality *as well as* metaphysics. This is in sharp contrast with Schopenhauer's pessimistic pronouncements on the will and marks Nietzsche's overcoming of his teacher. For Schopenhauer, the wise man, the person who has achieved perfection, resists the will and overcomes worldly temptations. Nietzsche, however, is more optimistic: his wise man, having freed himself from animality as well as metaphysics, plunges into action, transforming the world by his autonomy. Nietzsche writes, "[Schopenhauer] knew well that there is something higher and purer to be found and attained on this earth than the life of his own time."[29] With this, Nietzsche agrees and, in accord with Schopenhauer, summons the wise man: "genius"[30] "itself is now summoned, so that one may hear whether genius, the highest fruit of life, can perhaps justify life as such."[31] This invocation is meant to supply the occasion for Nietzsche to distinguish himself from Schopenhauer: "the creative human is now to answer the question: 'Do you affirm this existence in the depths of your heart? Is it sufficient for you? Would you be its advocate and redeemer? For you have to pronounce a single, heartfelt yes! — and life, though it faces such heavy accusations, shall go free'."[32] Schopenhauer's pessimism answers these questions in the negative, "at the end of his life, no man if he be sincere and at the same time in possession of his faculties, will ever wish to go through it again. Rather than this, he will much prefer to choose complete nonexistence."[33] Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer's pessimism as metaphysical, since its denial of the will amounts to accepting the metaphysical existence of a will which denies the worldly will.[34] Now this approach may be useful in overcoming one's animality, but it itself has to be overcome to make way for the emancipation of human agency, the condition essential to genius and creativity.[35]

VI

For Nietzsche, Zarathustra attains the status of active, life-affirming genius once he allows "the thought of eternal recurrence" to gain possession of him. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche anticipates *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* when he writes this of the eternal recurrence of the same:

> If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in each and everything, "Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?" would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight. Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to crave nothing more fervently* than this ultimate and eternal confirmation and seal?[36]

To internalize the thought of eternal recurrence, to be in its possession, implies that the person acts in such a way that were this moment to recur again eternally, he would not change the way he acted. He has acted properly in response to relevant details of the situation demanding his action, and not for the sake of satisfying his animal inclinations, nor out of the motivation to ground his action in a metaphysical ideal.[37]

In the third book of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Zarathustra is identified as merely the teacher of eternal recurrence.[38] However, in the fourth book, Zarathustra himself internalizes the principle of eternal recurrence.[39] The internalization of the thought of eternal recurrence means that the agent has acquired the ability to act appropriately in response to the ethically salient features of the world. This transformation is already evident in the beginning of the fourth book when Zarathustra says: "For *that* is what I am through and through: reeling, reeling in, raising up, raising, a raiser, cultivator, and disciplinarian."[40] Here, Zarathustra indicates that he has heeded his own teachings. He has completed the process of self-transformation and has achieved autonomy.[41]

VII

Persian culture, according to Nietzsche, embraces the ideal of truthfulness, and as such allows for the overcoming of mere animality. This is a significant step towards the achievement of the good life, the life of autonomy, but it is not enough. One must liberate oneself from the metaphysical weight, in order to achieve the fulfillment that Nietzsche prescribes. This is why, in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche places the emphasis on the second conjunct of the Persian virtue: "To speak the truth and to *shoot well with arrows*."[42] The shooting is a metaphor for going beyond: overcoming. Nietzsche's Zarathustra goes beyond his historical, metaphysical counterpart in thinking the thought of eternal return: "The self-overcoming of morality, out of truthfulness; the self-overcoming of the moralist, into his opposite — into me — that is what the name of Zarathustra means in my mouth."[43] Nietzsche's Zarathustra goes beyond truthfulness (the virtue of the Persians) to the good life, the life of affirming the creative, law-giving will of the individual. Of course, this transfiguration requires truthfulness as a necessary condition. The individual will

has to be emancipated from animality and its extensions, and it is truthfulness along with its corollary, metaphysical morality, that allow for this liberation. Therefore, Nietzsche's Zarathustra does not reject the project inaugurated by the historical Zarathustra, who sought to improve his people by means of truth. Nietzsche's Zarathustra augments and completes the teachings of the Persian Zarathustra.

Endnotes

1. The name "Zarathustra" is derived from the Greek "Zoroaster" which is a corruption of the Persian *Zartusht*. Zarathustra founded a religion (referred to in the west as Zoroastrianism) which was the dominant religion of Persia (Iran) for more than a thousand years (until two centuries after the Muslim conquest of Persia in the seventh century). The main features of Zoroastrianism, for our purposes, are its renunciation of polytheism and the worship of one good god, *Ahuramazda*. Zarathustra, however, addresses the problem of evil by conceiving a cosmic opposition to *Ahuramazda*. This warring evil force was named *Ahriman*, and the moral life involved enlisting in the battle against this powerful adversary. The *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* contains an informative entry on this subject under the heading "Zoroastrianism."
2. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Schopenhauer as Educator," *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) section 8, p. 193. Abbreviated as SE in references to follow.
3. SE 8, pp. 193-4.
4. SE 8, p.194.
5. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* with *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967) "Untimely," 3, p. 281. Abbreviated as EH in references below.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 391.
8. *Ibid.*
9. See, e.g., Plato, "Apology," *Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961) 29a-30c; and "Meno," *Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, trans. W.K.C. Guthrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961) 79e-80d.
10. See, e.g., Aristotle's "Metaphysics," *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. W.D. Ross (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) 1074b15-16.
11. See, e.g., Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. W.D. Ross (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) Book X, Chapter 8.
12. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967) Preface, section 2, p. 16. [Henceforth cited as GM with reference to part number, in roman numerals, followed by section number.] For this characterization of philosophy and the inclusion of himself in its ranks, also see GM III:12.
13. I believe that Nietzsche's account of the will (human agency or practical freedom) is similar to the Kantian one in that both consider the will to be the ability to act independently of inclinations and in conformity with norms. "For the human will is not determined by that alone which stimulates, that is, immediately affects the senses; we have the power to overcome the impressions on our faculty of sensuous desire, by calling up representations of what, in a more direct manner, is useful or injurious. But these considerations, as to what is desirable in respect of our whole state, that is, as to what is good and useful, are based on reason" [Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1929) A802=B830]. To act based on reasons is to act in conformity with norms, since reasons take something as useful or injurious for a purpose. This is not to suggest that every time we act we are *conscious* of the reasons for our actions; it only means that we *can* become conscious of such reasons. Consciousness is achieved through an examination of what we have come to take for granted. Both Nietzsche and Kant agree that we should engage in a critical examination of our reasons, but they differ on how such an examination should be conducted. Kant proposes a formal test for determining the propriety of reasons, based on the notion of the categorical imperative. Nietzsche, however, is more particularistic in his take on self-examination. This essay clarifies Nietzsche's views on this matter. A further exploration of the similarities and differences between Nietzsche and Kant on self-examination is available in note 37.
14. EH, Destiny, 3, p. 328. Kaufmann explains Nietzsche's account of the Persian virtue in light of Nietzsche's comment that "[w]hatever makes it [a people] rule and triumph and shine, to its neighbor's awe and envy: that is to it the high, the first, the measure, the meaning of all things" (Kaufmann, p. 201). Kaufmann goes on to mention the virtues of two other peoples, the Greeks and the Jews, along with the Persians: "The greatness of Greece is interpreted in terms of the conception of the contest which, in turn, is now taken as reducible to will to power. The Persians, like the Greeks, strove for both physical and moral power, here represented by truth-telling and arrow-shooting. The Jews' honoring of father and mother, however, seems to be a striving for moral excellence only, not for physical power; yet of them alone Nietzsche says that they became powerful" (Kaufmann, pp. 201-2). These remarks are interesting in supplying a context for Nietzsche's account of the "Persian virtue." However, I disagree with Kaufmann's claim about physical excellence, at least in regard to the Persians. I offer my interpretation of arrow-shooting in section VII.
15. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1966) 1, "On The Thousand and One Goals," p. 59. Abbreviated henceforth as Z.
16. EH, Destiny, 3, pp. 327-8.
17. *Ibid.*
18. SE 2, p. 130.
19. SE 5, p. 159.
20. SE 4, pp. 152-3.
21. SE 6, p. 162.
22. R. J. Hollingdale had originally translated the German "*Exemplare*" as "specimens" [*Nietzsche: The Man and His Philosophy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1965) p. 127]. "Specimens" is a bad translation of "*Exemplare*," because it implies biological attributes. One either is or is not a specimen. A better translation of "*Exemplare*" is "exemplar," because it captures exemplarity as essential relatedness: being a representative instance illustrating some feature of interest and relevance to other members of a class, a feature they can all display to varying degrees. It also captures exemplariness as inessential difference: showing an excellence not exhibited but attainable by other members of a class. This rendition of "*Exemplare*" shows the relevance of the term as a description of the educators.
23. SE 5, p. 158.

24. Z 1, "On The Three Metamorphoses," p. 26.
25. SE 6, p. 163.
26. Z 1, "On The Three Metamorphoses," p. 27.
27. *Ibid.*
28. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche uses the term "*autonom*" to characterize the person who has reached the final stage: "If we place ourselves at the end of this tremendous process, where the tree at last brings fruit, where society and the morality of custom at last reveal what they have been simply the means to: then we discover that the ripest fruit is the sovereign individual, like only to himself, liberated again from the morality of the custom, autonomous and supramoral GM II, 2. ["*das autonome Übersittliche individuum*" (*Nietzsche Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), VI, 309.]
29. SE 3, p. 146.
30. Nietzsche's references to exemplary educators as geniuses should not be interpreted as referring to a class of people who are by nature superior to the rest of mankind. For Nietzsche, as I claim in note 22 above, *exemplars* are essentially identical with the rest of mankind insofar as their capacities are concerned. Their having achieved excellence is their inessential distinguishing feature.
31. SE 3, p. 146.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation,* Volume I, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1958) p. 324.
34. In "Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?," Martin Heidegger focuses on the characterization of Zarathustra's task as the redemption of mankind from revenge. See *Nietzsche, Volume Two: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 219. Revenge, according to Zarathustra, is "the will's ill will against time and its 'It was'" (Z 2, "On Redemption," p. 141). For Heidegger's Nietzsche, "redemption from revenge is redemption from the repulsive, from defiance and degradation in the will" (Heidegger, p. 225). I take Heidegger to mean that any attempt to justify one's actions by reference to purposes external to the particular transient situation (e.g., money, power, religion, etc.) defies and degrades the *situation* in which one acts. Such attempts must be aborted. Heidegger goes on to maintain that Nietzsche's solution, unlike Schopenhauer's, does not involve "the dissolution of all willing. Redemption releases the ill will from its 'no' and frees it for a 'yes'" (Heidegger, pp. 225-6). Nietzsche's solution involves the appropriate exercise of the will, rather than its denial. I want to add that, for Nietzsche, the proper exercise of the will also requires an education that includes learning to value the particular transient situation.
35. Richard Schacht, in "Zarathustra/*Zarathustra* as Educator," draws a similar parallel between "Schopenhauer as Educator" and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Schacht, however, writes that in "Schopenhauer as Educator" Nietzsche "was clearer about the end [the production of genius] than he was about what might be done to advance its achievement" [*Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, edited by Peter R. Sedgwick (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995) p. 227]. My contention is that the process of producing the great human being is already sketched out in "Schopenhauer as Educator." The problem with Schacht's account is that it does not contain a discussion of the parallel between the developmental stages in "Schopenhauer as Educator" and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.
36. Z 4, "The Shadow," pp. 273-4.

37. The approach to ethics suggested by this reading of the principle of eternal recurrence comes close to the one advocated by analytic philosophers like John McDowell. The idea is that proper training provides the agent with the ability to act properly given the morally relevant features of a particular situation. For instance, McDowell comes to the rescue of the notion of the categorical imperative by arguing that to see its moral significance, one must go beyond the explicitly prescriptive or normative *language* altogether. See his essay, "Are Moral Requirements Hypothetical Imperatives?" in *The Aristotelian Society Supplement*, 52 (1978), p. 14. In other words, for McDowell, the necessity of the categorical imperative is not determined by the normative character of the imperative, as advocated by Kant. Rather, it involves "some appropriate specific consideration ... [which would include] a mention of what one takes to be relevant features of the circumstances in which the action is to be performed" (*ibid.*). The sensitivity to the salient features of the circumstances is instilled by one's moral upbringing, which is not a mere programming "to behave on conformity with rules of conduct, but to see situations in a special light, as constituting reasons for acting; this perceptual capacity, once acquired, can be exercised in complex novel circumstances, not necessarily capable of being foreseen and legislated for by a codifier of the conduct required by virtue, however, wise and thoughtful he might be" (McDowell, p. 21). The thought of eternal recurrence, in my opinion, implies a similar particularistic approach to the notion of the categorical imperative. Eternal recurrence prescribes that one ought to do the right thing as determined by the ethically relevant features of the situation in which one acts, since it evokes the understanding that the propriety of an act is answerable to the relevant features of that particular and recurring situation. Assuming the eternal recurrence of the same, the propriety of an action cannot be answerable to one's subjective preferences, since preferences are ephemeral and cannot withstand the weight of eternity. The rightness of one's act, under the same assumption, cannot be determined by formal and/or metaphysical considerations either, because such considerations apply without regard to the recurring situation; in their light, the thought that a particular situation recurs eternally would be irrelevant.
38. Z 3, "The Convalescent," p. 220.
39. It is important to note that in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* the expression of the thought of eternal recurrence undergoes a certain clarification. Its first unsatisfactory expression is uttered by the figure of "the Dwarf" in the form of a doctrine — a cosmological hypothesis about the structure and nature of time (Z 3, "On Vision and the Riddle," pp. 157-8). Next, Zarathustra's animals enunciate it as an attitude towards life, an optimism requiring no fundamental inner change (Z 3, "The Convalescent," pp. 220-1). It is only in the final book that Nietzsche's Zarathustra is transformed by understanding the ethical and philosophical significance of eternal recurrence.
40. Z 4, "The Honey Sacrifice," p. 239.
41. It should be kept in mind that the conditions for Nietzschean autonomy do not ensure that the autonomous person avoids a repulsive way of life. In this regard, I find Alexander Nehamas's comments, in *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, instructive. Nehamas writes: "Perhaps the proper approach to Nietzsche's view is to think of his ideal life, the life of the *Übermensch*, as a framework within which many particular lives, each one of which exhibits the unity and coherence he finds so important, can fit. We could then try to develop independent reasons for excluding some of these lives, particularly those that are vicious or objectionable in some other way, as inappropriate. I do not know how we might accomplish this, and Nietzsche is not at all interested in providing the necessary guidelines... [H]owever, we must keep in mind that the test involved in the

thought of the eternal recurrence is not at all easy to pass. Constructing a self and a life that meets its requirements is an extremely difficult task: it is not as if every vicious person would satisfy it, or as if Nietzsche could not condemn many such lives." *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 167.

42. EH, Destiny, 3, p. 328.

43. *Ibid.*

ASPECTS OF ENLIGHTENED UTOPIANISM IN NIETZSCHE'S *ZARATHUSTRA*

Lewis Call

A central component of Nietzsche's thought is his critique of the Enlightenment tradition. In a note from *The Will to Power*, for example, he asks "what is noble?" His answer is, among other things: "Disgust for the demagogic, for the 'enlightenment,' for 'being cozy,' for plebeian familiarity."[1] This critical impulse, which is especially strong in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, has received a good deal of attention from several important thinkers. Martin Heidegger suggests, for example, that "nihilism cannot be overcome from the outside. We do not overcome it by tearing away at it or shoving it aside — which is what we do when we replace the Christian God with yet another ideal, such as Reason, Progress, political and economic 'Socialism,' or mere Democracy. Try as we might to cast it aside, the black snake attaches itself ever more firmly. Zarathustra thus immediately gives up such rescue operations."[2] The content of the traditional Enlightenment, including reason, progress, liberal politics, and so on, was anathema to Nietzsche, and Heidegger is quite right to suggest that Nietzsche made no attempt to resuscitate these ideas in their original form.

Yet the fundamental project of the Enlightenment is ironically Zarathustra's own project, and Nietzsche's as well: to create a better world in which humanity might realize its fullest potential. Despite his energetic, enthusiastic and often quite compelling critique of the Enlightenment, Nietzsche remained unable to eradicate important elements of Enlightened thought in his own work. And it is in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that Nietzsche's debt to the Enlightenment is strongest. *Zarathustra* is a utopian vision of a future populated by strong and independent individuals whom Nietzsche calls overmen; it contains, in short, a project that is very much in harmony with that of the Enlightenment.

Nietzsche states his project in terms that often mask his fundamentally humanistic, utopian impulses. For example, Nietzsche frequently describes humanity as nothing more than a means to produce the overman (*Übermensch*). He writes: "man is a rope, tied between beast and overman — a rope over an abyss."[3] A strange and awkward middle ground, humanity's purpose is to make possible something superior. "What is great in man is

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