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NIETZSCHE'S OTHER NATURALISM

A reading of the fifth book of Daybreak

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INTRODUCTION

Current Anglo-Saxon Nietzsche scholarship is dominated by naturalism. Naturalism contains a metaphysical claim, namely that all phenomena are natural, and an ethical claim, that value is identical with existence and therefore, that the opposition of good and evil should be absorbed into the opposition of existence and inexistence. There is also an implicit claim connected to the former, namely, that existence is nature. From these three basic claims, most naturalist readers of Nietzsche deduce the existence of a paradox in his thinking: if what there is is identical with value, what is it that allows Nietzsche to judge as much as he does? Sure enough, he judges what he calls illusions and this much is consistent with the equation of inexistence and negative value, but this only moves the question one step down the road. If the inexistent is truly inexistent, why should Nietzsche judge it? Why does losing it require any effort? Of course, illusions do exist (as illusions), but precisely insofar as they exist, they do not justify their removal. This is endless. This serves to establish what I think are the stakes involved in calling Nietzsche a naturalist. Those stakes are primarily metaethical and ontological. Naturalism should concern us because it makes the entire Nietzschean critique of judgement problematic. Secondly, because it refuses to enter into ontology, it should concern us even more, or at least concern those who believe that Nietzsche's ambiguous relationship to judgement can only be solved at the ontological level

(after all, this ambiguity is best encapsulated in the constant talk of fatalism, and the paradoxical command for one to 'become who they are', to do with the meaning of being).

Even though the upshot of this is that ontology and metaethics must, in my view, constitute the horizon of the discussion of Nietzsche as a naturalist, what I will focus on here is the value of naturalism as an interpretive framework for Nietzsche's theoretical philosophy. In the background, I will retain the assumption that this predicament inherited from the naturalist readings is not a fatality, and that liberating ourselves from the epistemic naturalist Nietzsche would reopen ways of making sense of his metaethics and ontology.

I contend that the paradox described above relies on two unattended assumptions that one finds in naturalism, but not in Nietzsche: the first is that all that there is is properly characterised as nature. The second is that nature is properly understood as 'the object of the natural sciences'.

There is a standard response to my accusation that the naturalists make unattended assumptions, for the first assumption at least. A naturalist would object that talking about 'all that there is' in any sense other than the naturalist sense would involve collapsing into metaphysics. But rejecting metaphysics is different from not doing metaphysics. And it seems that naturalism suffers from an etymological prejudice that dies hard: that physics spares us metaphysics. As a result, naturalism leaves us with an implicit and naïve metaphysics that dare not speak its name; call it metaphysical bad faith. Metaphysical bad faith is a real danger to the naturalist, but it may be avoided. The problem, as I will try to show, is that avoiding it makes naturalism viable but trivial: it makes key concepts such as 'nature' and 'science' so vague and indeterminate that naturalism amounts to the trivial and circular claim that all there is is nature and nature is all there is. These are, in my opinion, the Charybdis and Scylla of naturalism, and they must inform a consistent naturalist's position: how can one see Nietzsche as a naturalist without either making unwarranted metaphysical assumptions or making naturalism trivial and/or circular?

I. THE NATURALIST ARGUMENT

Although he does not express this concern in these terms, it seems to me that the naturalist Nietzsche scholar who shows the sharpest awareness of this predicament is Brian Leiter. In a recent article entitled 'Nietzsche's Naturalism Reconsidered', Leiter does not reconsider his original naturalists reading of Nietzsche so much as he clarifies it by way of a response to some of his critics.¹ In addition to Leiter's distinctive concern for consistency, the facts that this is such a recent article, that it purports to assess the road travelled since the introduction of the theme of naturalism in the Anglo-Saxon scholarship in the 90s, and that it addresses objections that have cropped up along the way, make this article a viable paradigmatic example of the naturalist readings of Nietzsche. This is how I will use it in this paper.

I say that Leiter is aware of the double constraint posed to naturalism because he insists in describing Nietzsche as *a certain kind of* naturalist, and he makes it clear that the qualifications he appends to the label 'naturalist' in the case of Nietzsche offer solutions to several interesting challenges that have been raised against it. For Leiter, Nietzsche is altogether a 'Humean', (p. 582) 'Methodological', (p. 577) 'Therapeutic' (p. 582) and 'Speculative' (p. 577) naturalist.² For all of these qualifications, Leiter has good textual evidence and I will not challenge any of them in particular. What I am concerned with, however, is whether the resulting naturalistic position assigned to Nietzsche passes successfully between the aforementioned Charybdis and Scylla, that is, whether it succeeds in avoiding both triviality and metaphysics.

I will argue that it fails this test, but it does so in a peculiar way. Leiter's naturalism contains enough ambiguity for it to be interpreted as falling prey to triviality or to metaphysics, but I am unsure of which. I do, however, provide an argument in which it is impossible for Leiter to avoid both sides at the same time. Given this indeterminacy, I believe that the principle of charity requires that we pursue the strongest possible position,

¹Brian Leiter, 'Nietzsche's Naturalism Reconsidered,' chap. 25 in *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*, ed. Ken Gemes and John Richardson (Oxford University Press, 2009).

²Unless otherwise stated, page references are to Leiter, 'Nietzsche's Naturalism Reconsidered'; See also: Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality* (London: Routledge, 2002).

so I will take seriously the possibility that Nietzsche's naturalism, as construed by Leiter, offers something like a metaphysics. After all, it is Leiter's project, not mine (and I think, not Nietzsche's), to get rid of metaphysics thus conceived. My argument will therefore focus on the *quality* of the purported metaphysics, and its loyalty to Nietzsche's texts. As suggested above, I find that the resulting metaphysics is naïve and distinctly at odds with a great number of Nietzsche's published writings. I will focus, for this last point, on a reading of *Daybreak's* Book V. It goes without saying, therefore, that even though I am myself convinced that all of Nietzsche's corpus stands against naturalism as construed by Leiter, my present argument has force, if it has any at all, only with reference to the texts of *D's* Book V.

1.1. NATURALISM AS AN INCONSEQUENTIAL QUALIFICATION

Naturalism defined with reference to the natural sciences

Let me begin with the problem of indeterminacy. It seems to me that if it is to avoid any metaphysics, naturalism must be merely formal (or it risks making theoretical assumptions) and contextually determined (or it risks making essentialistic assumptions). Leiter recognises the requirement of formality when he emphasises that Nietzsche is an M-naturalist (Methodological Naturalist), and the requirement of circumstantiality as well, when he defines naturalism with reference to the natural sciences. Whether these two moves are sufficient is debatable however, for it seems that Leiter's understanding of M-naturalism is indeed quite substantial, and that the reference to science is as problematic as the concept of science itself, a problem Leiter barely touches upon.

In this section I examine both criteria with the assumption that they do indeed avoid metaphysics. My argument is that in doing so, they also lose any meaning and make 'naturalism' a trivial determination.

Let me begin with the reference to science. It is, I think, obviously insufficient if we are to take a reference to science to be (as it should if it were to avoid metaphysics) non-essentialist. Science, in this context, just means the practice of those we call scientists. That is to say, it is determined by two practices: the practice of science, and the practice of language, especially our use of the word 'scientists'. One doesn't need Nietzsche to know that such practices are entirely historically determined. The problem, of course,

becomes that in order to meaningfully attribute naturalism to any philosopher, one has to make 'science' either a predetermined object (which contradicts the non-essentialist requirement) or a determinate but unknown object: there is an essence of science that is being discovered as science progresses. In any case, naturalism thus defined runs into three problems:

1) It is a useless denomination, as it makes it hard to see what, in this definition, any non-naturalist philosophy would look like.

2) It submits philosophy to science not only in principle but in practice too. Even if this is a plausible position, it is not an interesting one, especially bearing in mind Leiter's repeated and important demand that when uncertain, we assign to Nietzsche the most interesting and fruitful position. Here, Nietzsche's naturalism would only make him a superfluous sub-scientist.

3) It conflicts with Leiter's other construal of Nietzsche's naturalism, namely that it is a *Speculative* M-naturalism. As speculative, Nietzsche's M-naturalism must be different from science the way it is practised, for science only speculates in order to test empirically its hypotheses. At best, if we were to force the parallel, we could say that Nietzsche is a scientist in the sense that he produces scientific hypotheses (educated guesses), but not in the sense that he deploys any methods or scientific deduction to test these hypotheses. Nietzsche would therefore be some sort of 'mutilated' scientist whose work would be limited to the first step of any scientific process only. Besides, if Nietzsche is a speculative naturalist in this sense, this makes it hard to see how he can still be a methodological one, since most (if not all) of the scientific method concerns testing procedures. One way to keep speculative and methodological naturalism together would be to say that Nietzsche's speculations are naturalistic because they assume that they can be tested the way the sciences test their own hypotheses. This is still subject to the two prior objections for it submits philosophy to the practice of science and makes the qualification of naturalism useless for distinguishing Nietzsche's philosophy from any other philosopher's: what philosopher would not accept that their theories be tested by science, when they are continuous with it? It could be that Nietzsche would be different from other philosophers insofar as he believes any sound philosophical

theory should be testable scientifically, but besides ample textual evidence to the contrary, this only assumes a certain essentialism regarding science (at least some methodological essentialism, the idea that the historicity of the sciences does not affect their methods, which is a view no philosopher of science I know would accept), and in any case (bearing in mind Leiter's concern for doing away with the 'silly' Nietzsche (p. 594)), makes Nietzsche's philosophy really quite boring, as a failed attempt at being science.

The problem with submitting philosophy to science resides in this simple fact: *science* is not naturalistic, only philosophy can be. Naturalism relies on the belief that *all that there is* (a specifically philosophical topic) is nature. Science, of course, makes no claim about 'all that there is'. Neither is science concerned with establishing what nature is, but in establishing how nature functions. Secondly, it is involved with a progressive discovery of nature, which would be rendered impossible by any a priori definition of what nature is. Yet, speculative naturalism requires such an a priori definition. Even defining nature vaguely as 'that which is observable' involves a reference to possibilities. And as we suggested above, any reference to possibilities involves either an open future of discovery, and therefore, the impossibility to define nature a priori, or a predetermined idea of science, which amounts to a metaphysical claim.

Naturalism defined methodologically

It seems therefore that the formal characterisation of naturalism may offer more promise. This states that Nietzsche's naturalism is only methodological, and that it therefore makes no assumptions, but only gives itself some rules and procedures. Assuming for a moment that M-naturalism need not be also speculative (something Leiter correctly regards as necessary for separate reasons), this makes philosophical naturalism a form of scientific practice. In this case, Nietzsche is very bad at it, he who did not make any specific experiment to test any of his theories. Let us throw in the speculative denomination now, and Nietzsche becomes construed as providing scientific hypotheses. But scientific hypotheses are, as we noted, recognisable as scientific only by their testability. That is to say, such theories as Nietzsche's, if regarded as scientific hypotheses, are either recognisable out

of a comparison between the essence of the hypothesis and the essence of science (collapsing into essentialism), or they cannot, in practice, be recognised as naturalistic (i.e. testable scientifically) until confirmed by science, either making the attribution of naturalism to Nietzsche and uninteresting speculation about Nietzsche's personal intentions, or making Nietzsche's philosophy redundant by submitting it to the progress of science.

Leiter's response to both my objections about the contextual reference to science and the formality of naturalism would probably be to point out that the criterion he uses to define science and M-naturalism escapes them. The criterion is causation. Indeed, as far as I can see, he uses the reliance on causation as the last remaining specificity of naturalism in his response to objections from Janaway and others. In this view, what distinguishes Nietzsche's philosophy is the centrality of 'causal explanations' we find in his work. This does offer a response to my objection according to which speculative and methodological naturalism may be incompatible: it seems causation is central to speculation and it is also a methodological principle. Leiter insists forcefully on the fact that Nietzsche's theories are 'mainly modelled on science in the sense that they seek to reveal the causal determinants of these phenomena' (p. 585) and 'Nietzsche emulates the methods of science by trying to construct causal explanations of the moral beliefs and practices of human beings' (p. 588). These are claims intended to secure the connection of Nietzsche's work to the work of science, by saying that they share causality. Which theory doesn't? Leiter acknowledges this question when he responds to Gemes and Janaway's remark³ 'that seeking causal explanations is not enough to establish methods continuity with the sciences – as [Gemes and Janaway] put it, "Just because astrology seeks to give causal explanations we would not say it shares a continuity of methods with the sciences"' (p. 587). And indeed, Leiter himself declares that causal explanation was found in many other explanatory systems, good and bad (like 'intelligent design theory', 'astrology', 'religion' and 'morality'). So, while discussing the famous passage of the *Twilight of the Idols* entitled *The four great errors*, Leiter points out that when Nietzsche talks of 'the "error of imaginary causes" ... it is clear that he wants to distinguish

³Christopher Janaway and Ken Gemes, 'Naturalism and Value in Nietzsche,' *Philosophy & Phenomenological Research* 71 (2005): p. 731.

genuine causal relations from the mistaken ones that infect religious and moral thinking' (p. 586).

In other words, what makes Nietzsche a naturalist is not his causalism, but it is the *kind of causes* he regards as valid. These, Leiter says in response to Gemes and Janaway, are determined with reference to their compatibility with existing science. So it seems what makes Nietzsche a naturalist is that he seeks to propose speculations that are compatible with the sciences, and the solutions implied in pointing to the criterion of causalism vanish. This is only kicking the can down the road, for it would be generally recognised, I think, that *any* discipline seeks to avoid conflict with the sciences, whether it is about their notion of cause, or about their content. Even creationists are more often heard complaining that evolution is bad science, or 'only a theory' rather than opposing science as such.⁴ Besides, it is quite clear that astrology declined when its theories became contradicted by the theories of science, showing that it is sensitive to scientific causality just like any other field (Nietzsche is quite clear that the advances of science are involved in our nihilistic inability to believe in the supernatural anymore, suggesting a clear awareness that any domain of explanation seeks not only causal explanation, but also the compatibility with science). Indeed, if we remember how Leiter's concept of naturalism demands that naturalism be both methodological and speculative, it is hard to see how astrology (an example he takes over from Janaway and Gemes), in its ignorance of the (alleged) non-scientificity of its concept of cause (which was only made obvious later), was not, itself, a form of speculative naturalism. Saying that naturalism is minimally the commitment to a scientific notion of cause is therefore not sufficient to distinguish Nietzsche's or any one else's philosophy from other theories. But indeed, naturalism contains another claim, which in Leiter's argument is here explicit, there hidden: a naturalistic philosophy not only seeks compatibility with the findings of science, it also *limits* itself to them. Besides the fact that it places philosophy in the complete dependence on the sciences, its value is entirely derived from that of

⁴And even if there are cases of good-faith believers who recognise that science conflicts with religion, and decide to believe religion, thereby recognising that their belief is superstitious, this would still make all the rest naturalists alongside Nietzsche. It would indeed be a poor victory indeed to be able to call Nietzsche a naturalist only because he opposes obvious superstition; calling him a philosopher would be enough.

the science that confirms it, and therefore would violate Leiter's imperative of saving the 'interesting Nietzsche' (Nietzsche would always be less interesting than science and made redundant by it). This assumes an essential, permanent and visible difference between science and non-science, which essentialises it. It requires a metaphysics of science.⁵

Another problem with limiting philosophy to the realm of the sciences comes from the fact that the natural sciences have always relied on philosophy to take care of questions that were not (or not yet, the difference is unimportant here) within the purview of science. In short: the natural sciences *are not* naturalistic, only some kinds of philosophy are. This is simply due to the fact that naturalism makes a metaphysical claim about *everything* – namely, that it is natural. And claims about everything are emphatically not scientific claims. There is something in naturalism (a theory of everything) that is not exhausted by the reference to science.

1.2. NATURALISM AS METAPHYSICS

So, the method of naturalism becomes causalism, where, as we shall see, its metaphysics is determinism. Yet, causalism needs qualifying with reference to the scientific concept of 'natural causes', a concept that changes constantly as the concept of nature changes, under the advances of science. Leiter's view, of course, is different: he claims that naturalism can be both methodological *and* speculative because (I assume), the advances of science do not affect the *concept* of nature and therefore, there is a stable concept of natural causes which applies descriptively as well as speculatively. This, however, involves a deterministic metaphysics, a prejudice about the concept of nature that distinguishes naturalism (which assumes what nature is) from the sciences (which don't). Indeed, Leiter himself recognises that this is not a viable position and he declares explicitly that 'an important virtue of M-naturalism is that it does not purport to settle a priori questions about

⁵The best candidate for such an a priori and stable criterion of demarcation is Popper's criterion of falsification (a criterion which is itself philosophical and not scientific). Alas, it is well known that it is a criterion that can only apply a posteriori (a falsified theory is thereby recognised as scientific, but also useless) and therefore fail to satisfy the speculative dimension of Leiter's description of naturalism, or a priori through an essentialist view of the theory: for it is a matter of determining in advance the *abilities* of a statement, its ability for falsification.

ontology, deferring instead to whatever works in the explanatory practices of the sciences' (p. 586). Although predominantly wishful, this strong emphasis on the non-intrusive character of method, namely the assumption that methods do not predetermine their result (even partly), allows the naturalist to evade the objection. But, what we just said makes it plain, I think, that it does so at the cost of the speculative character of Nietzsche's alleged naturalism: naturalism cannot be speculative in any significant way without pre-judging of what nature is. As a result, it falls back into the other objection: M-naturalism, now detached from speculation, is a useless qualification.

Janaway expresses this problem more clearly than I ever could when he notes that Nietzsche must be seen as both an M-Naturalist and a therapeutic naturalist, and that these two qualifications conflict.⁶ Leiter's response is to separate method and objects (the real world which therapy is concerned with) with a strong membrane, implicitly based on a strong opposition of form and content, observation and reality.

Beside the fact that Nietzsche spends a great many of his best pages contesting this opposition, as we will aim to show, this seems to be a recourse Leiter gives up himself when he makes explicit the continuity between methodological causalism and metaphysical determinism: method seems to determine strongly its object. Leiter is aware of an objection of this sort when he understands Christa Acampora's remark⁷ that the belief in causality is metaphysical as asking 'whether Nietzsche is not a skeptic about what he takes to be the underlying metaphysics of modern science?' (p. 592). In fact, Leiter does not address this critique. Instead, he returns to Janaway, claiming that he makes the same criticism as Acampora, albeit in a more cogent way, by pointing out that Nietzsche talks of the will to power as involving interpretation. I take Leiter's implication that Acampora and Janaway's criticisms are similar to indicate Leiter's awareness of my own criticism: that we must not assume that observation (determined by method) is fully external to its object (here, the will to power seen as a biological *and* interpretive principle). Of course, the translation of Acam-

⁶Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁷Christa Davis Acampora, 'Naturalism and Nietzsche's Moral Psychology,' chap. 17 in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006).

pora's point into Janaway's critique of the externality of interpretation and its object is misleading, because it allows Leiter to reduce the objection to a philological problem regarding the importance we must give to the will to power. However, even if we might grant that one should de-emphasise the will to power, we shall see that well before any elaboration of the will to power, *D* makes very explicit the necessity to reject the externality of contemplation and its object. Indeed, there is much to bet that the will to power became elaborated in order to fulfil this requirement, and therefore, that this requirement should not vanish just because the will to power should. I do not see him provide any response to the substance of the objection however.

This issue is of course connected to the problem Leiter raises early in his paper with relation to Janaway's criticism regarding the compatibility of M-naturalism (he calls it 'Humean' naturalism there) with Nietzsche's therapeutic project, which is 'to get select readers to throw off the shackles of morality' (p. 584). Leiter's response to Janaway is to point out that 'we do well to recognise, and separate, the (alleged) therapeutic and Humean Nietzsches, as Janaway, alas, fails to do' (p. 585). For Leiter 'what Janaway fails to establish is that one can not, in fact, separate out the Humean Nietzsche's philosophical positions (about agency, motivation, the origins of morality, etc.) from the mode of presentation that is essential to the Therapeutic Nietzsche's aims' (p. 585). This may be the case, but it is not clear that the onus should be on Janaway to establish this (although it could be easily done, with reference to *D V* for example). In fact, all that Janaway's (and my) position requires, is to point out that the two 'Nietzsches' conflict. And they do, given the above argument to the effect that only a sense of M restrictive to the point of meaninglessness avoids crossing over into metaphysics (which contests Leiter's strong membrane) of a deterministic kind (which conflicts with Nietzsche's text). For what I take Janaway to be pointing out, and Leiter to be missing, is that the therapeutic project of Nietzsche reflects his belief in a strong notion of (at least his own) agency, and therefore any 'M' leading into determinism can be properly shown to be conflicting the 'therapeutic' requirement.

It therefore seems to me that if naturalism is to have any interpretive value for Nietzsche studies, it should imply that Nietzsche holds at least implicitly the three following positions:

- a) Determinism: all events are entirely determined by anterior causes. Consequently:
- b) The innocence of discourse: our discourses of knowledge do not take part in or influence the object they describe (this is made necessary by Leiter's emphasis on the separation of M-naturalism and Nietzsche's therapeutic project).
- c) Actualism: 'there are no objects that do not actually exist'.⁸

Leiter makes it clear that his Naturalist reading involves actualism when he insists that Nietzsche's alleged naturalism involves his belief in type-facts, and that defining naturalism with reference to the sciences commits one to regard naturalism as based on actualism. As Leiter writes: 'In my book, I document the many places where Nietzsche, in fact, embraces the idea of an "unchangeable" or "essential" nature' (p. 589).

2. NIETZSCHE'S OTHER NATURALISM IN *Daybreak V*

In what follows, I try to show that all three of these claims are explicitly denied by Nietzsche in Book V of 1881's *D* (whether their rejection leaves Nietzsche with any viable option is a separate issue). Leiter's remark that 'Nietzsche, in fact, embraces the idea of an "unchangeable" or "essential" nature' (p. 589) and his implicit recognition that this claim is systematically linked to the other aspects of his naturalism may provide a starting point. My intention in the remainder of this paper will therefore be to sketch out Nietzsche's general view about the question of 'nature' as 'deterministic', 'unchangeable' and 'essential'.

Nietzsche's critique of 'nature'

The main concern of Book V is the proper conception of nature. There is one view of nature that Nietzsche endeavours to overcome, and which is strikingly similar to Leiter's: it is the idea of nature as a set of causally connected facts and in which becoming is seen as a mere development of the

⁸Tomberlin (1998) defines actualism in these terms, and makes a strong case to the effect that 'naturalism implies actualism'.

already given (weak becoming). Let us call this 'closed nature'. Nietzsche opposes closed nature with his idea of an open nature where causality is efficient but not determinant, and which accommodates for becoming in a non-deterministic sense (strong becoming), and therefore, for agency. In the weeks immediately following the publication of *D* in July 1881, Nietzsche wrote:

For 'The outlines of a new way of life'

First book in the style of the first phrase of the ninth symphony. *Chaos sive natura*. 'On the dehumanisation [*Entmenschlichung*] of nature'. Prometheus becomes chained again to the Caucasus. Written with the cruelty of Κράτος, the power. (*KSA* 9:11[197])

And:

A fundamental error is the belief in the harmony and the absence of the battle. (*KSA* 9:11[137])

Although they are sketchy, these notes synthesise much of the project of the freshly completed Book V of *D*: it is a matter of finding 'a new way of life' through a new conception of nature. This new conception of nature as 'chaos' involves the 'de-humanisation' of nature. Nietzsche's idea of reason as ensuring the harmony between the human and nature suggests that we must understand 'humanisation' to mean 'fathomability': the de-humanisation of nature precisely means the recognition that nature is unfathomable to human reason. Note how Nietzsche would agree with Leiter that causation is a purely explicative principle. The difference is that Nietzsche emphasises the perils of causal explanation. Finally, we can see in the polemical reworking of the Spinozistic motto '*Deus sive natura*' that Nietzsche regards (seemingly paradoxically) the 'dehumanisation of nature' to involve a 'de-deification' of nature too.

Although this passage makes these connections explicit, we do not need to resort to the *Nachlass* to see such themes presented in Book V. In the very important aphorism 464, entitled *The shame of those who bestow* Nietzsche makes an explicit connection between humanised nature, deified

nature, and causal determinism in the context of a barely veiled allusion to Spinoza. He writes:

[Y]ou have put a god into nature and now everything is again tense and unfree! ... But there is no need for that, it has been only a dream! Let us wake up!

It is a matter of making us 'free' again by removing god from nature. In substituting nature as *Deus* with nature as *chaos*, Nietzsche ensures that we think of nature only as a free force. This may give us a preliminary insight into the relations between open nature and human freedom: if nature is open, it makes room for human action (both individual and cultural) to exist in a strong sense.

Aphorism 427 develops the bond between open nature and cultivation through the figure of horticulture. Horticulture (which is literally a form of cultivation) is the result of a dissatisfaction with nature and therefore reveals how nature is not human, but needs humanising, through cultivation. It is only by seeing that nature is not human that we can attempt to humanise it. It is therefore a very specific kind of freedom that needs retrieving: the freedom to humanise nature, something Nietzsche has been calling, since at least the time of the *Untimely Meditations*, *cultivation*.

The first conclusion one may draw from Nietzsche's critical examination of the notion of nature is that any deterministic concept of nature makes no room for cultivation, whereas the correct concept of nature in fact defines nature as inviting completion through cultivation. A second point that may be made readily, is that Nietzsche's 'de-humanisation' of nature involves a refusal of the given (*D* 445) that prefigures the contrast between factualism (a cult of supposedly given facts) and Nietzsche's own fatalism (an affirmation of fate as a creative force) and the ultimate contrast between being and becoming (See also *D* 441 and *D* 442 which expound Nietzsche's rejection of 'facts').

Nietzsche's critique of 'type-facts'

With this point established, Nietzsche opens a new sequence (*D* 430–434), where he becomes concerned with the figure of the Reformer necessary to achieve the requisite type of cultivation. The opening aphorism of Book

V depicts a nature that is silent and indifferent to the human, like the sea is indifferent to her admirer. This silence of sky and sea, Nietzsche adds cryptically, might force the human to 'become exalted above himself' (D 423). The tragic indifference of open nature, Nietzsche suggests, needs to be restored in order for new humans to arise. Those new humans are defined as cultivators and Nietzsche calls them 'Reformers' (*Reformatoren*, 6[44]).

According to Nietzsche, the liberation involved in the open conception of nature is liberation from our loyalty to nature. This is a liberation that makes hubris possible again (a call to hubris that will reach its culmination in GS's announcement that we killed god): we are now free to make of ourselves what we will, and of the world likewise. Nature is not finished or deterministic, it is *to be finished*, and culture is no longer inconsequential but the redemption of nature.⁹

The question of the type of the Reformer establishes a firm connection between Nietzsche's concept of open nature and his criticism of what Leiter calls 'type-facts' (pp. 586, 589, 590, 595, 596). The crucial argument, in my view, lies in Nietzsche's re-working of the notion of human nature. This is a critical discussion that parallels almost exactly the discussion of nature in general: Nietzsche endeavours to reintroduce a strong sense of becoming within human nature by refusing the idea that individuals are determined once and for all (Nietzsche says in D 538 that such a conception attaches us to 'what is the most personal and unfree' in ourselves). Leiter's idea of type-facts is akin to Schopenhauer's concept of character, and it is therefore not surprising that Leiter finds in Nietzsche many discussions of them: Nietzsche, after all, has an ambivalent and intense rela-

⁹As chaotic, nature demands human action and creation in order to be redeemed. Although Nietzsche uses the word *Erlösung* only once in *D*, giving it its Christian meaning, we know from the *Nachlass* of *D*, that he was already elaborating the concept of *Erlösung* that will be so central to *Z*. Even though he doesn't use the word in the published version of the aphorism, *D* 540 ends with connecting Raphaello's ability to study, which Nietzsche opposes to Michelangelo's connection with nature, by preferring the former for his ability for infinite creation and for being able to produce 'ultimate justificatory goals'. In other words, Raphaello's ability to learn allows him to redeem nature through creation. A draft of this aphorism, from the end of 1880 uses the term '*Erlösung*'. The same idea, without the word, appears in *D*. 436, 462, 540 and 568, and of course, in his 1887 preface, Nietzsche equates '*Morgenröthe*' with '*Erlösung*' (*D* P:1).

tionship to Schopenhauer. In *D V*, we see a very anti-Schopenhauerian Nietzsche, who laments stridently over the damage caused by the doctrine of the unchangeability of character. This doctrine, he believes, is nothing short of the greatest obstacle to the advent of the new men he calls 'geniuses', for geniuses are those that synthesise their unchangeable character *and* their fleeting spirit (none of which is deemed sufficient to determine one's actions or identity), and thus succeed in attaining cultural agency as 'reformers'. Note that it is one thing to recognise the existence of unchangeable characters (as Nietzsche does), and it's quite another to regard this character as 'central determinants of personality and morally significant behaviours', (p. 595) as Leiter does. Nietzsche does not go as far as to say that all is changeable and nothing is natural in us. Simply, he insists on the fact that we possess two dimensions to our individuality: one is character, and the other is educable. As a result, a well-thought-out lifestyle can make us attain 'a new nature in us' (*D 534*), something Schopenhauer (and Leiter) would regard as impossible.

In *D 115*, character is criticised for being invisible and subconscious: if it exists, it cannot help us *understand* our actions, for it is by nature hidden (which directly conflicts with Leiter's default defence position, that naturalism is minimally 'explanatory' (pp. 571, 580, 581, 586, 592)), and in *D 565*, Nietzsche warns us, in a pre-Sartrean fashion, against bad faith: we must not use our character as an excuse, especially, not as an excuse *for not learning*. Indeed, he writes, 'our ignorance and our lack of desire for knowledge are very adept at stalking about as dignity, as character' (*D 565*). Just like a certain idea of nature as objectively given removed cultural agency, Nietzsche worries that thinking of one's nature as determined by a character would remove personal agency, and this second removal is as lethal to any cultural project as the first (Nietzsche himself brings together his argument against naturalism and his argument in favour of learning in *D 540*). In an extremely rich and complete aphorism, Nietzsche brings together the questions of freedom, of learning, of character and of cultivation in a beautiful horticultural metaphor:

What we are at liberty to do. One can dispose of one's drives like a gardener and, though few know it, cultivate the shoots of anger, pity, curiosity, vanity as productively and profitably

as a beautiful fruit tree on a trellis; one can do it with the good or bad taste of a gardener and, as it were, in the French or English or Dutch or Chinese fashion; one can also let nature rule and only attend to a little embellishment and tidying-up here and there; one can, finally, without paying any attention to them at all, let the plants grow up and fight their fight out among themselves. Indeed, one can take delight in such a wilderness, and desire precisely this delight, though it gives one some trouble, too. All this we are at liberty to do: but how many know we are at liberty to do it? Do the majority not *believe* in *themselves* as in complete *fully-developed facts*? Have the great philosophers not put their seal on this prejudice with the doctrine of the unchangeability of character? (D 560)

Opposing the uneducable character with educable agency, Nietzsche declares, is crucial to any cultivating project, and those who 'know [they] are at liberty' to cultivate themselves, are the only ones one could properly call 'geniuses', while those who ascribe genius to character are said to misuse the term:

'Genius' is most readily to be ascribed to those men in whom, as with Plato, Spinoza and Goethe, the spirit seems to be only *loosely attached* to the character and temperament, as a winged being who can easily detach itself from these and then raise itself high above them. On the other hand, it is precisely those who could *never get free* from their temperament and knew how to endow it with the most spiritual, expansive, universal, indeed sometimes cosmic expression (Schopenhauer, for example) who have been given to speaking most freely of their 'genius'. These geniuses were unable to fly above and beyond themselves, but they believed that wherever they flew they would discover and rediscover *themselves* – that is *their* 'greatness', and it *can* be greatness! The others, who better deserve the name, possess the *pure, purifying eye* which seems not to have grown out of their temperament and character but, free from these and usually in mild opposition to them, looks down

on the world as on a god and loves this god. But even they have not acquired this eye at a single stroke. (*D* 497; see also *D* 532)

We seem to have therefore, a rigorous and conspicuous parallel between Nietzsche's criticism of the concept of nature and his criticism of the concept of character. The parallel lies in their common goal: to reject determinism so as to make cultivation possible.

This critique of the essentiality and unchangeability of nature, although it directly contradicts Leiter's naturalistic claims in several ways, would not suffice to refute him if it was only taking advantage of the fact that Nietzsche is often ambiguous if not contradictory, and therefore, that his writings could be put to use both for and against most claims. In the present case however, it would be too hasty to retort that Nietzsche's views on the 'unchangeability' of nature and character are contradictory. Indeed, it is so only if one assume a complete externality of nature and change, which, of course, begs the question. Nietzsche's point, on the contrary, is that there is a ground, below the unchangeable and the changeable, which unifies both, and it is this ground that one must call nature. If Nietzsche is a naturalist, he is one of this other kind: a naturalist of open nature. Of course, such 'other' naturalism falls short of being deterministic by a long stretch. On the contrary, nature thus considered opposes determinism and makes room for a strong concept of change and becoming by way of the reformer's agency. It is to this idea of agency that we now turn.

2.1. NIETZSCHE AND THE OPACITY OF DISCOURSE

Janaway and Leiter seem to correctly regard Nietzsche's overall project as both speculative and therapeutic and *D* is a case in point. It is worth noting further (perhaps against Leiter), that the speculative and the therapeutic project are necessarily connected for Nietzsche. *D* is organised around two projects: to enquire whether and how nature has any room for philosophical agency (that is to say, to what extent Nietzsche himself is able to dispense his cultural therapy in consequential ways), and *at the same time*, to initiate this therapeutic movement. In other words, *D* as a whole is concerned with the question of the continuity between discourse and reality. This is a theme declined in numerous ways, from mental causation

to the causal power of metaphors and dreams, to the history of cultural revolutions and of their heroes (including Plato, Goethe, Napoleon and Wagner) etc.

One of the ways in which Nietzsche formulates this problem is through the relations between *Vita Activa* (which Nietzsche associates with reality: it is the life of the practical man) and *Vita Contemplativa* (which is theoretical). In the terms of Leiter's polemic with Janaway, *Vita Activa* includes the therapeutic project, and *Vita Contemplativa* includes the methodological and speculative one (Nietzsche himself makes science a form of *Vita Contemplativa* in *D* 41). In keeping with Leiter's response to Janaway, we should expect that Nietzsche maintain a strong separation between the two vitae, corresponding to Leiter's strict opposition of methodology and therapy. However, we see that Nietzsche's first order of business is to dismiss their opposition and to criticise any metaphysics that appeals in any way to such an opposition. In fact, Nietzsche's establishment of the continuity between *Vita Activa* and *Vita Contemplativa* is congruent with his establishment of an open nature which provides room for agency: Nature needs finishing by way of cultivation, and the agency it requires for doing so is that of the 'reformers' whose contemplation of the world involves an action over the world.

In a very important aphorism entitled the *On the seventh day* (*D* 463), Nietzsche pursues the question of whether the world is finished or to be finished in terms of resignation and creation. He suggests that the world must be conceived as lying between the realm of creation and the realm of resignation, as both fact and potentiality, therefore, as an object for both *Vita Activa* and *Vita Contemplativa*. He imagines god admonishing mankind:

'You praise that as my *creation*? I have only put from me what was a burden to me! My soul is above the vanity of creators. You praise this as my *resignation*? Have I only put from me what was a burden to me? My soul is above the vanity of the resigned'.

The work of the demiurge is neither creation nor fatality, for these should not be opposed to each other. On the contrary, there is a *necessity* to create that shatters the opposition between creation and resignation, and between

fact and possibility. It is this necessity that becomes the focus of Nietzsche's more ontological musings in *D*: how must we think of reality in order to account for it being a necessary unification of the actual and the possible? That is to say: how can we think of a world that supports the *continuity* of *Vita Activa* and *Vita Contemplativa*? (*D* 452, 458, 463, 496, 500, 540, 548, 563 all establish the continuity of reality and contemplation).

In Book V, Nietzsche proposes repeatedly that we inaugurate a new relation to 'things'. In *D* 567, entitled *In the field*, for example, he declares:

'we must take things more cheerfully than they deserve: especially since we have for a long time taken them more seriously than they deserve'. So speak brave soldiers of knowledge.

The phrase 'soldiers of knowledge' of course is intended to shock, for it is a direct violation of the ideal of non-intrusiveness of knowledge, and thereby, of the opposition of contemplation and action. Taken in coherence with the title of the aphorism 'in the field', we are reminded of the 'ploughshare' which Nietzsche regarded his own book to be, and it becomes clear that what Nietzsche means by 'taking things cheerfully' is accepting to regard them as *cultivable*: this cheerfulness is the aforementioned *hubris*. 'Taking things seriously', on the contrary, is a form of factualism. This is an aphorism that initiates the final sequence of the whole of *D* (aphorisms 567–575, all of which are about the consequentiality of thoughts and of writings), and one that was written as an echo to the projected title of the book, and therefore, it seems to me that its importance cannot be overstated. This aphorism directly conflicts with Leiter's factualism. Indeed, the 'brave soldiers of knowledge' are those who understand knowledge to be not knowledge of things, but knowledge of possibilities attached to things. This is, in Nietzsche's view, a distinction that has only been very faint until his own discovery that being enclosed becoming. Descartes and Spinoza, he writes, were such 'soldiers of knowledge' whose passion for knowledge made them run the 'danger' of 'becoming panegyrist of things!' (*D* 550). For here lies the great danger: in taking things too seriously. For knowledge, in Descartes and Spinoza's minds, was ambiguous: part knowledge of becoming (of *natura naturans*, Spinoza would say), part knowledge of things (*natura naturata*). The object of true knowledge, however, Nietz-

sche insists, is open nature: a combination of actuality and potentiality; it rejects factualism and requires an original, possibilistic ontology.

If true knowers are also soldiers and cultivators, it is precisely because knowledge is no longer external to its object, no longer transparent and unintrusive. The spirit, Nietzsche suggests in *D* 476, creates new regions of being, new objects for itself, and this is due to the fact that one cannot know the world of experience without thereby contributing and adding up to it. This makes the task of knowledge infinite, and Nietzsche laments:

If only it were enough just to stand and gaze at it! If only one
were a miser of one's own knowledge!

But it cannot be enough to just 'gaze' at the world, for contemplation detached from action is now recognised to be a mere abstraction. Gazing always transforms its object and knowledge, which transforms its own object as it approaches it and winds up endlessly chasing its own tail.

Knowledge, Nietzsche declares in *D* 550 quoted above, begins as a superficial and external application of mind to matter, but at long last, it becomes transformative. Using the case of aesthetic judgements, Nietzsche writes: 'knowledge casts its beauty not only over things but in the long run into things – may future mankind bear witness to the truth of this proposition!' (*D* 550). In the following year's *GS* 301, Nietzsche would refer to this transformative contemplation as *Vis Contemplativa*.

Indeed, Nietzsche notes, it is when the 'active people' practise contemplation and the 'contemplative' practise action that they become 'mighty practitioners'. This is a crucial phrase which echoes 'the soldiers of knowledge' discussed above: although 'might' and 'practise' would seem to belong to the active individual, Nietzsche insists in this aphorism, that it is only in the combination of contemplation and action that 'mighty practice' arises. For the practice of *Vita Activa* alone is only inconsequential, if we remember that both contemplation and action fall prey to the same illusion: that of the non continuity between reality and action. On the contrary, Nietzsche finishes the aphorism by revealing what he means by 'mighty practitioners'. He writes: 'thus, a defect of character [being either contemplative or active] becomes a school of genius'. 'Mighty practitioners' and 'soldiers of knowledge' are geniuses; that is to say, on the basis of our foregoing

discussion, they are those that unify spirit and character, the possible and the actual, those who *create* or rather, those through whom creation takes place.

Nietzsche's critique of determinism therefore must be understood not simply as an expression of his insistence on historicity. It also indicates how fundamental this historicity must be: it is a historicity that is more than a development of a pre-existing determinate project, or potentiality. This kind of becoming, which determinism can accommodate, Nietzsche regards as superficial and anecdotal, this is the one he calls 'progress'. In *D* 554, entitled *Going on ahead*, he opposes progress with the much more indeterminate 'going on ahead'. For progressing already contains a criterion of progress, that is to say, a *telos*. Progress is a becoming that always already presupposes a pre-established knowledge of both the past, the present and the future of the trajectory. It is not surprising therefore that Nietzsche wilfully gives up knowledge of the future in order to restore free creation. For in replacing 'progress' with 'going on ahead', what is lost is knowledge of the endpoint, but what is gained is freedom of creation. What is gained, therefore, is a sense of possibility, and geniuses are '*seers* who tell us something of the *possible!*' (*D* 551).

We can now return to the relations of contemplation and action, for Nietzsche's project was to overcome their opposition, and this is achieved in the figure of the genius, a figure whose possibility has been established by Nietzsche's deepening of his anti-deterministic ontology. The genius is eminently contemplative and eminently active, precisely because once well-understood, the object of contemplation becomes understood as the possible, and therefore, true contemplation must count as creative action, the bringing about of the possible. Let us return to the question of naturalism. It seems to me that the naturalist line of reading Nietzsche is articulated most clearly and consistently by Brian Leiter. This is a naturalism which relies on a sharp distinction of method and therapy, on a deterministic concept of nature – and of character – as closed, and on factualism. All of these positions are denied explicitly by Nietzsche in Book V of *D*. Perhaps we should take Nietzsche's argument as an invitation to research in what way we can conceive of another naturalism, a naturalism of open nature, perhaps even of an original possibilist ontology.

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