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Nietzsche's Second Turning

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Introduction

There is a long tradition of dividing Nietzsche's corpus into early, middle, and late periods, with *Human, All Too Human* (1878) initiating, and *The Gay Science* (1882) concluding, the middle period. Indeed, the back cover of the first edition of *GS* read, in part, 'This concludes a series of writings by Friedrich Nietzsche on the free spirit', and it is likely that Nietzsche himself wrote this material.[1] So Nietzsche himself seems to have thought of *GS* as closing off a period of his work.

This description of *GS* as concluding Nietzsche's writing on the free spirit is puzzling to us now, however, since free spirits still have a prominent role in one of the late works, *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886). What then is it that makes *GS* a transitional work? Having published a few years ago a study of *HH*[2] in which I argued for taking the periodisation of Nietzsche's work as more than just a chronological convenience, and which identified *HH* as the watershed in his development – inaugurating his middle period and, indeed, marking the point at which Nietzsche 'becomes who he is' – I would now like to consider the second great turning of Nietzsche's philosophical development. Why is it that Nietzsche, with the publication

[1] Ruth Abbey, *Nietzsche's Middle Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), preface.
[2] Jonathan Cohen, *Science, Culture, and Free Spirits: A Study of Nietzsche's Human, All-Too-Human* (New York: Prometheus, 2010), hereafter SC&FS.

of *GS* in 1882, heads in another direction? And what exactly is the nature of this transition in his philosophical development?[3]

In what follows, I return to *HH* to characterise two crucial and interrelated points of instability in the philosophical stance of that work. I then show how *GS* resolves these two issues and thus sends Nietzsche's philosophy in a new direction. I conclude by showing how the new synthesis provides the foundation for Nietzsche's mature work. This essay is in no way meant to be a comprehensive interpretation of the book as a whole[4]; rather, I hope to provide a framework for the interpretation of some crucial passages in *GS*, for recognising elements of intertextuality in *GS*, and for locating *GS* in Nietzsche's philosophical development.

1. First Instability in *Human, All-too-Human* – Epistemology

Positivistic faith in the truths produced by science is unmistakable in *HH*. Contrasting science and philosophy, Nietzsche writes, 'The latter wants, as art does, to bestow on life and action the greatest possible profundity and significance; in the former one seeks knowledge and nothing further – and does in fact acquire it' (*HH* 6, trans. Hollingdale). Or again:

> [O]ne believes that the more profoundly a man thinks, the more tenderly he feels, the more highly he rates himself, the greater the distance grows between him and the other animals … the closer he will get to the true nature of the world and to a knowledge of it: this he does in fact do through science, but he *thinks* he does so even more through his arts and religions. (*HH* 29)

[3] I gave a cursory answer to this question in the final pages of SC&FS (pp. 224–228); the current essay is an expansion.

[4] For that the reader is directed to Kathleen Marie Higgins, *Comic Relief: Nietzsche's "Gay Science"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Monika M. Langer, *Nietzsche's Gay Science: Dancing Coherence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Neither of these works pay much attention to issues of development or intertextuality (other than to note that *GS* 342 is identical with the first section of the Prologue to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*), as I do here.

The repeated use of 'in fact' (*auch*) emphasises Nietzsche's own certainty about the matter: science produces truth. At the same time, however, several sections in *HH* evince suspicion about the human mechanism for knowledge. According to Nietzsche,

> [Man] really thought that in language he possessed knowledge of the world.… [He] conceived … that with words he was expressing supreme knowledge of things; language is, in fact the first stage of the occupation with science.… A great deal later – only now – it dawns on men that in their belief in language they have propagated a tremendous error. (*HH* 11)

Not only language, but '[l]ogic too depends on presuppositions with which nothing in the real world corresponds'. Even that pillar of scientific positivism, 'mathematics, … would certainly not have come into existence if one had known from the beginning that there was in nature no exactly straight line, no real circle, no absolute magnitude'. (*HH* 11, cf. 19)

Nietzsche comes across here as a somewhat confused Kantian. The mind actively creates the features of the world it then finds to be true, but rather than, like Kant himself, giving up on knowledge of things in themselves, Nietzsche, perhaps 'corrupted' by Schopenhauer's claims to have accessed things in themselves via the concept of Will, finds he must contrast knowledge of things in themselves with our actual beliefs, to the utter detriment of the latter: 'That which we now call the world is the outcome of a host of errors and fantasies which have gradually arisen and grown entwined with one another' (*HH* 16). Yet science is still privileged as the best hope of humanity for whatever clarity is yet possible:

> Rigorous science is capable of detaching us from this ideational world only to a limited extent – and more is certainly not to be desired – inasmuch as it is incapable of making any essential inroad into the power of habits of feeling acquired in primeval times: but it can, quite gradually and step by step, illuminate the history of the genesis of the world as idea – and, for brief periods at any rate, lift us up out of the entire proceeding. (*HH* 16)

We are left, then, with Nietzsche in *HH* as a sort of Kantian positivist, if there could be such a thing – categorically suspicious of the very scientific truths he loudly proclaims. Such an epistemology will not long stand. Nietzsche will remain sceptical about humans' ability to know as much as we think we do, and will be a proponent of the naturalistic findings of science, throughout his career, but he will need to find some way to jibe these two proclivities.

2. Second Instability in *Human, All-too-Human* – Free spirits

As described in *HH*, the book which invents them (as Nietzsche admitted later in the preface to the second edition), free spirits (hereafter FS) exist in a state of tension too. They are defined as the avant-garde of culture (*HH* 224), leading the way by propounding conceptual innovations that the fettered spirits, who cannot think for themselves, must ineluctably follow. However, they are also presented as the avatars of science: devoted to knowledge alone (*HH* 34), understanding the truth of determinism (*HH* 107), asking always for reasons (*HH* 225 & 633), avoiding always unchanging convictions (*HH* 636), etc. These two roles – men of science and leaders of the cultural parade – involve them in conflicting commitments that reflect the instability in Nietzsche's epistemological position. As avatars of science, FS know truths. But if these truths were fixed, there would be no way for FS to continue to be the forerunners of cultural development – they would land on the truth and then stay there. Since free spirits in *HH* must keep moving in order to continue to lead the parade of culture, they must never become stuck in their opinions, and this actually implies that the truths they propound are not fixed points in the march of positivistic science.

> Opinions grow out of *passions; inertia of the spirit* lets them stiffen into *convictions*. – He, however, whose spirit is *free* and restlessly alive can prevent this stiffening through continual change, and even if he should be altogether a thinking snowball, he will have in his head, not opinions, but only certainties and precisely calculated probabilities. (*HH* 637)

This tension issues in the fact that Nietzsche emphasises the uniqueness of the opinions of the free spirits (*HH* 286), yet at the very same time gives them a common character description: 'a firm, mild, and at bottom cheerful soul' (*HH* 34), 'calm and steady in head and heart' (*HH* 285), 'desir[ing] nothing more earnestly than knowledge' (*HH* 288), 'spin[ning] out their life of monologue in a calm and cheerful mood' (*HH* 625), and so on.[5] Presumably Nietzsche would argue for a distinction between the common character type he attributes to the free spirits and the unique opinions he foresees them holding. But whether this distinction holds or not, it is clear that Nietzsche himself is quite sure he knows already what the free spirits will be like, making the attribution of uniqueness somewhat suspect.

These two axes of tension, the one pertaining to epistemology, the other to the free spirits, makes Nietzsche's own demonstration of free spirithood in Parts 6 through 9 of *HH* somewhat odd. The thoughts conveyed in these parts are individualistic, in that these are Nietzsche's own iconoclastic views of human society, but it is clear at the same time that he considers his contributions to be candidates for truth. The fact that he continues in this vein through *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* (1879), *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (1880), and *Daybreak* (1881), does not eliminate these tensions. For that, *Gay Science* is needed.

3. Continuity between *Human, All-too-Human* and *The Gay Science*

Readers of the first edition of *GS* might have thought, as they began their reading, that the thought-world and concerns of *HH* were simply being continued in *GS*, as they were through *AOM*, *WS*, and *D*.[6] Poem 35 of the 'Prelude in Rhymes' asserts that ice helps the digestion, an observation that would have fit in perfectly with *HH*'s dominant metaphor of the beneficial

[5] See SC&FS Ch. 4.

[6] This is not true, however, of readers of the second edition, for which Nietzsche added a preface noting that the book contained both 'the proximity of winter' and a 'triumph over winter' (*GS* P:1). Readers of the second edition – assuming they were familiar with *HH*'s metaphor of the coldness of science providing an antidote for an overheated culture – would thus be aware from the beginning that *GS* will be transitional.

effects of scientific coldness on the culture of an overheated age.[7] Poem 40, meanwhile, sounds very much like a description of the free spirits of *HH*, who also have no envy and no need for applause.[8]

When Nietzsche returns to prose in Book One of *GS*, he still seems to be continuing *HH*'s concerns. The very first section of the book argues that all human instinct, even 'evil', contributes to the preservation of the race, and this jibes perfectly with Nietzsche's argument in *HH* that a free spirit breaking away from convention is actually contributing to the progress of society.[9] Section 2, meanwhile, observes that people seem to have no intellectual conscience – i.e. they believe things unquestioningly – but Nietzsche's ideal is someone who craves certainty despite the ambiguity and uncertainty of life; this continues the trope of the sections that end the original edition of *HH* (e.g. *HH* 637). At the end of section 2, Nietzsche reveals his own 'injustice', namely that everybody should crave this certainty. This seems to show that Nietzsche still has hope for all of humanity, even though he recognises that only a few people will actually feel this way. And this was true of *HH* too: everyone can hold unique opinions, but in the end only a few will follow through on their individuality (*HH* 286). As in *HH*, what's needed is for people to slow down, to cease worrying about their productivity and take on the trappings of idleness.[10]

A crucial series of passages in the middle of Book One outlines the same relation between free spirits and fettered spirits as in *HH*. In *GS* 23, Nietzsche reevaluates superstition to be a symptom of enlightenment and individuality in the face of the corruption of established religion – a typical mid-period Nietzschean reversal of the standard wisdom. At the end of that section, he declares that 'The times of corruption are those when the apples fall from the tree: I mean the individuals, for they carry the seeds of the future and are the authors of the spiritual colonisation and origin of new states and communities' (trans. Kaufmann). This is precisely the

[7] See *HH* 38, 244. No less significant a reader than Cosima Wagner protested that she could not even pick up the book to read it – so cold it was that it hurt her hand. See SC&FS 71–72 and 256fn44.

[8] See SC&FS 109 ff.

[9] See SC&FS Ch. 5.

[10] Compare *GS* 6 with *HH* 285. Similarly, boredom is declared a necessary preliminary to activity in *GS* 42, just as it was in *HH*'s praise of the contemplative life in sections 284–290.

same justification given in *HH* for focusing on individuals whose originality will provide new directions for their communities (see *HH* 224). The next section, *GS* 24, repeats *HH*'s characterisation of free spirits as weak and fettered spirits as strong, along with Nietzsche's argument that the former are responsible for the possibility of change and should therefore be tolerated.[11] In *GS* 25, Nietzsche criticises a 'stupid humility' that leads people to run away from new truths because they feel unequal to them, just as in *HH* he urged potential free spirits to find courage for their task (see *HH* 292).

A section in Book Two continues a discussion of the relation between free and fettered spirits that might have been equally at home in *HH*. *GS* 76 is entitled '*The greatest danger*', and this turns out to be madness, which Nietzsche here defines as arbitrariness in judgement. However, this understanding of madness is far from pejorative. Nietzsche concedes that it is important for many people to agree in order to have a law of agreement. Still, he notes that 'impatient spirits' – especially 'explorers of truth' – bristle at this and actually take delight in madness. While it's true that society requires a certain amount of 'virtuous stupidity' (again, compare *HH* 224), 'we others are the exception and the danger – and we need eternally to be defended'. Nietzsche here precisely recreates *HH*'s division of labour between free spirits and fettered spirits, and again defends societal exceptions as good, even necessary, provided that they never want to become the rule.

Even when no longer talking directly about the cultural division of labour initially outlined in *HH*, Nietzsche seems in *GS* still focused on many of *HH*'s specific concerns. For example, Nietzsche repeats the idea that a man of renunciation, rather than merely giving something up, is in fact affirming his higher goals (compare *GS* 27 with *HH* 136-144). As late as *GS* 88, one might think *GS* was a continuation of *HH* and not transitional. There Nietzsche notes that an idea which a thinker considers a frivolity might be taken and presented seriously by an artist. This recalls the last few sections of Part 1 of *HH*, in which Nietzsche acknowledges that

[11] It is interesting that in this passage the weak, who will bring change, are described as feminine, while the strong ones who bear the threat of stagnation are described as masculine. This gendered element is missing from *HH* and complicates the traditional labelling of Nietzsche as misogynist.

illogic, injustice, and error might be necessary for creative activity (*HH* 31–33); free spirits, though, remain devoted to truth (*HH* 34).

Even after *GS*'s transitional status becomes clear at the beginning of Book Three (discussed below in section 5), plenty of sections echo ideas first expressed in *HH*. In *GS* 151, for example, Nietzsche argues that metaphysics need not be the cause of religion but the result of its collapse. Repeating his argument from *HH* 5, he argues that religion itself comes from misinterpretations of nature that require positing 'another world' (cf. *GS* 205 as well). In *GS* 154, Nietzsche observes that those who 'have no idea what [they] are living through' rush about as if drunk, but their drunkenness keeps them loose and thus they don't get hurt when they crash; 'we', however, are made of glass. These drunks resemble the lazy-minded active men of *HH*, and the 'we' unmistakably resemble the weak, fragile, free spirits of *HH*. One of *GS*'s most famous passages, in which Nietzsche urges us to 'live dangerously', sounds very much like his exhortation at the end of Part 5 of *HH* to go 'Forward!' in pursuit of free spirit-hood (compare *GS* 283 with *HH* 292). Finally, another passage from Book Four of *GS* picks up *HH*'s praise of *otium* as necessary for genuinely deep thinking (compare *GS* 329 with *HH* 282–291).[12]

4. Inklings of Change

Even in the early parts of *GS*, however, there are some hints that change is in the wind. Poem 53 mentions *HH* explicitly in its title, and might thus reinforce the impression that *GS* is continuing the concerns of that book. However, this mention is ambiguous. Here is the poem entire:

> *Human, All-too-Human*: A Book
>
> You're sad and shy when looking at the past,
> But trust the future when yourself you trust:
> Are you some kind of eagle in pursuit?
> Or just Minerva's favourite hootootoot?

[12]More echoes of *HH* in *GS* are listed on SC&FS 224.

Free spirits, the stars of *HH*, appear to be the ones being addressed: they are sad and shy when looking at the past because they have broken away from the views that would have been expected of them in their former social context (see *HH* 225); they trust the future when themselves they trust in that their becoming individuals is crucial for them to lead their society in new directions (*HH* 286 & 292). But the poem now asks which bird they resemble, an eagle or an owl? That is, are they a predator in pursuit of something, or are they blathering their wisdom passively? The latter is in fact the stance that Nietzsche praises in *HH*: free spirits do not deliberately intervene in the cultural direction of their society; all they do is announce their truths and let the natural process of cultural progress do the rest.[13] The former, though, is a new possibility: perhaps free spirits re-enter the cultural fray, diving down from their aerie perch to take a more aggressive role in the culture wars? This is the account of free spirit-hood outlined by Nietzsche in the 1886 preface to the second edition of *HH* – a first stage of detached observation, and a second stage of returning to earth – and it seems he is having some first thoughts about it in *GS*'s Prelude in Rhymes from 1882.

Another inkling of change in Nietzsche's views comes midway through Book One. Just as in the transition from his early to his middle view, it is science that is the bellwether.[14] In section 37, Nietzsche opines that science has been pursued because of three errors. The first was in order to understand God's goodness (Nietzsche attributes this motive to Newton), the second was out of belief in the utility of knowledge (attributed to Voltaire), and the third was out of belief in science's harmlessness and innocence (attributed to Spinoza). This listing recalls a passage in the early works (*SE* 6) in which Nietzsche uses this very multiplicity of motives to cast doubt on science's purity (and cf. *GS* 123). What is most surprising here is that the third motive given is precisely Nietzsche's own in *HH*. What Nietzsche seems to be signalling is that he is distancing himself from his view in *HH*, returning to his early view, and now positioning himself in (at least partial) opposition to science. This impression is furthered in *GS* 46, where Nietzsche says that our 'amazement' at the firmness of science is due to the way we contrast it with fantasy, but in olden times the morality of *mores* was

[13] See SC&FS 146–147.
[14] See SC&FS Ch. 2.

firm enough to provoke the same amazement.[15] Nietzsche thus implies that science, too, is not really firm, a diametric reversal from the positivistic passages from *HH* cited above in which firmness is precisely what he claims for it.

5. Nietzsche's Second Turning

The full flowering of Nietzsche's second turning does not become apparent, however, until Book Three of *GS*, where Nietzsche's new attitude about science gets its theoretical underpinning – perspectivism.

Book Three begins in section 108 with the first mention of God's death (more famously expanded in section 125). Nietzsche suggests that, like the shadow of Buddha which appeared posthumously on the wall of a cave, God's shadow is still with us. Rather than talk about caves or even churches, though, what Nietzsche turns to, immediately, is epistemology. He argues that we must recognise that there's no inherent order, beauty, form, wisdom, purpose, creation, etc., in the world, only chaos; rather than insert these things into the world, our goal, says Nietzsche, should be 'de-deification' (*GS* 109). Unlike in *HH*, however, where naturalising meant resisting supernatural explanations of the type offered by Schopenhauer and traditional religion[16], here in *GS* it means resisting anthropomorphic value additions to our perception of the world. Nietzsche now goes on to repeat points made in *HH* 11, 16, and 19, to the effect that the knowledge that is useful for life relies on errors (*GS* 110), and that the science of logic arises out of illogical assumptions such as taking similar things to be the same (*GS* 111). In *HH*, these criticisms of science were counterbalanced by Nietzsche's dogged insistence that science nevertheless produced truth; such insistence is conspicuous in *GS* by its absence. To the contrary, Nietzsche is now, in Book Three of *GS*, turning his powerful deconstructive weaponry against science. Now he argues that there is no such thing as genuine causation, just 'one-thing-after-another', and that even when we merely isolate something as an event, what we're actually seeing is the

[15] 'Mores (*Sitten*) can also be translated as 'custom'. For a discussion of this issue, see Rebecca Bamford's paper in this volume (footnote 7) – *The Editors*.

[16] See SC&FS Ch. 3.

effect of our own perception (*GS* 112). Indeed, in science we see not the operation of dispassionate logic, as *HH* might have claimed, but rather the effect of a long evolution of a multitude of factors: 'the impulse to doubt, to negate, to wait, to collect, to dissolve' (*GS* 113). In this same section, Nietzsche completes his reversal of his earlier view by repudiating the great 'hall of culture' that *HH* envisioned, a room so large that science and the arts could coexist (*HH* 276): 'now the time seems remote when artistic energies and the practical wisdom of life will join with scientific thinking to form a higher organic system' (*GS* 113). In the thought-world of *HH*, an opposition between science and art and/or practical life would have resulted in Nietzsche siding with science, for in *HH* art is debunked (in Part 4) and practical life is declared unsuitable for the free spirit (in the last several sections of Part 5). In *GS*, by contrast, this opposition results in the devaluation of science – science is now just one perspective among others.

What has died along with God, then, and what remains as no more than a shadow which we must still vanquish, is the notion of absolute truth. Sure enough, just after the death of God briefly mentioned in *GS* 108 has been explicated at length in *GS* 125, the attack on causation from *GS* 112 is connected explicitly with the death of God in *GS* 127. It was ancient religiosity, says Nietzsche, which promoted a belief in the will, and this in turn promoted belief in causation. At this point the connection implied in the juxtaposition of *GS* 108 with *GS* 109–114 has become explicit: the death of God, and with it the end of the illusion that a God's-eye view is possible, gives rise directly to perspectivism, the philosophy of human-eye views. And thus the tension in *HH* between positivism and incipient perspectivism is now in Book Three of *GS* resolved once and for all in favour of perspectivism.[17]

What triggered this second turning? Nietzsche's first turning was triggered, I have argued, by Wagner's triumph at Bayreuth, a cultural event that showed Nietzsche the emptiness of German nationalism and the dangers of anti-scientism. This provoked him to rethink the relationship of science and culture that he had propounded in his early works, and invent

[17]To be sure, Nietzsche does not use that term. Even in *BGE* he will do no more than refer to perspective as the condition of life. Perspectivism as a term is the creation of 20th-century scholars of Nietzsche.

scientifically educated free spirits to replace the 'republic of genius' as the agents of cultural progress.[18] I do not believe Nietzsche's second turning has as clear-cut a triggering factor as the first. Rather, Nietzsche continued thinking about his views and came to realise that the science which he championed in *HH* had its own human, all-too-human weaknesses – not as vitiating as those of metaphysics and religion, but enough to require it to give up its claim to sole possession of the truth.[19]

6. Impact of Perspectivism on Nietzsche's Conception of the Free Spirits

This resolution of the epistemological tension of *HH* by means of perspectivism in *GS* impacts Nietzsche's conception of free spirits, and this secondary effect is just as crucial for the formation of Nietzsche's mature philosophy. In *HH*, the free spirits were the agents of transformative cultural change via their role as the avatars of scientific truth. Can they still perform their role as agents of transformative cultural change henceforth, with science having been reduced to no more than perspectivally true? Indeed they can, but they will have to change their tactics. No longer can they simply launch their truths and sit back, secure in the trust that these truths will inevitably triumph over metaphysics. Rather, because the scientific perspective is just as much a perspective as any other view, the free spirits will now have to actively promote their perspectives, whose superiority will now be cashed out in terms of being life- and progress-promoting rather than positivistically true. In other words, free spirits must rejoin the culture wars in order to promote better perspectives than the ones they find in their societies.

Several passages displaying the new way free spirits will perform their function come in the aphorisms that end Book Three. For example: '*A good age for free spirits.* – Free spirits take liberties even with science – and so far get away with it, as long as the church still stands' (*GS* 180). Nietzsche is here admitting that science, like any perspective, has its flaws. However, it's still better than religion, and so presumably can still be useful to free

[18] See SC&FS Ch. 2, especially pp. 71–76.
[19] See SC&FS pp. 224–226 and p. 281n16.

spirits in their role of battering down the old ways in service of renewal and societal progress. Or again: '*Without envy.* – He is utterly without envy, but there is no merit in that, for he wants to conquer a country that nobody has possessed and scarcely anyone has even seen' (*GS* 238). The free spirits of *HH* were without envy, and Nietzsche trumpeted it as one of their best qualities. Now it appears that their lack of envy is only apparent – they have as much cupidity as anyone, but it is for something new, and thus they do not have to compete with anyone for it. Another instance of the same change in the free spirits is this: 'The *sigh of the search for knowledge* [comes from] an all-coveting self that would like to appropriate many individuals as so many additional pairs of eyes and hands' (*GS* 249). As in the previous example, this passage too betrays the free spirits as having, *contra HH*, covetousness and greed inherent in their search for knowledge – they want to have everyone involved in the search, and to have access to all of the past. In *HH*, justice – not political justice, but judiciousness in evaluating things – was the only goddess before whom free spirits would kneel (*HH* 637); in *GS*, it turns out that 'With a great goal one is superior even to justice, not only to one's deeds and one's judges' (*GS* 267). Free spirits have now apparently transcended justice – it is now only preparatory to their goal. Finally, one of the string of questions Nietzsche asks himself rhetorically at the very end of Book Three is '*In what do you believe?*', and the answer is, 'that the weights of all things must be determined anew' (*GS* 269). In *HH*, free spirits are only observers; reconfigured in *GS*, they are value-makers.

The subtitle of Book Four, 'Sanctus Januarius', epitomises the change in Nietzsche's view (and apparently in Nietzsche himself). The miracle of St. Januarius involves a vial of dried blood that becomes liquid once more; Nietzsche clearly feels that he himself is returning to life in January of 1882, after several years of difficult health. In a poem appended to Book Four as an epigraph, Nietzsche expresses his move away from the icy free spirit-hood of the middle period towards a new task for his philosophising:

> With a flaming spear you crushed
> All its ice until my soul
> Roaring toward the ocean rushed
> Of its highest hope and goal.

Free spirits, he now believes, need to lose their icy detachment and take up a new, more involved role:

> Is it our fault that we were born for the air, clean air, we rivals of the beams of light, and that we wish we could ride on ethereal dust specks like these beams – not away from the sun but *toward the sun!* That, however, we cannot do. Let us therefore do what alone we can do: be 'the light of the earth!' And so to that end we have our wings and our speed and severity. (*GS* 293)

The allusion to the philosopher-kings in Plato's *Republic*, who desire to stay in the light of the sun but know they must go back into the cave in order to enlighten their fellows, like all of Nietzsche's classical allusions, is almost surely intentional. And it allows Nietzsche to suggest, without having to say so, that free spirits too would prefer to stay aloof, in purposeless contemplation, as they did in *HH*, but they are now compelled, in order to fulfil their societal function, to return to 'earth' and the hurly-burly of improving culture. A free spirit

> fancies that he is a *spectator* and *listener* who has been placed before the great visual and acoustic spectacle that is life.... Actually, however, free spirits are those who really continually *fashion* something that had not been there before: the whole eternally growing world of valuations, colors, accents, perspectives, scales, affirmations, and negations. (*GS* 301)

Note the presence of the word 'perspectives' on this list – Nietzsche does not use it often. But here he does clearly understand that creating perspectives is what free spirits will be doing, not formulating scientific truths as in *HH*. The same move from quietism to activism is portrayed in a mock dialogue a few sections later: Character A says that the point is to find a place in the sun where one can thrive; Character B says the point is to create one's own sun (*GS* 320). Nietzsche seems here to be deliberately blocking the radical individualist interpretation of his philosophy (often associated with Ayn Rand), that people should go their own way and damn everybody

else, and pushing instead the image of free spirits as those who are creative in their own way but who nevertheless shine for all.

This, then, is the resolution of the second of *HH*'s tensions, the one regarding free spirits: Nietzsche no longer asserts a common character type for the free spirits, as he did in *HH*, but now emphasises their individuality exclusively. The extent to which he has changed can be located in the remarkable (re)appreciation of Wagner found in *GS*. *HH* had marked the moment in his career when Nietzsche turned away from Wagner, and while Nietzsche is not yet obsessed with criticising Wagner, as he will be in the later works, he has nevertheless had only criticism for Wagner in the middle works so far.[20] In *GS*, however, he suddenly delivers a lengthy appreciation of Wagner, for no other reason than his individuality:

> Let us remain faithful to Wagner in what is true and authentic in him – and especially in this, that we, as his disciples, remain faithful to ourselves in what is true and authentic in us. Let him have his intellectual tempers and cramps. Let us, in all fairness, ask what strange nourishments and needs an art like this may require to be able to live and grow. It does not matter that as a thinker he is so often in the wrong; justice and patience are not for him. Enough that his life is justified before itself and remains justified – this life which shouts at everyone of us: 'Be a man and do not follow me – but yourself! But yourself!' Our life, too, shall remain justified in our own eyes! We, too, shall grow and blossom out of ourselves, free and fearless, in innocent selfishness. (*GS* 99)

It would be too much to say that Nietzsche here acknowledges Wagner as a free spirit; the rest of the passage explains in detail just what Wagner got wrong in his borrowings from Schopenhauer. But Nietzsche clearly finds much to appreciate in Wagner's creative originality, and that alone indicates a shift in his valuation of individuality.[21]

[20] See, for example, *HH* 23, 162 and *AOM* 134, 171; SC&FS lists several more passages containing thinly disguised anti-Wagnerianism on 276fn12 and 277fn13.

[21] And it is surely no accident, but rather reflects the careful placement of sections on Nietzsche's part, that this praise of individuality in *GS* 99 comes shortly before the emergence of perspectivism in *GS* Book Three.

A passage near the end of Book Four (and thus near the end of the first published version of *GS*) sums up Nietzsche's new view linking science on the one hand and self-creation on the other. Nietzsche argues that, rather than attempt to legislate universal morality *a la* Kant's categorical imperative, we should try simply to purify our own opinions and to create our own tables of what is good. 'We, however, *want to become those we are* – human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves' (*GS* 335). For this, Nietzsche says, it is necessary to become physicists. This might seem like a *non sequitur* – to assert that science is the key to an ethical project – but what Nietzsche is doing is combining his appeal to the salubrious effects of training in science, first introduced in *HH* (e.g. 256), with the goal of unique self-creation, developed in *GS*. The transition is complete.

7. The Most Personal of Nietzsche's Books

In a letter, Nietzsche calls *GS* the most personal of his books.[22] And the book does contain a great many personal revelations. But perhaps the most striking way to observe the change from *HH* to *GS* is to notice the remarkable increase in the use of the first person singular. The first person singular appears very, very rarely in *HH*, *AOM*, *WS*, and *D*; Nietzsche will often say 'we', to include all free spirits or even all humans, but almost never 'I' or 'my'. Individualism is present in *HH* in that each person has something unique to offer, but what that might be is described in impersonal, dispassionate terms. Suddenly, however, in *GS*, instances of the first person singular become quite numerous. It appears in, by my count, roughly one of every seven passages in Books One, Two, and Three, and then, following the poem that accompanies the beginning of Sanctus Januarius, metastasises to the point where it appears in roughly half of the passages in Book Four. Clearly, individuality now matters, and Nietzsche is no longer shy about putting himself in his writing. The introduction of Nietzsche's own voice marks his return to life and his launching of the program of individualism and perspectivism.

[22] Quoted in Walter Kaufmann, 'Introduction,' in *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1991).

At the beginning of Book Four – the point at which first person singular becomes the dominant voice of the book – Nietzsche introduces *amor fati*, the love of fate. This is what Nietzsche wants his life to be in this new year (i.e. 1882) – to love the world as it is, with no falsification or artificial sweetening, 'to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful' (*GS* 276). In this way, by being wholly and uniquely oneself, one has a positive cultural effect.

Even when the first person is not used, Nietzsche can be seen to be talking about himself. Indeed, when we return to the poem cited above entitled '*Human, All-too-Human*: A Book', the free spirit addressed as 'you' can, in retrospect, be read as Nietzsche himself: the past he is sad and shy about looking at is the book *HH* itself, and he is urging himself to look towards the future and decide if he will be a mere hootootoot or an eagle after prey. On this reading, the fact that the title of the book is the title of the poem does not indicate that its thought-world is the thought-world of the poem, but rather that the book itself is precisely what Nietzsche is looking back at, sad and shy. In other words, he has moved on and now regards *HH* from a distance – it's just a book.

To sum up: *HH* contained the roots of perspectivism, but it is in *GS* that Nietzsche's mature epistemology first emerges from the earth. And free spirits reconceived as individualistic cultural warriors are the fruit that the tree of perspectivism bears. Having made this conceptual connection, Nietzsche now, in Book Four, presents himself as one of those cultural warriors, and thus becomes comfortable with speaking in his own, highly individualistic voice.

This strategic pattern – arguing for a theoretical connection between epistemology and free spirits first, then exemplifying that connection himself – repeats itself in *HH* and in *GS*. In *HH* the argument takes place in Parts 1–5 and the exemplification in Parts 6–9.[23] In *GS* the progression is more subtle, but I believe the rarity of first person in Books One through Three, and then the proliferation of the first person in Book Four, is quite intentional.[24]

[23] See SC&FS Ch. 6.

[24] This might explain, too, why Nietzsche went back and added Book Five to the second edition of *GS* in 1887, after publishing *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (which grows out of *GS* 342), *Beyond Good and Evil* (which, according to Nietzsche, 'says the same things as my

8. Free Spirits in *Beyond Good and Evil*

The synthesis and synergy of perspectivism and individualism established in *GS* informs the later works, where Nietzsche continues to use first person quite frequently.[25] The free spirits of *BGE* are now described not in terms of a personality type but in terms of their functioning. They still are the ones who can look at things with the fewest illusions and can endure the most truth (*BGE* 39; cf. *HH* 34 and *GS* 110). But they are now philosophers, not scientists (see *BGE* 44). And the tension in *HH* between their continual mobility and their devotion to 'certainties' has now been conclusively decided in favour of mobility. Thus Nietzsche devotes a long passage to describing all the ways in which free spirits do not remain stuck, not to a person, nor a fatherland, nor to some pity, nor to … a science (*BGE* 41). The inclusion of science in this list is a clear sign of the success and durability of Nietzsche's new opinion about science – science is useful, but not so authoritatively true that one should remain stuck to it. To cinch the point, after a section defining free spirits as 'attempters' (*versucher*), Nietzsche writes,

> Are these coming philosophers new friends of 'truth'? That is probable enough, for all philosophers so far have loved their truths. But they will certainly not be dogmatists. It must offend their pride, also their taste, if their truth is supposed to be a truth for everyman.… 'My judgment is *my* judgment': no one else is easily entitled to it. (*BGE* 43, trans. Kaufmann)

Nietzsche no longer defines free spirits in terms of a personality type, nor as the avatars of science, but now as the avatars of perspectivism.

The next item after science in Nietzsche's list describing the freedom of free spirits is the following: 'Not to remain stuck to one's own detachment, to that voluptuous remoteness and strangeness of the bird who flies ever higher to see ever more below him – the danger of the flier' (*BGE* 41).

Zarathustra' – see Walter Kaufmann, 'Translator's Introduction,' in *Beyond Good and Evil* (New York: Random House, 1990), sec. 2. Also *GM* (which grows out of *BGE* 260). With that string having played itself out, Nietzsche now wanted to add on to *GS* to show how his own individualistic culture warrior trajectory had continued.

[25] See, for example, *BGE* 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 27, 35, 36, 231, etc; *GM* I.1–5; , etc, etc.

Rather than stay aloft observing, as in *HH*, the free spirits as reconceived in *GS* and deployed again in *BGE* are defined as culture warriors who force the will of millennia onto new tracks (*BGE* 203).

So why did Nietzsche say on the back cover of the first edition of *GS* that the book concluded a series of writings on free spirits? It's possible, though unlikely, that he thought at the time that he was done with free spirits, and that their reappearance in *BGE* in 1886 was unexpected by him in 1882. However, it is more likely that *GS* concludes not Nietzsche's interest in free spirits but in his thinking of them a certain way – *GS* concludes a series of writings on the free spirits as detached observers. As well, *GS* marks the end of Nietzsche being a hovering, uncommitted, pure knowing free spirit, and the beginning of his becoming the participant in the culture wars that the free spirit is in *BGE*. Just like the moment in section 15 of *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) where he says we (i.e. he) are not free to merely observe but must also engage in the battle over culture, *GS* marks and justifies his re-entry into the fray.[26]

[26]I am grateful for the comments, companionship, and encouragement of participants in a reading group devoted to *The Gay Science* that met at the University of Maine Farmington in the Fall semester of 2013: Angela Hall, George Miller, Steven Pane, Steven Quackenbush, Frank Underkuffler, and Catherine Zachary.

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