Nietzsche on Time and History

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Edited by
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If there is no goal in the whole of history of man's lot, then we must put one in: assuming, on the one hand, that we have need of a goal, and on the other that we've come to see through the illusion of an immanent goal and purpose. And the reason we have need of goals is that we have need of a will—which is the spine of us. 'Will' as the compensation of lost 'belief', i.e., for the idea that there is a divine will, one which has plans for us.

<div style="text-align: center">Friedrich Nietzsche, Nachlaß Summer 1886–Spring 1887, KSA 12, 6[9]</div>

We are still growing continually, our sense of time and place, etc., is still developing.

<div style="text-align: center">Friedrich Nietzsche, Nachlaß April–June 1885, KSA 11, 34[124]</div>

'Timeless' to be rejected. At a particular moment of a force, an absolute conditionality of the redistribution of all forces is given: it cannot stand still. 'Change' is part of the essence, and therefore so is temporality—which, however, just amounts to one more conceptual positing of the necessity of change.

<div style="text-align: center">Friedrich Nietzsche, Nachlaß May–July 1885, KSA 11, 35[55]</div>

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The four excerpts of printed music of Wagner, Bizet, and Stravinsky in Jonathan R. Cohen's essay appear here with permission of Dover Publishing, Chester Music Limited (Music Sales) and Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG. Every effort has been made to trace and contact copyright holders. If there are any inadvertent omissions I apologize to those concerned and undertake to include suitable acknowledgements in future editions.

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Abbreviations and Translations

Friedrich Nietzsche's published and unpublished writings (Nachlaß) are quoted according to the following abbreviations:

A   *The Anti-Christ*, cited by section number.

AOM   'Assorted Opinions and Maxims' (vol. 2, pt 1, of *Human, All Too Human*), cited by section number.

BAW   *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe. Werke*, ed. Hans Joachim Mette, 5 vols. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1933–1940), cited by volume and page number.

BAB   *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe. Briefe*, ed. Hans Joachim Mette, 4 vols. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1933–1940), cited by volume and page number.

BGE   *Beyond Good and Evil*, cited by section number.

BT   *The Birth of Tragedy*, cited by section number and KSA page number.

CV   'Five Prologues to Five Unwritten Books', cited by number and KSA page number.

CW   *The Case of Wagner*, cited by section number.

D   *Daybreak*, cited by section number.

EH   *Ecce Homo*, cited by section heading and (when applicable) number.

EI   'On the Future of Our Educational Institutions', cited by section number.

GM   *On the Genealogy of Morality*, cited by essay and section number.

GS   *The Gay Science*, cited by section number.

HA   *Human, All Too Human*, cited by volume and section number.

CV   'Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books', cited by preface number and KSA page number.

KGB   *Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975–), cited by volume and page number.

KGW   *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, established by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, ed. Wolfgang Müller-Lauter and Karl Pestalozzi (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967–), cited by volume, part, and page number.

KSA   *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967–), cited by volume and page number. The Nachlaß is cited by date, KSA volume, notebook section, and fragment number.

KSB   *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe Briefe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986–), cited by volume and page number.

NCW   *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, cited by section heading.

OTL   'On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense', cited by KSA page number.

PTAG 'Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks', cited by section number.

TI   *Twilight of the Idols*, cited by section heading and number.

UM   *Untimely Meditations*, cited by part and section number, and (when applicable) KSA page number.

Z   *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, cited by part, section heading, and (when applicable) number.

Note on Translations of Nietzsche's Works

The contributors to this volume have used different translations of Nietzsche's texts, often modified by the individual contributor. At the end of each essay the reader will find a list of the translations used. Where no such list has been provided the contributor has relied exclusively on his or her own translations. All translations from Nietzsche's Nachlaß are usually by the individual contributors, although other translations have been consulted whenever possible, notably *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967), and *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, ed. Rüdiger Bittner, trans. Kate Sturge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Nietzsche's Problem of the Past

John Richardson

Nietzsche has a problem with the past. He thinks we all have a problem with it, indeed several interlocking problems, whose chief root he tries to identify. His repeated attention to this topic, coming at key points in his texts, amounts almost to a fixation.

My aims are to point out this repeating theme, which I think has been under-recognized, but more importantly to suggest the underlying reasons Nietzsche has for making the past a problem. And I'll sketch how he ultimately handles this problem—a solution that draws jointly upon his genealogical method, his ideal of freedom, and his thought of eternal return. For this purpose I will use and extend certain lines of interpretation and argument that I presented in *Nietzsche's New Darwinism* (Richardson 2004).

Let me start by reminding of a few places in Nietzsche's corpus that treat the past explicitly and with emphasis.[1] In each of them our—humans'—relation to the past is a *problem* we have difficulty addressing—and Nietzsche offers to help us with it.

a. First an early passage. 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' focuses on certain kinds of misuse of *history* that Nietzsche thinks are symptomatic of the present age: 'we are all suffering from a consuming fever of history and ought at least to recognize that we are suffering from it' (UM II Foreword). And then in section 1: 'there is a degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of the historical sense, which is harmful and ultimately fatal to the living thing' (UM II 1, KSA 1, p. 250). This criticism of history and of a certain 'historical attitude' which characterizes our age is probably the most emphasized point in this essay.

Nietzsche claims that this modern misuse of history is connected to (rooted in) something broadly and in fact essentially human: what distinguishes us from animals is that we remember the past, but this memory is also our great burden: 'Man ... braces himself against the great and ever

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1   For the sake of (a kind of) economy, I'll largely confine myself to these four texts: *Untimely Meditations* II, *Human, All Too Human*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and *On the Genealogy of Morality*.

greater pressure of what is past: it pushes him down or bends him sideways'; 'it was' is 'that password which gives conflict, suffering and satiety
access to man so as to remind him what his existence fundamentally is—an
imperfect tense that can never become a perfect one' (UM II 1, KSA 1, p.
249). Another set of early passages I'll use but won't quote now are the
opening sections of *Human, All Too Human*, which detail how a primitive
past is still present—still works—in all of us.

b. Next a passage from Nietzsche's 'midday', in *Zarathustra*. His famous explication there of the eternal return—the climax of the book—
presents this idea as responding to a deep human worry over the past. The
past disturbs us, because it is utterly beyond the will's reach: the will 'can't
will backwards': 'Willing liberates; but what is it called that puts even the
liberator in fetters? / "It was": that is the will's gnashing of teeth and loneliest sorrow. Powerless with respect to what has been done—it is an angry
spectator of all that is past. / Backwards the will is unable to will; that it
cannot break time and time's desire—that is the will's loneliest sorrow' (Z
II 'On Redemption'). And soon after: 'This, yes this alone, is what revenge itself is: the will's ill-will toward time and its "It was"' (ibid.).

Later in this section Zarathustra has an inkling how eternal return can
solve the problem, but he is only able to embrace that thought in part three.
By willing eternal return, the will is able to redeem the past and to say
(truly) 'Thus I will it, thus shall I will it', thus meeting the challenge that
had been set in 'On Redemption'. And this is the dramatic turning point of
the book, which therefore hinges on the problem of the past. Eternal return
is needed above all to meet this challenge; its chief function is to change
our relation to the past, and solve that problem with it.

c. Finally a late passage, in the *Genealogy*. The second essay's opening
genealogy is of *memory*: this capacity didn't come to us from our animal
past, but had to be trained into humans by ages of brutal punishments. This
memory was imposed against the grain of our natural 'forgetfulness',
which is an active repression of the past, requisite for healthy and effective
functioning: 'there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no
pride, no present, without forgetfulness' (GM II 1).

Originally, what humans were trained to remember were their past
promises, including especially their promise to obey the social rules. People were trained to 'remember' them not just as past facts, but in the strong
practical sense of *keeping allegiance* to them, taking themselves to be
bound by them: 'an active desire not to rid oneself, a desire for the continuance of something desired once, a real memory of the will' (GM II
1). This memory for the rules was a necessary condition for increasingly
close, large-scale, and efficient social life.

So society needed to 'burn this memory into us'. Consider this complex passage on the past, and memory: 'perhaps there was nothing more fearful and uncanny in the whole prehistory of man than his mnemotechnics … Something of the terror that formerly attended all promises, pledges, and vows on earth is still effective: the past, the longest, deepest and sternest past, breathes upon us and rises up in us whenever we become "serious"' (GM II 3).

This training in memory is the key first step in the 'taming' and 'civilizing' of humans, their socialization. *But*, Nietzsche says, both this new capacity (memory) and that long training for it by means of terror, pain, and punishment have had the overall, pervading effect of *sickening* and depressing us, even today. It's this training in memory, above all, that has rendered us 'the sick animal'.

Now seeing Nietzsche returning so often and so critically to the past and memory raises the simple question: *why* is the past so important to him? And we can mean this question in at least two ways: (a) What psychological factors induced Nietzsche to worry over the past (and his relation to the past) in this way? (b) What does Nietzsche *avow* as the past's importance—i.e., what reasons or grounds does he offer?

I'll say just a few things about (a), on the personal-psychological weight of the past for Nietzsche, and what might be at the root of this. Certainly there are reasons to think that his philosophical attention to the past reflects a 'fixation' running down at the level of his own psychological character.

His professional field, classical philology, is itself a major statement of his special fascination with the past. We should take seriously the oddity in this, that a philosopher who later prided himself on being so far ahead and futural should have originally occupied himself with not just history but *ancient* history. Famously, he later regretted this decision—and that he hadn't read in the sciences instead. So he expresses a retrospective regret at his own retrospectiveness.[2]

I think we find another expression of Nietzsche's personal problem with the past in the hostility he so characteristically shows to his predecessors—and especially to those who have clearly influenced him. His hyperbolic rejections of Socrates, Plato, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Darwin can be read to show him bothered by their influence—by the debt he may owe to

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2   Notice, in the 1886 Preface to HA II, how Nietzsche says that all of his works except one (surely *Zarathustra*) 'are to be dated back—they always speak of something "behind me"'. Each of them describes a viewpoint Nietzsche had lived through at varying distances in his past. So most of his writing is retrospective.

others' ideas, and the threat to his independence and originality. This is mixed with a sense of the flaws and failures in these sources. He expresses some of this in *Human, All Too Human*: 'He who has come to a clear understanding of the problem of culture suffers from a feeling similar to that suffered by one who has inherited a fortune dishonestly acquired … He thinks with sorrow of his origins and is often ashamed, often sensitive about them. The whole sum of the energy, will and joy he expends on his property is often balanced by a profound weariness: he cannot forget his origins' (HA I 249).[3]

I don't know, and do ask, whether Nietzsche's relation to his personal past was troubled—whether he struggled against unpleasant memories. Are there things in his past that he regrets, and feels guilty or ashamed of? Perhaps the Lou Salomé episode—his lack of success with her, his own resentful reaction to her and Paul Rée? Perhaps his father—as a 'priest', as having gone mad? Perhaps his rather embarrassing mother and sister, surely deflating to his own grand ambitions and self-conception?

If this could be filled in, it would license a psychologistic suggestion: that Nietzsche found himself obsessed with or fixated on the past in ways he found troubling and self-undermining—and that he was both expressing and working this personal issue through in his basic philosophical thinking.

He purports to have eventually succeeded in this. For in *Ecce Homo* we find an utterly positive account of his past: he claims to be completely content with it, seeing it all as the path by which he 'becomes who he is'. (We can read his glad emphasis here as a sign, perhaps, of how much discontent he overcame.) In the introductory paragraph: 'How could I not be grateful to my whole life?' He depicts himself, perhaps, as exemplifying the kind of gratitude towards the past, and will to have it just as it was, that is involved in willing eternal return.[4] Biographically, again, we may wonder whether he really did achieve the reconciliation with the past he so long wanted.

However, more important than these biographical speculations is the task of clarifying the main structure of Nietzsche's philosophical views about the past and memory—to see how his various reflections on memory might fit together into a coherent theory. So I'll go on now to try to formu-

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3   In this light HA II 110 may be read as a confession.

4   In the same paragraph he says, 'I looked backwards [*rückwärts*], I looked out [*hinaus*], I have never seen so many and such good things at once' (EH 'Why I Am so Wise', KSA 6, p. 263). These terms for the retrospective and prospective stances echo those in a key passage on eternal return in *Zarathustra*, which we'll look at in section 3 below. Nietzsche here claims the simultaneous satisfaction of both stances that I'll argue eternal return is supposed to represent.

late this 'problem of the past' more fully and exactly, and to settle his an-
swer or response to it. Here I mean to sketch the gist of the problem, as
Nietzsche came to see it in his maturity.

I'll present the problem as lying in the tension or apparent contradic-
tion between two large points:

1. that the past is far too important to ignore (being important in ways
and for reasons we don't suspect),

2. but that attention to the past seems to be harmful to us.

So, it seems, we're damned whether we do or don't pay attention to it.

1. The Past's Importance

The past is important because we don't and can't 'leave it behind': it is the
secret meaning of who we are (and what we do). I think this is a point on
which Nietzsche disagrees with both common sense and science. He thinks
the past 'gives our meaning' not just in the (scientific and commonsensi-
cal) sense that it *did* make us, and hence explains us as a cause (something
externally determining)—the relevance the past usually seems to us to
have. Rather, the past 'gives our meaning' in the stronger sense that it has a
kind of 'presence' in us, constituting us now as who we are, determining
the meaning of what we now do. This is because, first, there are structures
or mechanisms in us that were made long ago in very different condi-
tions—that are 'remnants' of those past times. And it is because, second,
these structures were made by *wills*, and hence express the aims of these
wills, which carry their intentions ahead into us. Together these points
make the past constitutive of the present: of who I am, of the meaning of
what I do.

The first point is more to the fore in *Human, All Too Human*. Nietz-
sche states it most broadly at the opening of section 223 'Wither we
have to travel': 'Direct self-observation is not nearly sufficient for us to
know ourselves: we require history, for the past continues to flow within us
in a hundred waves; we ourselves are, indeed, nothing but that which at
every moment we experience of this continued flowing [*Fortströmen*]'
(HA II 223). This section builds to the lesson that one might study the
sedimented layers of the past *within oneself*, discovering all of our cultural
and even organic past deposited there. Such a one 'will rediscover the ad-
venturous travels of this becoming and changing ego [*dieses werdenden
und verwandelten ego*] in Egypt and Greece, Byzantium and Rome, France
and Germany, in the age of the nomadic or of the settled nations, in the
Renaissance and the Reformation, at home and abroad, indeed in the sea,
the forests, in the plants and in the mountains. —Thus self-knowledge will

become universal knowledge [*All-Erkenntnis*] with regard to all that is past' (ibid.).

This passage from the second volume of *Human, All Too Human* states the lesson behind much of the discussion that opens volume one. Notice, for example, the description of cruel people as 'stages of e a r l i e r c u l - t u r e s that have remained behind: the mountain ranges of humanity here openly display the deeper formations that otherwise lie concealed … In our brains there must also be furrows and whorls corresponding to that state of mind, just as reminders of our existence as fishes should be ascertainable in the form of individual human organs. But these furrows and whorls are no longer the bed along which the stream of our sensation now rolls' (HA I 43).[5] Note again the reference to past evolution as *layering* structures into us.

By the time of the *Genealogy* the second point—the intentionality of those past 'causes'—is clear. Those past shapings of us were for meanings and purposes that our parts and processes continue to bear. So the book elaborates (a) how our practices of punishment, bad conscience, and religion have been designed for certain functions, and (b) how the genealogy of this design shows the 'meanings' these practices now have. The practices *carry along* the aims their selection-design has given them, so that Christian values, for example, still carry the slavish and resentful purposes with which they were first formulated.[6]

Here let me step back to give my current reading of Nietzsche's notions of *will* and *drive*, as the bearers of that intentionality.[7] These are the basic *explanatory* terms in Nietzsche's account of human beings—and indeed of 'life' more generally. Wills and drives are identified by what they are 'to' or 'for'. They therefore involve a *kind* of teleology. Explaining by wills or drives involves explaining by what they are 'to' or 'for': you cite the *outcome* as explainer, as why the drive did what it did. So for example with 'will to power': this explains action/doing as 'done as a means to power'.

However, it is a persisting point for Nietzsche that we *cannot* explain this 'to' (or this 'done as a means to') by the model usual in philosophy and in common sense: the model of a personal and conscious aiming,

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5   See also HA I 250: 'the past is still too powerful in their muscles'.

6   This is why a critique of moral values depends on 'a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances out of which they have grown, under which they have developed and shifted' (GM Preface 6).

7   Here I summarize an interpretation developed in *Nietzsche's New Darwinism* (Richardson 2004).

which represents and thereby 'looks ahead' towards a goal. Nietzsche thinks this model is deeply false. We need to think our way out of it, despite the tendency of our language's very structure to pull us back in. Wills and drives can't be 'mini-subjects' or micro-consciousnesses. They can't have their 'towardness' by representing their goals in thought or consciousness or anything mental (not even an unconscious mentality). They don't 'look ahead' or 'anticipate' in any straightforward sense.

On the other hand, wills can't be mere causal tendencies to bring about certain outcomes. Nietzsche's term is richer than this. Power isn't just the tended-outcome of a will. If it were, 'power' would drop out of the explanation. Nietzsche insists on the need to supplement mechanism with a 'will'. So we need a kind of 'intentionality' and 'directedness', but again not in a cognitive or mental way. Nietzsche expresses his need for such a non-mental directedness in those clearly metaphorical attributions to life of a foresighting purposiveness, e.g., when he speaks of 'life's healing-artist instinct' (GM III 16). He forces us to look for a way that aiming could be something non-mental.

So how do wills/drives get their aims? The suggestion I present in *Nietzsche's New Darwinism* is that wills have their ends precisely in their having been selected for certain outcomes. So what makes a will '*to* power' is not that it holds power in view, or 'looks ahead' to it, but that a selective process has 'made' this will 'so that' it tends to bring about power. The causal tendency to bring about power would not itself be enough to make it 'to' power. It must also have been selected to bring about power, such that power explains why the tendency is here. This 'etiological' account of wills (owing ultimately to Larry Wright and Ruth Millikan) makes that selective process determinative of drives' aims and meanings.

What's the 'selective process' that determines a drive's aim?

a. Originally *natural selection*, whereby drives serve 'life'. I've tried to show that Nietzsche takes over, though little mentioning it, the basic Darwinian insight: that selection for replicative success gives functions to organs and goals to organic processes. Even here he thinks he has a correction to Darwin, on the consequence (or tendency) of natural selection: what gets selected are especially drives and instincts for *power*, and not, as Nietzsche thinks Darwin thought, instincts for survival.

b. Nietzsche has a second correction to Darwin: he thinks there's a new kind of selection that works in the human case, by virtue of our *social* character. I call this 'social selection'. Humans become capable of not just 'drives' but 'habits', i.e., behavioural dispositions transmitted not genetically, but by social copying. By this, a disposition for some behaviour is 'selected' by its spreading through the population. It is incrementally and cumulatively modified ('designed') to facilitate this spread.

Nietzsche thinks this new kind of selection designs these habits for a different ultimate end. Whereas natural selection designs structures that further my 'reproductive fitness', social selection designs habits that favour the success of my society—and especially by increasing society's cohesiveness and homogeneity. So social selection's main tendency is to design practices that make us want to be similar to one another. Its tendency, in other words, is to render us 'herd animals', by developing a 'herd instinct' in us. So: natural selection selects *drives to power* because they serve the *organism's replicative success*, but social selection selects *habits of herding* because they serve the *society's cohesion and strength*.

It's this social selection that mainly explains why I have the habits of acting and thinking as I do. I acquire these by copying from the social nexus, and they have their meaning and point in that wider context. The 'meaning' of the habit or practice is then *not* anything I believe myself doing it for, as I do it, but the functions designed into it by the social processes that spread it to me. These functions are 'what the drive is doing in me', though often unbeknownst to me.[8]

Consider an objection: don't I choose the habit because it appeals to some psychological need or taste or desire? And isn't the latter the explanation why I have it, and what it's doing in me? But this misses, first, how the habit is rather, in Nietzsche's view, a kind of virus that uses this desire as a point of entry, for purposes of its own. This is how Nietzsche thinks Christianity has worked: it appeals to certain weaknesses and sicknesses for entry into persons, but then treats-aggravates that weakness for purposes of its own (see, e.g., GM III 16). And it also misses how many of our desires are themselves inserted into us by the same socializing process— and above all the desire to 'do as others do'.

So all of these wills/drives are (as it were) a great many 'machines' designed for various purposes and built into us beneath our notice. It's these machines, and the functions designed into them, that explain most of what we do. We need to realize that there are these many mechanisms in place in us (as parts of us), which are unconsciously plastic towards certain outcomes—which are 'for' these outcomes in the sense of having been designed to accomplish them. It's precisely because we *don't* see how there

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8 On the efficacy of these long early stages see *Human, All Too Human* I 2: 'everything e s s e n t i a l in human development occurred during primeval times, long before those four thousand years with which we are more or less acquainted; during these years, humanity may well not have changed much more.' And later *On the Genealogy* III 9 speaks of 'those enormous stretches of time characterized by the "ethic of custom", which lie before "world history" as the real and decisive principal history that established the character of humankind'.

can be such directednesses in us, except for the overt and cognitive sort (i.e., consciously, deliberately willing an outcome) that we fail to see all the meanings our behaviour has, 'beneath', 'before', even 'instead of' our conscious meanings.

Ultimately, perhaps, Nietzsche is attacking what might be called a 'psychology of presence'. He opposes our commonsense confidence that we determine what we want and mean by our present acts of intending. 'A thought comes when "it" wants, not when "I" want' (BGE 17). And what the thought wants is determined by the processes that selected-designed the thought. We might call this a 'temporal externalism' about meaning.

This social design of our habits and practices builds into us our *values*, and in doing so gives these values their *meanings*. So the *Genealogy* un-covers the meaning of Christian values: they've been designed as a 'slave morality', i.e., have been structured to appeal to and further the interests of the reactive, sick, and suffering. This design builds into us meanings we don't understand. It makes us 'intend' things we're unaware of.

Human, All Too Human I 18 already states the point:

> [W]hen the sensate individual observes itself, it takes every sensation, every change for something isolated, that is, unconditioned, without connection: it rises up from within us without any tie to earlier or later things. We are hungry, yet do not originally think that the organism wishes to be sustained; instead, that feeling seems to assert itself without any ground and purpose, it isolates itself and takes itself as arbitrary. Therefore: the belief in the freedom of will is an original error of everything organic.

So the 'will' of the organism to be sustained is not available in the sensation (or experience) of hunger. And the point extends much more widely: all of our desires and values are doing further things, serving further purposes, than what shows up in them.

Recall also the famous genealogy of punishment in GM II. In investigating 'why' we punish, Nietzsche turns not to our present and conscious intentions. Instead he considers the practice as a complex set of procedures, and asks how different parts of this complex have been designed at different times *in the past* for different functions now. These many functions have been *layered into* the practice, which *now* has *all* these meanings. And it has also built into us a host of metaphysical errors: 'What we now call the world is the result of a host of errors and fantasies, which emerged gradually during the overall development of organic beings, merged together as they grew, and are now passed on to us as the accumulated treasure of the entire past' (HA I 16).

For all these reasons, we are *in thrall to our past*. This is the first threat in the past: that it controls us. It deprives me of a freedom I have always supposed myself to have. It means that I lack the responsibility I've

claimed for myself in acting and valuing. Of course we've always believed that the past was the threat to our freedom, but because we might be *causally determined* by the past. Instead, it's because the meanings of what we do are *logically constituted* by past selection.

Now given these ways the past controls us, it seems attention to the past is requisite, both for the sake of understanding ourselves, and for the sake of realizing the autonomy or agency we suppose ourselves already to have.

And this expectation is confirmed by Nietzsche's frequent insistence that philosophy must become 'historical': 'A lack of historical sensibility is the original failing of all philosophers … They do not want to learn that humanity has come to be, that even the faculty of cognition has also come to be' (HA I 2). Later: 'From now on therefore, historical philosophizing will be necessary, and along with it the virtue of modesty.' And: 'The steady and laborious process of science, which will someday finally celebrate its highest triumph in a genetic history of thought' (HA I 16).

2. Problems with Retrospection

And yet, when we do retrospect or remember or study the past, it seems this tends to *hurt* or *damage* us.[9] Or at least, Nietzsche often remarks on such negative effects. We looked at three sets of passages (from *Untimely Meditations*, *Zarathustra*, and the *Genealogy*) that presented this harm in three different ways. Now we need a more comprehensive account of Nietzsche's considered judgement. How, given what we've seen, does he think we should proceed to study and assess retrospection?

Clearly, we need to study retrospection's genealogy: to see how this stance arose and developed by the same kinds of historical processes we've been treating. That is, we need a retrospective study of our retrospection, in order to understand what it's doing in us now. This is why it is—paradoxically?—Nietzsche's (retrospective) genealogy of retrospection that best shows how the latter is harmful. Its damage lies in the 'functions' that have been designed into these retrospective abilities and practices.

So how did our capacity and propensity to remember and (in general) 'regard' the past arise and develop—and what functions has it thus been selected for? I take this to be a or the central topic of the *Genealogy*'s sec-

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9   This is one more place we find Nietzsche in dispute with Plato—and the value he
     places on 'recollection' of the Forms.

ond treatise, which let's examine. This essay, I'll try to show, presents memory as the decisive ability acquired by the earliest humans, upon and around which our striking higher capacities were then built.

First a background point. The second essay opens with a certain picture of the causality of this evolution: it presents 'nature' as 'setting itself the task' to 'breed an animal that m a y   p r o m i s e' (GM II 1). Nietzsche speaks as if nature foresightingly aims this process towards the 'sovereign individual' who, he soon says, emerges eventually from it (GM II 2). Later in the *Genealogy* he offers this picture again, to explain the social role of priests; he develops 'what I think life's healing-artist instinct has at least a t t e m p t e d through the ascetic priest' (GM III 16). Such passages challenge the reader: Nietzsche clearly posits some kind of overall 'design', and yet we can't believe that he means literally this designer he mentions—'nature', treated as an agent working towards represented goals. This agentive nature must be a stand-in for some other causal process working at the level of the society or species as a whole, and somehow 'in the interest' of such aggregates. As I've said, I think Nietzsche must mean a *selective* process, working by aggregate effects over populations.

Memory evolves by selection *in social groups*. As animal, we were capable only of the *projective, forward-turning stance* that Nietzsche associates with *will*. This is what we share with all the rest of 'life'. Memory— our capacity for a second, *retrospective and back-turning stance*—arose within society. Or better: memory arose at the very time that society formed, and *so that* society could be the more possible and successful.[10] Nietzsche gives the name *Sittlichkeit der Sitte* (ethic of custom) (GM II 2) to this long early phase of our history, in which memory made social custom and vice versa. Humans' retrospectivity, which distinguishes us from all the rest of nature and life, was originally selected-designed to facilitate our 'socialization'—to make us creatures of habit and custom.

Indeed it might not be too strong to say that originally memory *just was* the ability to *acquire (social) habits or practices*, distinct from the innate drives. Memory was first and foremost the ability to *remember the rules*, even when one's drives pushed hard the other way. It was the ability 'to keep a few primitive requirements of social co-existence p r e s e n t for these slaves of momentary affect and desire' (GM II 3). One remembers

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10 Nietzsche later suggests that the beginnings of memory precede society, in the more primitive relation between 'buyer and seller, creditor [*Gläubiger*] and debtor [*Schuldner*]', which he says is 'older than even the beginnings of any societal associations and organizational forms' (GM II 8). But clearly the main work developing memory is done socially—and indeed Nietzsche goes on at once to focus on the community [*Gemeinwesen*] as the most important 'creditor' (GM II 9).

not to steal the fruit in the market-place, even when one's hunger drive impels. So memory's original work is to 'give one pause', restraining one from acting on the immediate excited drive, by inserting a glance 'back' at one's commitment to the social rules.

Early humans were trained to remember this commitment by 'burning' into their bodies and senses certain vivid and powerful experiences of the horrific punishments inflicted on those who break the rules. After many generations of this training, 'one finally retains in memory five, six "I will nots", in connection with which one has given one's p r o m i s e in order to live within the advantages of society' (GM II 3).[11] These dramatic punishments train into us the ability to interpose between drive and action that memory of the rule. And the capacity to remember all of the rules is the ability to impose, on top of one's drives, that new layer of social practices—to which one is committed to subdue one's drives.[12] All of this shows how the first function of memory was to 'socialize' us—to make us abide by the rules necessary for social existence.

This new power and propensity to remember gets inserted into an existing context of drives. It struggles to control the latter, but of course they also struggle to control it. They try—by Nietzsche's drive-psychology— not only to enact themselves despite its restraining efforts, but also to infiltrate, modify, and use that new capacity for their own purposes. We need to bear in mind in what follows this counter-action by the drives upon retrospection.

Now of course this is only the very beginning of a genealogy of our retrospective powers, which have obviously evolved very richly from this start. In fact, Nietzsche treats these powers as embryonic for major further developments in our human cultural history, which we should look at. As the retrospective stance is broadened and enriched into further powers, the latter largely take up the original function of memory—to socialize us, or in Nietzsche's terms to 'tame' and 'herd' us. We can distinguish two sets of such powers developed from that root.

a. First there are ways that memory, our backwards view, founds both *religion* and *morality*. Nietzsche stresses how belief in gods develops out of a retrospective view—the feeling of indebtedness to ancestors. The social group reveres its ancestors as the founders of the customs and laws

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11 Punishment effects 'a lengthening of memory', 'a sharpening of prudence, mastery of the appetites' (GM II 15).

12 Among the drives subdued in this way is that to *revenge* oneself for injuries received—one learns to treat these as offences against 'the law', to be punished by it. Thus 'the eye is trained for an ever m o r e i m p e r s o n a l appraisal of deeds, even the eye of the injured one himself' (GM II 11).

that have made the group strong (and the good life within it possible): 'all customs, as works of ancestors, are also their statutes and commands' (GM II 19). This retrospective feeling of debt binds each member more tightly to those customs. And as the group grows stronger, those founders are magnified into gods—and members' debt to them is magnified as well.[13]

More than religion, morality is Nietzsche's target, and this too is an offshoot of that primordial power to 'remember the rules'. Morality is a next phase of social values, evolved from the ethic of custom. Though a very complex phenomenon, its key ingredient I think is what Nietzsche calls 'bad conscience' or 'guilt', and which he also genealogizes in the second essay. Our bad conscience, which so poisons the moral stance for Nietzsche, develops from memory in the following way.

Learning to remember the rules is learning to constrain or suppress the aggressive drives that would threaten social life. Yet these drives crave expression, and can't be utterly stifled. So a way of making them subserve our socializing-taming is found:[14] these aggressive drives are turned back against themselves, against the 'entire animal old self' (GM II 18). Members are trained to feel guilty about their instincts, and this feeling is a way of venting some of those instincts—especially those to inflict pain— venting them on oneself. So here that retrospective stance which draws back from the drives' engagement re-aims those drives against themselves, as a means to its own fuller control. Our memory for the social norms is reinforced by the habit of paining ourselves with regrets at the drives that tend to violate those norms. It's this co-opting of members to punish themselves with a retrospective guilt that distinguishes morality from custom.

b. Besides its roles in religion and morality, that retrospective stance is at the root of another main human achievement, which Nietzsche likewise views with a famous suspicion. This is our *reason*, our *cognition*—the attitude or stance in which we understand and know. Theory and science are at root retrospective.[15] We should notice how often Nietzsche takes memory to *represent and epitomize* the theoretical attitude—an attitude we take to be different and broader than memory. So his critique of 'history' becomes a critique of all science, and his critique of 'memory' becomes a

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13 Nietzsche struggles against a related feeling of indebtedness when he fights (as we saw above) to distinguish himself from the philosophical predecessors who most influenced him.

14 It is 'found' by selection at the social level—and not necessarily by the conscious discovery and design of determining individuals.

15 Notice how UM II 10 says that science 'sees everywhere things that have been, things historical' (KSA 1, p. 330).

critique of all self-reflection (all looking at one's aims or values from out-side them).

Nietzsche treats this theoretical stance, the 'will to truth', in not the second but the third essay of the *Genealogy*, where he identifies it as a (surprising) manifestation of the ascetic ideal, indeed as its core (GM III 27). We can better see why he thinks so by seeing how this stance develops out of that primordial memory.

Before and without this memory, the stance of our original willing was and is dominantly *futural*: our drives make us lean ahead towards their ends, and see and assess present conditions as they bear on those ends—as opportunities or obstacles. In this willing we understand ourselves in what we, in our drives, are trying to be (do, have).

Nietzsche thinks of memory as the root of a *second stance* humans be-come able to take. By that primeval training to remember the rules, humans learn to 'step back' from that immediate willing in their drives—to 'insert a pause' in enacting those drives. Instead of focusing ahead on what our impulses can achieve, our attention 'turns back' to some content independ-ent of them.[16] Moreover, one then binds and constrains those futural aims, in line with this content.

Centrally, this independent content was and is the social rules. The pause in enacting the drives is the ability to remember these rules—what one must not do. Although I'm calling this 'retrospective', it is perhaps less a matter of what 'the mind's eye' sees than of what the mind's ear hears—verbal formulations of those rules. As well, one remembers all the more particular commitments one has made, besides, to these norms: the prom-ises made to others and oneself.

Now these memories are not mere reveries, but effective and practical: I constrain my forward-pressing impulses and aims in view of past com-mitments which I keep present. And the point and purpose of the content I notice—my promises and commitments—is precisely to change what I do, how I act. But, I think Nietzsche thinks, this capacity to 'turn back' from the aiming in my drives into a space or attitude apart from them, resistant to them, is the germ of humans' capacity for theory—for the project of knowledge or truth.

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16 This way that (what I have been calling) memory turns us away from the drives, and towards something separate from them, shows how it goes beyond the kind of memory that subserves the drives, and that surely *did* occur in our animal past. The latter is the power by which animals remember where the water source was, for example; this doesn't interrupt their thirst drive, but is entirely steered by it. So it doesn't count as the memory or retrospection we're examining.

Our theoretical attitude, in which we try to know things 'as they are', objectively, depends on that ability to pull back from our usual engagement—to put a pause in our effort. But it uses this pause not to recall practical aims distinct from the drives (those social norms and promises), but instead to 'just look' at things, in that space apart from drives' effort.

To be sure, we must recognize that this 'space apart' from my drives isn't wholly apart, because of that counter-action of the drives upon retrospection, noted before. That new power is in competition with the drives, and is affected by them as they are by it. So Nietzsche frequently stresses how our theory expresses our drives and does not achieve the separation it aspires to.

Moreover, in that 'space apart' I don't find myself alone—not even alone with my drives. Like that practical memory, theory too depends on remembering rules: the vocabulary and methods of whatever practices of knowing I have learned. So theory is not an individual and solitary stance, but fully as social and intergenerational as our memory of the social norms. I must remember those rules and guide my observing and describing by them.

This begins to explain why Nietzsche thinks that this theoretical attitude, our 'will to truth', belongs to the ascetic ideal. It is ascetic, ultimately, precisely because it takes this stance contrary to the willing in our body and drives. It turns away from our aims and ends, and binds us to something independent of them. Indeed, in this regard our will to truth is an ultimate form of that contrary stance—'that ideal itself in its strictest, most spiritual formulation' (GM III 27).

This new stance, in which we front the world differently than in willing, becomes most *contrary* to willing when it turns to study this willing itself. Knowing, just as retrospective, already absents itself from our effort to enact our drives. But when it turns back to look at those drives themselves—at the aims by which we really set our behaviour—it works actively against them. When we turn this retrospective eye upon our values and aims, we chill and kill them. So the historical or genealogical study of our values is the most ascetic of all.

Already in 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' Nietzsche writes:

> A historical phenomenon, known clearly and completely and resolved into a phenomenon of knowledge, is, for him who has perceived it, dead: for he has recognized the delusion, the injustice, the blind passion, and in general the whole earthly and darkening horizon of this phenomenon, and has thereby also understood its power in history. This power has now lost its hold over him insofar as he is a man of knowledge: but perhaps it has not done so insofar as he is a man involved in life (UM II 1, KSA 1, p. 257)

Moreover, because our will to truth is a development out of that prior ability to 'remember the rules', it is entangled in some of the latter's long and harsh design; it has been partly aimed by that design. For example, it participates in the ideology against the drives, and in guilt over failures to abide by what the retrospective stance reveals. In acquiring this will we inevitably receive with it elements with these remnant functions.

Overall, this genealogy of memory or retrospection shows it in a very unfavourable light. It reveals how this back-turning stance has been designed for a group of functions we were unaware of, and which are often immediately unappealing—not functions we would *want* our attitude or stance to perform. I'll come back to give Nietzsche's assessment of them in a moment.

But first we should notice that there's another, more positive way in which this retrospective stance changes us. Besides these ways it lies at the root of religion, morality, and theory, it also changes the kind of *self* we can have or be. Before memory was acquired, a human was simply a collection of drives—drives of differing strengths, which thereby naturally formed a hierarchy or power-structure of impulses.[17] Such a human—or proto-human—identifies with the ends of these drives, or perhaps with the ends of whichever drives happen to be active or dominant at the time. He is who these drives are currently trying to be.

But once memory is developed, it functions in a new way of identifying oneself. I now 'find myself' not just in these ends my drives aim me at, but in the past commitments and promises I have made. I find myself retrospectively, in ways I have bound myself to be. And this changes as well my prospective or projective stance. I now aim, not just at the end of whatever drive is now strongest in me, but at fulfilling my promises—at being the person I have committed myself to be. This gets fixed in me as a new drive—but a most anomalous one. By this binding I am someone somewhat independent of those (other) drives: I can act quite against them, to keep my commitments. So I can have and feel a kind of *power over* my drives. My 'agency' lies in the continuity I give my life by this retrospecting committedness.

All of us feel, I think, this gratifying sense of control, in our identity as deciding subjects. But although Nietzsche does think there is a major achievement here, he believes it is less and different than we suppose. This self-identifying involves a great error or illusion. I take my 'moments of

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17 This was, perhaps, too much the only way I treated our drive-structure in *Nietzsche's System* (Richardson 1996). And Nietzsche himself sometimes operates with this simpler picture.

decision'—the choices in which I commit myself to be a person *like this*—as the complete and sufficient explainers of what I then am and do. And in these moments of choice I feel my reasons as the only reasons that select and explain how I choose. But in fact, my own reasons are selected by those aggregate processes that 'designed' values for social functions. My reasons are subordinate to those functions—I have been aimed by them, and don't really aim myself as I naively suppose.

The crucial such function is of course to socialize me—to induce me to live by the rules, and more generally to fit my behaviour into the general practice. What I bind myself to is—for the most part—these social rules, so that my commitment to them serves, ultimately, not my own interests but those of society. These seemingly free subjects are really a kind of automata, each of them committed to that same morality which holds them to their social tasks.

So, like our theoretical attitude, our 'sovereignty', as a development from that retrospective stance, retains deep design features that rather spoil it, Nietzsche thinks. That positive sense of power we have in this stance proves to be in important ways an illusion and even a deception. These herding values disguise their own work by purveying this sense of personal responsibility and control. Nevertheless, it is this image of a personal sovereignty that inspires our immediate aversion to these herding forces, once our genealogy reveals them. I discover that I'm very much *not* what I've learned to pride myself as being.

3. Solving the Problem of the Past

Together, the points in sections 1 and 2 confront us with a dilemma: the past is more important than we suppose, but attending to it seems to hurt rather than to help. We're in thrall to our past, but working on the problem by studying the past seems only to make it worse, by diverting us into a stance that undermines our natural drive-effort, co-opting it for social ends.

Early on, I suggest, Nietzsche has a simple (and somewhat mechanical) way of answering this problem. He insists on the need to *limit* this retrospective stance. We must learn to subordinate our knowing to our willing. Happiness (*Glück*) can't occur in that stance, since it depends on forgetting (UM II 1, KSA 1, p. 250). So science and knowing must be controlled: 'science requires supervision; a hygiene of life [*Gesundheitslehre des Lebens*] belongs close beside science' (UM II 10, KSA 1, p. 331).

Nietzsche does not make clear just how this limiting or constraining of our retrospection would work. He says that 'the unhistorical' (forgetting) and 'the suprahistorical' (art and religion) will be used as 'antidotes' to our

historical stance (ibid.). There may also be some kind of restriction on the topics that get studied and known. A healthy culture, and a healthy individual, will not turn this retrospecting scrutiny on the values most crucial to it. This is a most important theme in the notes from the early 1870s.

When Nietzsche enters his positivist phase this naturally changes his position on the worth of this retrospective, knowing stance. Perhaps we should say that he now enters into and occupies it, and becomes preoccupied with exposing as much about us as he can to the cold eye of study. So he no longer fully recognizes those problems in the attitude—what it misses, what it injures. This (temporary) loss of the sense of what's best for him was the means by which he cured himself of Romanticism (HA II Preface 2).[18]

We find this less troubled stance expressed in *Human, All Too Human* I 292, which counsels contentment with the way we're still liable to religious, artistic, and other such 'unclear [*unreinen*] thinking'—since we can use this susceptibility for truth. This presence in us of past irrationalities had seemed a threat to our knowing, but really it helps us 'forward on the path to wisdom'. For our rootedness gives us insight into the past, useful for our future: 'Turn back and trace the footsteps of mankind as it made its great sorrowful way through the desert of the past: thus you will learn in the surest way whither all mankind can and may not go again.'[19] So the way we are 'thrown' (*geworfen*) into this mixed condition turns out to be useful for our effort to understand and learn from the past.

But—Nietzsche later thinks—this positivist embrace of knowing lost sight of what knowing costs us. In his step 'back to health', in his maturity, he regains 'the perspective of life', and his sense of how that knowing stance is dangerous and undermining to it. This stance is responsible for the death of God, and threatens to destroy all of our values as well and to land us in nihilism. But now Nietzsche's response is not to restrict or oppose our knowing, but to use it in a new project that realizes all of its po-

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18   As usual in the retrospective 1886 Prefaces and 1888 *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche claims that an implicit purposiveness was at work in him. His 'still healthy instinct' was *using* this cold and sceptical objectivity in a spiritual self-surgery. And in *Human, All Too Human* II Preface 5: 'so I, as physician and patient in one person, compelled myself to an opposite and unexplored clime of the soul.' Similarly *Ecce Homo* says that *Human, All Too Human* 'is the monument to a crisis … I used it to liberate myself from things that did not belong to my nature'—such as idealism (EH III HA 1).

19   See also HA I 616 on how absorption in past world-views gives us a valuable perspective on the present as a whole. Also HA II 179 and HA II 223, quoted above.

tential. He sees a way to *reform and intensify* our relation to the past by putting it to work in a new *healthy* project, a project that betters our 'life' and 'power'.

I will try to show how Nietzsche's new solution to the problem has as its two main components *genealogy*, as an epistemic ideal, and *freedom*, as an ideal for willing; they are the new versions he offers for our two basic stances, projective and retrospective, and which he thinks will allow a reconciliation of them. And I'll present *eternal return* as Nietzsche's emblematic image for this reconciliation.

Let me start by suggesting another way to read a very familiar passage of *Zarathustra* 'On the Vision and Riddle':

> 'Behold this gateway, dwarf! I continued. It has two faces. Two ways come together here: nobody has ever taken them to the end. / 'This long lane back here: it goes on for an eternity. And that long lane out there—that is another eternity. / 'They contradict themselves, these ways; they confront one another head on, and here, at this gateway, is where they come together.' (Z III 'On the Vision and Riddle' 2)

I want to propose a different way to interpret these two paths: in terms of the two 'stances' we humans are capable of. When Nietzsche speaks of the paths 'out' (*hinaus*) and 'back' (*zurück*), he may mean not just (and even not mainly) the future and the past, but these two different stances or modes of comportment (of intentionality).[20] The path ahead refers to our projective thrust towards ends—to our willing. And the path behind refers to that 'retrospective' pause or interruption in this willing, which distinguishes humans and reaches its fullest form in our knowing.

So when Nietzsche says that these stances contradict one another, he is (partly, I suggest) referring to the incompatibility we've seen between these attitudes: how the retrospective stance undermines and negates our effort to will ahead. This reading lets us connect this crucial passage in *Zarathustra* to the diagnosis we've seen Nietzsche makes of our human condition as deeply disturbed by its special power of memory—by the way we're now 'conflicted' between our willing and our knowing. And this passage, Z III ' On the Vision and the Riddle' 2, is crucial because it sets up the problem that eternal return is meant to solve.

This reading of the passage is reinforced, I think, by recalling Z II 'On Redemption', which gave an earlier statement of the problem eternal return must address. This problem was 'the will's ill-will toward time and its "It was"'. The connection between this point and the contradiction between

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20 Recall that very much the same terms occur in the introductory paragraph of *Ecce Homo*, where Nietzsche tells how he affirms his life—in both stances.

the paths 'back' and 'out' is puzzling. I suggest that we think of the will's ill-will at not being able to will the past as expressing the point that the retrospective view has stilled the will, contradicts the will. (Our fondness for the retrospective stance has made our will ill.) So both passages concern the same problem. And I'll try to show that eternal return is so important to Nietzsche because it symbolizes his solution to this problem—to our deep division.

Now in the terms of these 'two paths', what would it be to solve the contradiction between them? It would be for the retrospective stance to somehow 'meet' the stance of willing, and for the latter to meet it as well. This would 'complete the circle' in both directions. But how might each of these stances 'meet' the other? Each, I suggest, must be satisfied with the other in its (the meeter's) own terms, by its own standards. Each must find that it grows (is empowered) through the other. And for us to be able to 'will the past' is for that retrospective stance to serve will.

The retrospective stance steps back from willing to regard things without and despite that willing. In its original form it is the promise to comply with the rules. But in its fullest, most developed form it is the commitment to knowledge and science. What would satisfy it about (the stance of) willing would be to *know it*, and to *make it knowing*. The first of these is accomplished by genealogy, and the latter by a conversion within willing itself. I start with how genealogy knows willing.

For a long time humans have supposed that they know themselves. Even in the early and simple forms of retrospectivity, in which persons bind themselves only to the simplest of social rules, the stance still lets each person find a self, an identity. It's this backward turn from the drives that makes it possible for a person to commit to a 'self' in some independence from them. One commits to certain rules or virtues, for the sake of which one undertakes to overrule the drives. I now 'remember' who I've promised (to myself and others) to be, and believe that this *is* me, much more than those drives my commitments override. Since I seem to *commit* to these rules and virtues in conscious acts, and then to *remember* and follow them consciously, this self or identity seems transparently evident to me.

This confidence in self-understanding is all the greater in persons with developed forms of the will to truth—philosophers, psychologists, other scientists. These take themselves to have an especially overt and considered awareness of their own decisions, thoughts, and feelings. It is the

framing point of the *Genealogy* that even here, and here especially, persons fail in the most important points to understand themselves.[21]

We experience our own choice as the determining and responsible factor in our thinking and acting, but in fact this choice—where it is operative at all—merely executes the aim or will embedded in the norms and values by which we choose. Those values, by their design for social purposes, make our choices instrumental for those purposes. The motives for which we think we choose are trumped by ulterior purposes. Indeed even our pride in our self-responsibility serves those purposes: we are the better herd animals when we believe ourselves to be freely setting our own ends in our own interests.

So I have never known my own willing. But genealogy, by exposing the social formation of my values, now makes this possible. It lets my retrospective stance truly understand—bring into view—the forces that really aimed the rules and values to which I commit myself, and with which I identify myself. It reveals the direction of that 'throw' whose momentum my choices merely follow. It even lets my retrospection understand itself, in particular—how its own backwards look originally (and partly still) serves to commit me to rules that oppose my drives. It lets me grasp the ascetic function at work in the 'will to truth' in which I commit myself to know.

Genealogy is the highest achievement of the will to truth, inasmuch as it penetrates to the most hidden, most difficult, and most important truths—the facts of what and why we are (as we are). By pursuing this genealogy we close in on what we really are. We uncover to ourselves more and more of the drives, habits, and values working in us, and more and more of the selective forces that gave them their thrust and tendency. Of course this insight is far from complete. But we do arrive, for the first time, in the proper domain of a genuine self-understanding—we're now looking in the right place, in the right terms.

But even as the highest form of the will to truth, genealogy is in its own right most dangerous. It is most effectively ascetic: it 'cuts into life', by examining and exposing the drives, habits, values, and desires that together constitute our willing. As we diagnose any one of these, and understand the forces that shaped it and the purposes they have made it serve in us, we chill or enervate whichever will we study. We step out of this (projective) will, and expose it to a (retrospective) look that flattens and disenchants it. This is why genealogy can be a route to nihilism, alienating us from our values, one after another.

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21   See especially GM Preface 1; also, e.g., GM I 1–2, and the end of GM III 23.

Nietzsche's answer is to show a way to turn this dangerous instrument to a new positive purpose, a purpose that is rooted in the abiding core of our will and drives. There's a certain way we can put genealogy to work, within a life-plan that promises us a superior kind of power and accomplishment. We can use genealogy to make ourselves stronger, by taking an increasing control over the habits and values built into us by social-historical processes. So we put it to the service of our 'will to life', which deeply aims at power and control.

Genealogy exposes ways we have *lacked* such power—ways we have been controlled and used by forces outside us, social forces in whose interest our habits and values have been designed. As we've seen, there is an overall tendency in social selection to evolve values and practices for their *social* utility, i.e., for the way they make society more cohesive and effective. Our deep urges to be like others, to share their values and viewpoints, serve this social function. Moreover, other of our values have been selected to serve the interests of particular social groups or of specific kinds of people. For example, most Christian values are a 'slave morality' in the sense that they have developed and spread because of how they serve the interests of the weak, sick, and suffering. Nietzsche calls me to discover whether my values have been designed in the interest of the kind of person I really am.

By exposing how other forces have made us, genealogy gives us the chance to work, prospectively, towards a kind of control that was never possible before. We can act on these parts and constituents of ourselves for the first time *knowingly*—with an understanding why we have them, and what they are doing (have been aimed to do) in us. By genealogy, we can judge those designed-in purposes of our ways of thinking and acting—and decide whether we favour those purposes. And if we don't favour them, we can try, at least, to redesign those thoughts and acts for different ends. We can try, as Nietzsche often urges us, to reconfigure them so that they suit our individual physiologies—the peculiar mixture of animal drives at the bottom of each of us.

It's this new power, I think, that Nietzsche refers to as 'freedom', and offers as his principal ideal for how a person should be. He thinks he has discovered or invented an importantly new kind of freedom, stricter, fuller, and more genuine than the old. He offers this ideal both as an improvement on the existing value of freedom, and as a best (so far) achievement of the 'power' at which he thinks our most basic and indispensable drives aim.

Thus besides completing the knowing stance, genealogy also enables the projective stance of will to perfect itself. It confers a self-understanding that makes possible a new freedom in that willing, by which will achieves the power and control at which it aspires. This new freedom is more genu-

ine than the kind we have just by our agency—by our being able to promise and commit ourselves. Genealogy corrects the mistake we 'agents' have long made in thinking freedom something possessed and automatic. It constitutes a 'will to responsibility, freedom of the will' (GM III 10).

If freedom is being responsible, i.e., being the principal determiner or explainer of the things I do, then that sovereignty I already have in being able to honour commitments does indeed give me some of this. It lies especially in my sense of power *over my drives*—I identify myself not with them but with those retrospected rules and promises, and pride myself in being able to override those drives to follow those rules.

But as we've seen, there's a major hole in my responsibility: I fail to recognize that the values to which I commit myself have been designed to 'do things with me'. They have been designed, for example, to make me a better herd animal. Since I don't understand what these values are 'for', and what they're doing in me—how I'm being 'used' in my commitment to them—responsibility really slips through and out of me, and belongs to the social forces that made my values by which I am steered. So, for example, I may act out of a habit of pity or benevolence, and cite this as a motive in my choice, yet fail to understand why I have this habit or motive of benevolence—what it is doing in me, what work it was designed to do. And in this case I am in fact being used by those selective forces for those purposes the drive was shaped to play in me.

So by the new (genealogical) insight into this 'what' we are, we now notice a way we *have not been free*. We discover the incompleteness and inadequacy of the freedom we've had by discovering a new constrainedness—how we are subject to the social-historical forces that designed the habits and values we live by. And from this, we can next project and plan out a way to overcome this constraint, and become for once (or more fully) free.

To accomplish this freedom I need more than genealogy. The latter of course belongs to the retrospective, theoretical stance, so the task is now to reflect it in my projective stance of willing. I need to win my freedom not just in theory but in practice. This is what Nietzsche calls 'incorporating' this understanding (see GS 11 and 110). It is to make it effective in how I really do aim myself, moment by moment. My existing values are built into my drives and socialized habits, and I don't annul them just by saying that I do. I need to push genealogical insights down to the very points at which these drives and habits operate. I must build into my everyday responses those countering diagnoses supplied by genealogy, so that I see *why* I will, *while* I will. Willing only really takes up theory into its own projective stance when it takes practical regard of it in its concrete and everyday moments of willing.

Nietzsche thinks that our projective will must *test* and *assess* the genealogical truths by *how far* they can be incorporated. Some truths it will be impossible to import into our practice. For there are limits to how pliable and alterable our drives and habits are. With some drives, we *won't be able* to make their diagnoses effective—they work on us so fundamentally and pervasively that we can't hope to make them self-aware. This means there are limits to the freedom we are capable of. Here see, for example, *Human, All Too Human* I 41 on how 'the motives influencing [a human being] cannot ordinarily scratch deeply enough to destroy the imprinted script of many millennia' (it says this is due to the shortness of human life).

However it is not just truths that get tested by this effort at incorporation—for these truths also test our drives, and those norms and values we identify ourselves with. I test a drive or value by seeing whether I can incorporate the insight why I have it—what it's doing in me. Can I build a diagnosis of my willing into my very willing? Can I, in the very act of willing-valuing X, understand this act? Can I will X while I know why I will it? Many or most of our aims and values, Nietzsche thinks, won't survive this test—or rather they will need to be heavily revised so as to be sustainable, still value-able, in the light of that incorporated diagnosis.

So our insight by genealogy into our willing gives us a new opportunity: to begin knowingly to *redesign* this attitude. Carrying out this redesign is the way to freedom, the truer freedom we're capable of.

At this point it's worth noticing what this shows about Nietzsche's difference from Kant. Nietzsche often seems to be finding 'conditions' of our experience—limitations and biases built deeply into the ways we think and value. But his naturalistic orientation makes these *not* Kantian transcendental and logical 'conditions of the possibility', but quasi-Darwinian conditions-of-selection: what these ways of thinking and valuing have been selected to do. Since the latter are not logical conditions, they are susceptible to that redesign. The upshot indeed is that Nietzsche uses his 'conditions' for an opposite purpose than Kant: Kant identifies conditions to validate them for science, but Nietzsche identifies them in the hope of freeing himself from them.

I've tried to show how the knowing stance completes itself in genealogy, and how the willing stance completes itself in the freedom this makes feasible, which reconciles these two stances with one another. It shows how the retrospective stance, when it *finally finds truths*, can be not a drag and burden to our forward-pushing will, but can in fact help it to find a new kind and degree of power, in the power over our values.

I suggest that Nietzsche means—or partly means—the image of eternal return to express this reconciliation. In this reconciliation the will over-

comes its ill-will against the past, i.e., against the retrospective stance that so deflates it, by discovering how the truth about its past empowers it to overcome its past. I think one role of eternal return is to model and remind us of this reconciliation. That these two paths, back (*zurück*) and out (*hinaus*), meet each other and join in a ring symbolizes how these two basic stances of humans, whose conflict has been our grand problem, find their own completion by joining one another.

So eternal return is the emblematic attitude in which one holds together the contrary stances of retrospection (or theory) and will. It symbolizes the fusion of retrospect and prospect, hence of will to truth and will to power (life). It shows life how to face the past, and keep willing. It solves, finally, our problem of the past.

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