

On the Possibility of Morals

or

Nietzsche as Educator

by

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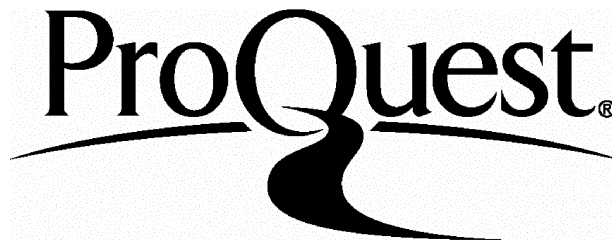
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Thesis abstract

Section one: *Nietzsche's central values*

Introduction: Nietzsche's oeuvre is ideologically diverse, and gives rise therefore to inconsistencies and even (perhaps) contradictions. On account of this, thesis will concentrate on one strand of his thought - his conception of individuality. This taken to be philosophically his most challenging area of interest, and to form an instructive contrast with Kant's moral philosophy

Chapter one: *The Eternal Recurrence* - This central to Nietzsche's thought, not *qua* indispensable linchpin of his ethics, but *qua* confluence for his key values: viz, strength, atheism, self-direction

Section two: *Nietzsche versus Kant*

Chapter two: *Eternal Recurrence [ER] versus Categorical Imperative [CI]* - Nietzsche's conception of individuality is highlighted by contrast with Kant's analysis of moral agency. How both the ER and the CI fulfil similar rôles within their respective ethical writings. How both are philosophically problematic. How the CI nevertheless proves to be rationally superior in one crucial respect

Chapter three: *Autonomy* - Kant's arguments for moral autonomy seen to be circular. Nietzsche's conception of individual autonomy seen to tend towards incoherence

Chapter four: *On Education* - Kant's idea of moral education claimed to be vulnerable to the same objections levelled at his delineation of moral motivation. Nietzsche's analysis of 'true education' claimed to undermine the possibility of education

Section three: *A coherent conception?*

Chapter five: *The pure individual* - Summary of Nietzsche's conception of individuality, and the implications it has for his views on consciousness, communication and language

Conclusion: *On Originality* - Nietzschean individuality claimed to rest on an

analytically prior understanding of value. The dichotomy he posits between `original´ and `adopted´ values claimed to be *male fundatum*, and to render his conception incoherent

Epilogue: *Beyond Nietzsche* - If Nietzsche´ s notion of individuality is incoherent, then it cannot be coherently adopted. Therefore its influence can be seen only in misappropriations and perversions (it does not admit of proper appropriation)

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Section one:

Nietzsche´s central values

Introduction

I think it is possible to say, without risk of controversy, that even a brief acquaintance with Friedrich Nietzsche's works makes one thing clear: they are diverse, both in form and in content. Formally, he was adept at writing aphorisms (e.g. The Gay Science [GS], bk.3, second half), short expositions (e.g. Twilight of the Idols [TWI]), substantial essays (e.g. Untimely Meditations) and what amount to whole treatises (e.g. On the Genealogy of Morals [GM]). Even if his attempts at poetry and prose-poetry are judged to be less successful, such formal diversity is in itself remarkable. What is equally remarkable, but gives rise to certain difficulties, is the ideological diversity of Nietzsche's writings. In order to give some idea of the latter, it is perhaps worthwhile to provide a couple of examples.

First, take what Nietzsche says about 'Genius and nullity' at Human, all too Human [HAH] 165: 'It is precisely the original heads among the artists, those who draw on resources that are their own, who can sometimes produce the empty and hollow, while the more dependent natures, the so-called talents, full of recollections of everything imaginable are able even when they are at their weakest to produce something tolerable. If the originals are deserted by themselves recollection renders them no aid: they become empty'. The content of this passage, I suggest, should appear to a reader acquainted with Nietzsche's work as a whole as distinctly atypical. This early passage, in its reservations about 'originality' and sympathy towards 'dependency', sounds almost un-Nietzschean - if 'Nietzschean' is taken to refer to the ideas of his later writings. For instance, consider something Nietzsche wrote in 1888: 'The brief spell of beauty, of genius, of Caesar, is *sui generis*: such things are not inherited' (The Will to Power [WM], 684); or consider his quoting Galiani with approval in 1887: '*Les philosophes ne sont pas faits pour s'aimer. Les aigles ne volent point en compagnie. Il faut laisser cela aux perdrix [partridges], aux étourneaux [starlings] ... Planer au-dessus et avoir des griffes, voilà le lot des grands génies*' (WM 989).

Secondly, take another of Nietzsche's remarks about 'genius' in HAH: 'In so far as genius of every kind maintains the fire of convictions and awakens the distrust of the modesty and circumspection of science, it is an enemy of truth, no matter how much it may believe itself to be truth's suitor' (635). He clearly intends the force of this to be pejorative, and yet in the light of his later philosophy this appears to be quite out of character. His praise of the ephectic virtues and his lauding of truth here are at odds with the denigration of both encountered elsewhere in his writings. For instance, at GS 344: 'No doubt, those who are truthful in that audacious and ultimate sense that is presupposed by the faith in science *thus affirm another world* than the world of life ... it is still a metaphysical faith upon which our faith in science rests ... But what if this should become more and more incredible, if nothing should prove to be divine any more unless it were error, blindness, the lie - '. Because Nietzsche comes to associate science and truth with the presuppositions of religious faith, he ends up oppugning the former, a stance also embraced by him at the close of GM: 'This pair, science and the ascetic ideal, both rest on the ... same overestimation of truth (more exactly: on the same belief that truth is inestimable and cannot be criticised). Therefore they are *necessarily* allies, so that if they are to be fought they can only be fought and called in question together' (III 25). In this way he drops his allegiance to science and truth (to put it crudely), and gives it instead to art and deception.

Is Nietzsche therefore guilty of contradicting himself? He does claim that 'our body is only a social structure composed of many souls' (Beyond Good and Evil [JGB, 19]), so perhaps he would maintain that what appears to be self-contradiction is in fact properly understood as those souls being true to themselves¹. Nevertheless I think the accusation of self-contradiction is unwarranted, in that it implies the strict logical error of

¹ cf WM 490 - 'The assumption of one single subject is perhaps unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects, whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness in general?' (referred to by Nehamas, p177)

asserting both p and $\text{not-}p$. Nietzsche may, on the other hand, be more vulnerable to the accusation of inconsistency. Yet even this accusation is predicated on the assumption that a (philosophical) writer is bound to strive after consistency *across his entire set of works*. And although this assumption may hold in the case of a philosopher like Kant, there is no reason, I think, to require that it must hold for all philosophers. That is, it seems reasonable to expect that they will change their minds over their productive life-times. In Nietzsche's case, admittedly, it seems that change of position receives a value *per se* ('the will to a system is a lack of integrity')²; but this makes it all the more important that critical interpretation limit itself to certain strands of his thought, which it takes to be philosophically salient within and thus illuminating of that thought.

So any Nietzsche-interpretation will have to be carefully selective, in that such interpretation will require certain of his ideas and some of his arguments to be privileged above others. But given such a selection, there still remains the difficulty of what precise significance one should give to claims made within that selection. This difficulty is, I suggest, particularly acute in the case of Nietzsche, because the paucity of linear arguments within his writings means one cannot assess his thought by the order in which he takes certain deliberative steps, or the relations of entailment that hold between them; moreover, his tendency to experiment with ideas (*versuchen* - which also means to 'tempt'), makes it more than usually difficult to say what exact weight he intends to give to particular claims.

For example, take aphorism 184 in GS, which is entitled 'Justice': 'I'd sooner have people steal from me than be surrounded by scarecrows and hungry looks; that is my taste. And this is by all means a matter of taste, nothing more'. These two sentences imply an ethical equivalence

² nb a remark in WM - 'Profound aversion to reposing once and for all in any one total view of the world. Fascination of the opposing point of view: refusal to be deprived of the stimulus of the enigmatic' (470); and one at TWI p54 - 'one is fruitful only at the cost of being rich in contradictions'

between justice and taste, but what sort of equivalence? And how seriously is it meant? The aphorism is characteristically Nietzschean, I think, because it begins by using a word with morally pejorative connotations (‘steal’), and then goes on to use one which deflates those connotations (‘taste’); furthermore, it seems to make an exhaustive claim with complete confidence (‘by all means ... nothing more’). Clearly the only way to arrive at an adequate assessment of such a claim is to be aware of Nietzsche’s statements about justice and taste throughout his work (especially since the force of those statements seems to be inconsistent with his apparent willingness in this excerpt to suffer for the benefit of the ‘herd’). So it seems that any worthwhile Nietzsche-interpretation will have to work on holistic premises, given that only an holistic approach to his work can show both the salient parts of that work and the weight of claims made within them.

Perhaps another example might bring this out. Take a brief remark Nietzsche makes in book four of WM (‘*Discipline and Breeding*’): ‘Terribleness is part of greatness: let us not deceive ourselves’ (1028). Only an holistic approach can hope to judge accurately both what *kind* of ‘terribleness’ is being invoked, and *how large a* ‘part of greatness’ it is meant to constitute. And only such an approach could demonstrate that no irony enters into this remark, given that one of Nietzsche’s deepest concerns is to eradicate self-deception. Moreover, holism is required even more in weighing claims made within Nietzsche’s poetry and prose-poetry, especially where he is not speaking *in propria persona* (e.g. Thus Spoke Zarathustra [Z]). Z indeed presents a particular problem, in that it appears Nietzsche considered it his finest work³, and yet in an important sense it is not *his* work - it is Zarathustra’s. So any claims made by the latter cannot easily be attributed to Nietzsche himself, in the sense of ‘endorsed by him’. For instance, take Zarathustra’s statement at Z p234: ‘For me - how could

³ ‘I have given mankind the profoundest book it possesses, my Zarathustra’ (TWI p114)

there be an outside-of-me? There is no outside!' This peculiar pronouncement seems less peculiar if it is realised that it occurs within a 'discourse' entitled 'The Convalescent', and that Zarathustra is often given to provocative hyperbole. Accordingly it would surely be misguided to understand Nietzsche as endorsing the solipsistic implications of such a statement.

Given all the caveats above, what strands of Nietzsche's thought will this thesis concentrate on, and how will it treat claims made in support of them? It will concentrate on Nietzsche's conception of individuality, on what he takes it that a genuine individual would have to be, and how this relates to what I call his 'central values'. These values are more or less variegated, but nonetheless not mutually contradictory, and they gain concrete instantiation in what Nietzsche calls his 'higher exemplars' - individuals like Goethe and Napoleon; Machiavelli and certain of the pre-Socratics. They also gain partial and abstract expression, I claim, through his formula of 'Eternal Recurrence' (see chapter one). But it will be the aim of this thesis to try to show how Nietzsche's conception of individuality impugns and provides insufficient basis for his 'central values', thus providing equally insufficient basis for his exemplars. That is, it will make the claim that although Nietzsche wants and sets out to depreciate the *Bildungsphilister* and to support the claims of 'greatness', the analytical means he uses to this end prove wanting, and even tend to undermine the possibility of such greatness. It follows that I take the claims he makes in support of his conception of individuality to be strong ones, strong enough to militate against his central values and cultural ideals.

The lack of consonance between analytical means and ends adverted to above is, I wish to demonstrate, also endemic to Kant's moral philosophy - and hence much of this thesis is devoted to explicating that philosophy, in order to form an instructive contrast with the central problematic of Nietzsche's oeuvre. *Prima facie* it might seem that Kant is so distant from

Nietzsche⁴, not only in the form but also in the content of his philosophy, that such a juxtaposition could prove only nugatory. But I think it is precisely in virtue of that immense distance that Kant's moral philosophy proves to be so efficient at highlighting an analytical isomorphism to be found between his thought and Nietzsche's. For in line with Nietzsche, I claim, Kant sets out to provide an analytical account of moral action - albeit in a far more regimented and uninviting fashion - and ends up rendering it a psychologically and motivationally opaque phenomenon. And that his mode of argumentation leads to such an eventuality has much to do with his desire to provide a *pure* account, in the same way as Nietzsche desires to provide a *pure* conception of individuality: but to try to say here in what such purity consists would be *praeposterum dicere*.

The last part of this thesis is concerned with the question of how Nietzsche's conception of individuality has exerted influence over various writers and thinkers who came after him, or (rather) of whether it is possible for it *eo ipso* to exert any influence. But, returning to immediate concerns, the subject-matter of chapter one will be that of 'Eternal Recurrence', a conception which Nietzsche without doubt intended to be influential and of educational import.

⁴ Indeed, he is also distant from Nietzsche's intellectual hero, Goethe, who, Nietzsche says, 'strove against the separation of reason, sensuality, feeling, will (-preached in the most horrible scholasticism by Kant, the antipodes of Goethe)' (TWI p112)

Chapter one *The Eternal Recurrence*

There are good reasons, it seems, for saying that Nietzsche considered his most significant idea to be that of the Eternal Recurrence [ER]. He calls it the 'thought of thoughts' (XII, 117 *Werke*), and at EH p295 refers to it as the 'fundamental conception' of Zarathustra, which he took to be his most important work. At the very end of TWI, moreover, Nietzsche's proud valediction concludes with the words 'I, the teacher of the eternal recurrence ...'. But besides his own estimate of the ER as of profound consequence, there are (I suggest) independent reasons in support of Nietzsche's view. These are founded not so much on the contents of the ER in its various formulations, but rather on its place within Nietzsche's thought as a whole: it crystallises much of his thinking about what is a proper object of value or ethical worth. It thus serves in particular as a channel for his criticisms of theism and Kantianism, and for his commendation of strength, self-sufficiency and *fröhliche Wissenschaft*.

The ER is significant, then, because it lends coherence to Nietzsche's thought by acting as a confluence for his ethical ideas. However, I want to claim that it is significant only in so far as it is understood as a thought-experiment within ethics, and not as a metaphysical thesis or physical theory (what M. Clark calls a 'cosmological' theory). If Nietzsche held it to be cosmologically sound then he was mistaken, but I think there are at least three reasons for believing that he did not (and thus was not). First, he introduces the notion of ER at GS 341 purely as a hypothesis: 'What, if ... a demon were to ... say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more"'. The conditional structure of 'If ... [then] would' is repeated during the passage, such that it is clear that Nietzsche does not assume the truth of ER at any point: 'If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you'. And this is consonant with what he says about hypothetical propositions at *Werke* XII, 117 - '... even the thought of a possibility can deeply move and transform us, not just what we can perceive

or definitely expect! Nietzsche's point is, then, that the ethical force of a hypothesis is logically independent of the sureness of its metaphysical or material foundations.

Secondly, in so far as the ER is considered as a *doctrine*, it cannot but bring to mind theological doctrine. And for an atheistic thinker like Nietzsche the latter must have represented an inchoate concatenation of ethical, metaphysical and cosmological claims (such as the creation story and the idea of a Last Judgement). Given this, it seems likely that what lay behind Nietzsche's introduction of the concept of ER was (in part) the desire to present an ethical hypothesis wholly purged of spurious cosmological claims. In this light, Zarathustra's rôle as teacher of the ER (and to some extent Nietzsche's) comes to appear highly ironic, in that it is intended to be a satire on Christ's 'coming to earth' to teach the Gospel - which rests on an elaborate cosmology of its own. Furthermore, Nietzsche might be making the point that if Christianity has succeeded in promulgating a harmful morality based on unworkable foundations, then the ER deserves far greater success, given that it promotes a healthy morality which does not debase itself by taking seriously a false picture of the universe. That the ER would involve such a 'false picture' if taken as more than a thought-experiment with ethical import is, however, a strong claim, and one which requires argumentative support. It is the claim that, when thought through, the ER entails a metaphysical incoherence - this incoherence forming the basis of the third reason Nietzsche did not intend it as a cosmological theory.

The incoherence is generated by the terms of the thought-experiment itself. These require both that each individual's life recur identically over time ('all in the same succession and sequence'), and that such recurrence be of the utmost concern to that individual ('*The greatest weight*'). But if complete identity is assumed here, that is in a numerical and not a qualitative sense, then it would seem that each recurrent self constitutes a wholly discrete entity, whereby no continuity of consciousness between such selves could be envisaged. In that case, the problem arises of how an

individual could be concerned with the welfare of his future self, given that it is clearly not 'his self' in any meaningful sense. This line of argument, which takes the ER to involve a discontinuity of personal identity, is adhered to by Ivan Soll. He sees no need for 'personal concern' at the prospect of ER, since its consequences lie 'beyond the possible limits of the individual human consciousness' (Solomon, p340). This is a powerful objection, but it does rely on a circumscribed notion of 'personal concern', one which will come under critical scrutiny when Kant's conception of moral action is discussed.

Further incoherence seems to follow from the opposite interpretation of the ER, which sees it as involving a continuity of consciousness and thus of personal identity. If my future self is an extension or continuation of my present self, then it would appear reasonable for the former to want to avoid or correct the mistakes of the latter. If such were possible, then *a fortiori* I would be presented with the chance to (as it were) hone my existence, to progress towards some Nietzschean ethical apotheosis. But it is exactly this possibility which the ER rules out, with its stringent requirement that the recurrent lives of each individual be token-identical. Moreover, it is clear from elsewhere in Nietzsche's writings that the notion of 'progress' did not strike him as having much substance. For example: 'The higher types ... perish most easily as fortunes change' (WM 684); 'Man as a species is not progressing. Higher types are indeed attained, but they do not last' (OUDHL, sec.9). And at *Werke* XII, 109 he explicitly warns against treating the ER as the instrument of any teleology - 'Let us guard against attributing any striving or goal to this cyclical course'.

Understanding the ER as allowing a continuity of consciousness can lead to an equal and opposite incoherence, however, which pictures each recurrence as increasingly burdensome and as likely to produce worsening psychological depredation. The difference between this picture of the ER and its predecessor is that it receives more support from Nietzsche's texts. For example: 'Let us think this thought in its most terrible form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale

of nothingness: "*the eternal recurrence*" (WM 55). Nevertheless, this portrayal of Sisyphean gloom is possible only assuming a 'continuity of consciousness' interpretation of the ER, which conflicts with the requirement of absolute identity among lives delineated earlier on. Given this incoherence, Nietzsche is very rarely drawn to a picture of ER as one of deepening nihilistic despair (he sees such despair rather as a mid-stage between the abandonment of religious faith and the embrace of ER, properly understood). Instead, he portrays nihilism and the ER as militating against each other in their implications: 'Let us ...[not] depreciate [the ER] according to our needs as monotonous, stupid, etc.' (*Werke*, XII, 109); 'To the paralysing sense of disintegration and incompleteness I opposed the ER' (WM 417).

That the ER gives rise to the conceptual difficulties outlined above stems from its two basic requirements, which, when taken together, result in metaphysical incoherence: namely, that my recurrent lives be discrete from one another, and yet still be (in some sense) 'mine'. This incoherence need be taken seriously only if it can be shown to undermine Nietzsche's purposes. Some have thought it does undermine them, and point to his sketchy reasonings concerning the preservation of matter, or to an isolated claim such as '[the ER] is the most *scientific* of all possible hypotheses' (WM 55). The latter is misleading, though, in that *wissenschaftlich* has a very different force in German (covering 'knowledgeable' and 'learned'); moreover, Nietzsche does admit he is picking the ER out of 'all possible hypotheses', so that the claim hardly appears a strong one. Surely it is right to conclude along with M. Clark that the ER is metaphysically an 'unrealistic' notion which was not intended to be realistic, but to be used as a 'practical doctrine'. The ER demands a 'pre-analytic response' from readers, and it is the nature of this response which determines the ethical standing of those readers, not any analytical criticisms they can formulate concerning it - these would constitute mere evasions.

If the metaphysical aspects of the ER are secondary and tangential, and what really matters is 'pre-analytic response', then what are

Nietzsche's criteria for a good response? They are that it be spontaneously *affirmative*, or 'Yes-saying', such that the respondent 'crave[s] nothing more fervently than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal' (GS 341). He must desire ER without reservation, that is, without feeling 'crushed' by the momentousness of the content of that desire. In order to bring out the essential features of the ER as a 'practical doctrine', perhaps it would be instructive to compare it with a related but significantly different conception found in Nietzsche's work - that of *Amor fati*. This is adumbrated at EH p258: 'My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it - ... but love it.' *Prima facie* this 'love of fate' is very similar to the embrace of the ER, but the two notions diverge at several points. The ER is addressed to individual readers as a moral psychological challenge, a personal test of fortitude. In comparison, the exhortation to *amor fati* appears to involve something closer to attitudinal assent. I use the word 'attitudinal' here for two main reasons. First, 'love of fate' requires a far more generalised embrace of events than does the ER. The latter asks individuals to affirm their lives, whereby events are to be considered only to the extent that they directly impinge on those lives. 'Love of fate' supersedes the individual perspective, and thus cannot but involve a more notional conception of assent. Secondly, the idea of ER is more action-guiding and prospective in its force - '"Do you desire this once more innumerable times more?"' would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight'. By contrast *amor fati* emphasizes fate and necessity, thereby being more retrospective in its force.

These differences relating to attitude, scope and temporal perspective are not great, but they do lead to mistaken interpretations of the idea of ER. B. Magnus, for instance, has criticized the ER for requiring the affirmation of atrocities and horrors in general. This would, I think, be required by the *amor fati* conception, but not by that of the ER. Similarly, M Clark speaks of the ER as entailing the unconditional affirmation of someone like Hitler.

But as Nietzsche explicates the ER, Hitler would have to be considered only if he directly affected the course of an individual's life. This is because the ER is a form of personal recurrence, based on the life-spans of particular individuals, these being both metaphysically and ethically discrete entities. This is attested to by the last sentence of GS 341, which asks '... how well-disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life' to crave ER, whereby it appears that to all intents and purposes the durations of 'yourself' and 'life' are co-extensive. It is this difference in scope which fundamentally divides the ER and *amor fati*, the latter remaining uncomfortably close to certain religious affirmations of 'God's will'. With the ER and its doctrine of personal affirmation, therefore, Nietzsche effects a more decisive break with theism than was possible under the *amor fati* conception.

The above exercise in comparison should have gone some way in showing what is distinctive about the idea of ER: its being in the form of a practical challenge, its action-guiding potential, its decisively individualistic content intended (in part) as a foil to theistic notions of affirmation. But the degree to which the ER acts as a synthesis of much of Nietzsche's ethical thought has not yet been brought out. This can best be achieved, perhaps, by considering the ideational genesis of the ER within Zarathustra, which of all Nietzsche's works was the one intended to promote the ER most effectively as a counter-ideal to that of the 'ascetic priests'. This genesis can usefully be broken down into roughly six stages, which are outlined in the section called *On Redemption* (part two).

The first stage pictures the individual will as a *prisoner*. It is imprisoned, so to speak, by its past: that is, no matter how much an individual feels his past as a burden, he can do nothing to change it. It constitutes an ever-present weight on his consciousness. Zarathustra expresses this state of affairs by saying - "It was": that is what the will's teeth-gnashing and most lonely affliction is called. Powerless against that which has been done, the will is an angry spectator of all things past'. The analytical truth that 'The will cannot will backwards', once recognised,

produces a reaction in the individual akin to that experienced by the inadequate individual of GS 341, who responds to the demon's challenge with a similar display of teeth-gnashing. Clearly this inadequacy is most un-Nietzschean, and remedies are sought for such a deleterious situation. Two of them prove to be just as inadequate themselves (these could be counted as the second and third 'stages'). Either the will succumbs to 'ill-temper', becoming 'a malefactor: ... upon all that can suffer it takes revenge for its inability to go backwards'. But this *Widerwille* against time is both hopeless and worryingly reminiscent of that *ressentiment* so characteristic of the slave-consciousness. The alternative (so far) is collapse of the will, bowing to melancholy, affliction and depression. But this too is to adhere to the spirit of *Sklaaven-Moral*, and so could constitute a remedy only for those who (mistakenly) glory in such spiritual malaise. Moreover, this affliction recalls that reaction to the idea of ER indicative of weakness, the kind of reaction found at Z p179: '- and must we not return and run down that other lane out before us, down that long, terrible lane - must we not return eternally?'

The only real remedy to the will-as-prisoner is the will-as-liberator, or the will-as-creator. This comes in two further stages, which are summarised at EH p306 - 'the tremendous, unbounded saying Yes and Amen'. Although this appears to be one unitary commitment, in fact it adverts to two different acts of the will. Saying 'Amen' or 'So be it' is merely an act of acceptance, which is compatible with Panglossian fatalism. It is, in effect, only to renounce revenge, and in itself seems not inconsistent with melancholy and regret. The crucial fifth stage of the ER idea transforms bare acceptance into positive affirmation, *Ja-sagend*. This is an act of the 'creative' will. The precise nature of this creativity is, however, problematic, and can seem to lead to absurdity. For example, Zarathustra declares at p163 - 'All "It was" is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful chance - until the creative will says to it: "But I willed it thus!"' Taken at face value, this must be absurd. The causal history of events cannot be rewritten by an act of will subsequent to those events. Taken literally, the claim 'I willed it thus' could make sense only assuming some kind of

solipsism. At times, indeed, it seems almost as if Zarathustra lends credence to the notion of an omnipotent individual will: "Better no god, better to produce destiny on one's own account, better to be a fool, better to be God oneself!" (p274). But that this is *not* to be taken literally is self-evident: both the word "fool", and the fact that these words occur within a prose-poem, bear witness to that. Rather, Zarathustra's statements and exhortations are meant to be expressive of an attitude, an ethical resilience and triumphalism.

So far, what has been said has been broadly compatible with the fostering of *amor fati*. The sixth and final stage is distinctive of the ER, in that it is prospective: "But I will it thus! Thus shall I will it!" In the context of future action, guided by the exigencies of the ER, producing destiny "on one's own account" comes to make sense. In this way Nietzsche links the idea of ER with that of a "personal providence", which is designed to counter that of a divine providence - just as he links it to personal affirmation of one's own will, rather than affirmation of God's will. Thus the ER serves to highlight the centrality of Will and atheism to Nietzsche's ethics. How it bolsters his atheism deserves more attention, however. To a large extent, the ER, in virtue of being *eternal*, is *eo ipso* an attack on the Christian notion of "eternal life". Nietzsche undermines this notion by picturing eternal life not as a reward or punishment consequent upon behaviour in this life, but as this life itself (which will constitute its own reward or punishment). This is at one with his portrayal of heaven as a grand metaphysical cheat, imposing joylessness on people for no identifiable reason: "... one needs eternal life, so as to be eternally indemnified in the "kingdom of God" for this earthly life "in faith, in love, in hope" ... How indemnified?" (GM I 15).

Thus the ER is unequivocal about earthly life being the only one available. That Nietzsche intended it as the counter-ideal to Christian eschatology he makes explicit: "[Think] what effect the doctrine of eternal damnation has had!... *This* life is your eternal life" (*Werke*, XII, 119/126). This position is also an implicit attack on Schopenhauer's idea that "If [life]

were something possessing value in itself, something which ought unconditionally to exist, it would not have non-being as its goal' (On the Vanity of Existence, sec. 6). This is clearly anathema to Nietzsche, who was shown above to be hostile to any teleological accounts of existence which did not see such teleology as wholly within the control of individuals. That is, Nietzsche is insistent that the meaning of life can derive only from within life, and not be imposed on it from outside. And this view also informs Nietzsche's reworking of theological accounts of justification and redemption. At EH p308, he says that Zarathustra 'says Yes to the point of justifying, of redeeming even all of the past'. If an individual embraces the ER, he will be justified by that very act, in that he will have proved his strength and fearlessness. This account is confirmed at GM I,12, where Nietzsche describes the 'happy, mighty, triumphant' (and therefore *fearful*) man as '... a man who justifies *man*, ... a ... redeeming lucky hit on the part of man for the sake of which one may still *believe in man!*'

Such a man, one able to withstand the strictures of the ER, is justified by and in himself because he does not recognise any external authority which can bestow justification on or withhold justification from him. Likewise he is redeemed, or rather is his own self-redeemer: 'To redeem the past and to transform every "It was" into an "I wanted it thus!" - that alone do I call redemption! ... Has the will become its own redeemer and bringer of joy? Has it unlearned the spirit of revenge and all teeth-gnashing?' Nietzsche's point once again is that the ER presupposes atheism, and that if this is grasped and accepted whole-heartedly, the rest will no doubt follow - i.e. redemption through the ER. Thus he often associates redemption and the abandonment of religious belief. For instance, at GS 109 he describes a de-deified nature as a 'newly redeemed nature'; and at WM 1052 he refers to Christ as 'a signpost to seek redemption from life', whereas Dionysus is seen to constitute 'a promise of life ... [which] will be eternally reborn and return again from destruction'. Self-redemption can occur only within this life, and its instrument is the ER: I am redeemed in this life through accepting it as my only life and affirming it as such.

All this confirms the rôle of the ER as a promoter of atheism, something Nietzsche recognised explicitly (‘In place of "metaphysics" and religion, the theory of ER’ - WM 462). This much has already been established. But the passage ends by saying ‘... (this as a means of breeding and selection)’. This points to the ER’s further rôle as a promoter of the Nietzschean values of strength and power. In order to endure the idea of ER, an individual will require above all strength of purpose and power of will. Thus Nietzsche writes at WM 1058, ‘The idea of recurrence as a selective principle, in the service of strength...’, and at WM 1053 even envisages the ER as a way of vetting whole peoples (‘the races that cannot bear it stand condemned’). Nietzsche mentions two ways in which the ER promotes strength, which when taken together look contradictory. First he pictures the ER as demanding strength to cope with the renunciation (‘*Entsagung*’) of divine teleology, ‘any reason in what happens, [any] love’ (GS 285). This aspect of the doctrine has been touched on several times already. But he then proceeds with a different analysis, which pictures such renunciation as putting a stop to the ‘religious dissipation of powers’, and thereby enhancing one’s depleted strength (he uses the metaphor of a lake which has ceased to be drained). Nevertheless, even if these pictures are mutually exclusive, what they both leave beyond doubt is that Nietzsche intends the ER as no less than a *test* of individuals’ well-constitutedness and psychological fortitude.

This function of the ER, to act not only as a decision criterion for individuals’ actions but also as an impersonal way of assessing such individuals, relies on a prior notion of endurance. People need strength to endure the ER, and the ER is hard to endure because (according to Nietzsche) it represents the truth about existence. And the capacity to assimilate unpalatable truths, as opposed to resting content with comforting errors, is one of Nietzsche’s primary criteria of value. At JGB 39 and WM 1041 he makes this clear: ‘"How much truth can a spirit endure, how much truth does a spirit dare?" - this became for me the real standard of value’. This idea is echoed at GS 110: ‘To what extent can truth endure

incorporation? That is the question; that is the experiment´. So this sheds new light on the ER, which now appears as a vital Nietzschean experiment, formulated in order to test the worth of each individual by seeing whether he can bear the truth of a necessary and recalcitrant existence, without succumbing to the cowardice of error.

Nietzsche also uses the ER to promote `joy´ in existence, although why it should do this at first appears opaque. At Z p244 he has Zarathustra proclaim that `... all joy wants eternity´. He also associates eternity with fecundity: `Oh how should I not lust for eternity and for the wedding ring of rings - the Ring of Recurrence!´ This peculiar association is, I suggest, understandable, if one first grasps Nietzsche´ s views on pain. There is in Nietzsche´ s work a (suppressed) theory that pain is necessary for the existence of pleasure. For example, he speaks of `pain conceived as a tool, as the father of pleasure´ (WM 1060); and at Z p331-2 he makes Zarathustra voice the question, `Did you ever say Yes to one joy? O my friends, then you said Yes to *all woe* as well´. These quotations, which imply a mixture of instrumentalism and determinism, can be usefully related back to the idea of joy and fecundity by a passage from TWI: `all becoming and growing, all that guarantees the future, postulates pain ... For the eternal joy in creating to exist, for the will to life eternally to affirm itself, the `torment of childbirth´ *must* also exist eternally´ (p120). Viewed in this light, Nietzsche´ s tenets that `Pain is not considered an objection to life´ (EH p297) and `not even to its eternal recurrence´ (EH p306) come to seem eminently comprehensible. Pain is seen as a necessary concomitant of joy, and if the ER is primarily concerned with the endurance of pain, then *ipso facto* it will also promote joy. In this way Nietzsche convincingly portrays the ER as part of that body of knowledge and belief called *fröhliche Wissenschaft*, and once more demonstrates its centrality to his `critique of moral values´.

Section two:

Nietzsche versus Kant

As was claimed in the Introduction above, the task of determining the content of Nietzsche's ethical thought is notoriously difficult. The plethora of critical disputes surrounding his thought bears witness to that: interpreters have not only to decide the exact nature of his ethical claims, they have also to decide what they are going to count as such claims in the first place. This prior decision is far from easy given Nietzsche's willingness to change his mind and to experiment with ideas he has no serious intention of endorsing. However, amid this interpretative flux, a few things appear incontrovertible. One of these is the fact that any adequate understanding of Nietzsche's ideas must view them in large part as reactions against earlier ideas (hence the eternal recurrence was seen in chapter one to function largely as an antithesis to the Christian notion of 'eternal life'). His arguments are thus usually best understood as counter-arguments (GM is subtitled 'A Polemic'). Nietzsche's main targets are well known: Christian apologists, German nationalists, Schopenhauer, women. A figure like Wagner was to be exposed to spectacular odium because his former acolyte came to associate him with all the aberrations listed above. Nevertheless, in this section it will be contended that Nietzsche's main philosophical opponent, the writer who inspired his most cogent polemic, was Kant.

Nietzsche's attacks on Kant vary in their degree of explicitness. Some are wholly implicit, and rely on a direct acquaintance with Kant's moral philosophical texts. For example, at Z p291 the king says to Zarathustra: 'Nothing more gladdening grows on earth ... than an exalted, robust will'. This makes implicit reference to the opening of Kant's *Grundlegung*: 'There is no possibility of thinking of anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be regarded as good without qualification, except a *good will*'. Thus Nietzsche adapts Kant's text for his own purposes, those of promoting *fröhliche Wissenschaft* and power in willing, while simultaneously denigrating the premise of Kant's entire moral

project. More explicit is a passage such as the following - '... antinature itself received the highest honours as morality and was fixed over humanity as law and categorical imperative' (EH p332). This attack on Christian morality as 'antinatural' uses Kant's terminology, thereby serving to sully the latter by association with the former (and vice versa - as will be argued shortly). The most unambiguous opposition to Kant's moral theory can be found in a passage like that at GM P3, where Nietzsche declares his own notion of God as 'the father of evil' to be '... that new immoral, or at least unmoralistic "*a priori*" and the alas! so anti-Kantian, enigmatic "categorical imperative"'. The 'alas' in this context indicates perhaps how Nietzsche's antipathy to Kant's moral views went along with a certain teasing respect for the man himself.

What, then, did Nietzsche find objectionable about Kant's moral philosophy? This is a vast question, and in order to make it a manageable one, I propose to tackle it from the point of view of the preceding section - that of the ER. There it was argued that Nietzsche's concept of the ER acted as a converging-point for many of his ethical commitments: to endurance, strength of will, self-sufficiency and militant atheism. It was also claimed that it served to bolster his anti-Kantianism. This claim can now be developed in the light of the above quotations, in which Nietzsche's criticisms of Kant centre on his doctrine of the categorical imperative [CI]. For just as the 'doctrine' of the ER was intended as the antithesis of the Christian doctrine of eternal life, so it was equally intended (I suggest) to be the antithesis of the CI.

The CI, as delineated in the *Grundlegung*, takes five forms (this according to H J Paton in The Categorical Imperative, ch. 5). But the central form it takes, and the one whereby it contrasts most markedly with the ER, is that of 'the formula of universal law'. Kant gives this formula at section 421: 'Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law'. Just as the ER gives Nietzsche's ethical thought coherence and (as it were) *embodies* his ethical commitments, so the CI assumes a central position in Kant's moral

philosophy, and gives expression to his moral theoretical claims. Of course Kant's approach is far more careful and deliberate than Nietzsche's in setting out his doctrine (his precise claim is that reason requires recognition of the CI as enshrining the moral law, that somehow morality is constituted by the CI). But this does not impugn the claim that the ER and the CI play parallel rôles in Nietzsche's and Kant's philosophy respectively.

Such parallelism, however, is purely formal and does not extend to content. Like the ER, the CI is a thought-experiment whose import is exclusively ethical. Like the ER, then, it is prospective and action-guiding in its force (unlike the CI, the ER has a retrospective aspect too). Both thought-experiments require an agent to consider his actions in the light of a mere possibility, and to derive ethical conclusions from such consideration. But here the similarities end. For whereas the ER asks the individual to envisage the eternal recurrence of his actions, the CI asks him to envisage their *universal occurrence*. Thus these two conceptions are crucially and instructively distinct. The Kantian agent asks himself whether he could recommend his (potential) action to others; the Nietzschean agent asks himself whether he could recommend his potential (or former) action to - *himself*. In this way the ER and CI push the agent concerned in very different directions. As was argued in the previous chapter, the ER can equally be taken as posing the question, 'Can I *bear* to recommend this to myself?'; likewise, the CI could be reconstructed in the form of the following question - 'Can I *bear* to recommend this to others?' As is plain from such a reconstruction, the kind of endurance invoked by the two conceptions is wholly disparate: the ER appeals to psychological fortitude, and the CI to some form of social conscience. The foundations of such radically different appeals, and their exact provenance, will be discussed shortly.

For the moment, a brief recapitulation of the contrast between the ER and the CI is perhaps in order. The ER constitutes a quintessentially Nietzschean reworking of Kant's CI. The CI requires agents to concern themselves with the lives of others, even if it does not specify the nature of

such concern. 'Other agents must be taken into account' is its basic premise: this could be called *bare concern*. The ER also requires one to be concerned with the lives of others - where those very lives are in fact one's own, according to the notion of temporal succession contained in the thought-experiment. (It is in this ethical twist, whereby the realm of one's concern is vastly extended and then immediately shrunk, that the great humour of the ER surely lies). In other words, the ER presents (what appears to be) a realm of other selves as of vital concern to me, while simultaneously showing the boundaries of such a realm to lie within myself. So where the ER diverges from the CI is in picturing one's self as the sole locus of ethical concern: I am concerned about my future selves in virtue of their being *mine*.

Lest this contrastive analysis sound too hostile to the ethical implications of the ER, now is the right time to consider problems engendered by the CI. Reference was made above to Kant's invoking the idea of 'bare concern' about others, this idea being implicit within the CI itself. But this is misleading. For Kant clearly assumes a far more substantive kind of concern than that, one which goes beyond a mere recognition of what Wiggins calls 'alterity'⁵, or what Nagel describes as 'the reality of others'⁶. In fact he assumes the kind of concern for others the concomitants of which are a tendency to self-denial and the eschewal of 'mere inclination' or 'interest'. The question arises, therefore, whether Kant can legitimately make such an assumption within the terms of the CI - that is, without appealing to a kind of moral concern which has its roots outside the formula of universal law. For it seems inadmissible for universalisability to serve as a sufficient guide to the morality or immorality of practical maxims, given a Kantian understanding of morality. For instance, the maxim 'If I wish to take a mistress, I shall take a mistress' appears eminently transmutable into 'All married men ought to be allowed

⁵ *Universalisability, Impartiality, Truth* in Needs, Values, Truth

⁶ The Possibility of Altruism

to take a mistress´, given certain moral premises. But such a universal law would be anathema to Kant. So it seems that in order for universalisation to function as Kant wants it to he must assume a particular kind of moral agent as subject of the CI. Namely, a Kantian moral agent, devoted to duty for duty´ s sake, and having a sophisticated grasp of the content of that duty. But his original claim was that the CI was sufficient unto itself, that is, its efficacy did not rest on a whole set of supplementary moral criteria being met concerning both actions and agents.

It is possible to make other criticisms of the CI, such that it seems to be rendered morally vacuous by maxims whose scope is highly specific⁷, or that it is wholly dependent on the form of words used in each maxim (and thus that moral tight corners can be avoided by redescription)⁸. However, the key problem is surely that the universalising of ´immoral´ maxims does not necessarily lead to what Kant calls ´contradictions in willing´, and that the CI seems to presuppose that which it purports to bring about. This circularity was adverted to by Leibniz - ´The rule, far from serving as a standard, will need a standard´ (in Wiggins, Needs, Values, Truth p81) - and well-described by F H Bradley: ´To get from the form of duty to particular duties is impossible. The particular duties must be taken for granted ...´ (Ethical Studies p156)⁹. Thus it seems that a simple rational formula, that of the universalising CI, cannot do the complex moral work Kant wants it to do.

⁷ Such that they can apply only to a few people, or perhaps even only to oneself

⁸ This problem is identified by GEM Anscombe - ´[Kant´s] rule about universalisable maxims is useless without stipulations as to what shall count as a relevant description of an action with a view to constructing a maxim about it´ (from Modern Moral Philosophy, in The Is-Ought Question, p176)

⁹ Wittgenstein was perhaps making a similar point in On Certainty, p139 - ´Not only rules, but also examples are needed for establishing a practice. Our rules leave loop-holes open, and the practice has to speak for itself´

This can be brought out by looking at twentieth century attempts to defend the CI. Such defence generally takes the form of adumbrating those 'particular duties' which Bradley claims 'must be taken for granted'. For example, Mackie (in his Ethics) posits a three 'stage' universalisation process, whereby one progresses from 'putting oneself in another person's place' to 'taking account of different tastes and rival ideals'. Yet, by his own admission, such stages are by no means inherent in any bare universalising formula (such as Kant proposed at G 421). Instead, they introduce items of practical wisdom which guide the moral consciousness to a pre-determined moral end *independently* of the universalisability requirement. This phenomenon is encountered again in an article by Barbara Herman (Journal of Philosophy, 1985), who is a committed Kantian (in contrast to Mackie). She claims that 'a Kantian account of moral judgement will not work without rules of moral salience' [RMS]. These she defines as 'rules that ... make up the substantive core of [an] agent's conception of himself as a moral agent', which are revealed to him through 'practical tasks' within a community of moral agents. Such a moral agent will develop a 'structure of moral sensitivity ... [to the] moral marks of ... actions, circumstances, etc.' In this way it appears that Herman places all significant moral content in the RMS, and none in the universalisability requirement. And yet she clearly does view the latter as performing an important function over and above that of the former: '[RMS provide] the descriptive moral categories that permit the formulation of maxims suitable for assessment by the CI procedure of judgement'. Nevertheless, she does not view the 'CI procedure' as implicated in cases of moral ignorance or negligence: these lie '... at the level of the RMS, and not in the agent's willing'. So either way the CI's moral 'product' seems entirely contingent upon the character of an individual's own RMS, thereby undermining the rôle assigned to the CI by Kant of providing universal and necessary moral rules.

Nietzsche saw the lacuna in Kant's universalisability thesis, and his pugnacious criticisms of it are acute. At WM 428 he places Kant in a long

line of philosophers determined to 'give reasons' for morality¹⁰, who through such an endeavour, prove that such attempts are 'necessarily sophistical'. At WM 414 he again attacks Kant's scientific rationalism: '... he invented a reason expressly for those cases in which one would not need to bother about reason: namely, when the needs of the heart, when morality, when "duty" speaks'. So Nietzsche's central criticism here of Kant's moral philosophy appears to be that it evidenced an arguing from, rather than an arguing towards moral conclusions. He expresses this by saying that Kant had a '*moral* origin' (WM 410), or more damningly that 'Kant falsified in his "morality" his inner psychological tendency' (WM 424) - which tendency, no doubt, had been shaped by his Pietist upbringing.

Notwithstanding Nietzsche's pertinent criticisms of that moral philosophy with the CI at its heart, his own version of the CI - the '*Nietzschean imperative*' of ER - can now be seen perhaps to be equally vulnerable to rational objection. This is because it too rests on certain assumptions about individuals and their relation to the world which are morally tendentious. That is, as was argued in the previous chapter, the thought-experiment of ER was designed to test individuals' psychological strength by confronting them with the prospect of eternal return. And this was seen to be an ethical challenge, such that anyone who could meet it would *ipso facto* receive the Nietzschean accolade of nobility of spirit. It was given this picture of the working of the ER that Nietzsche called it the '*highest formula of affirmation*' (EH p295). But nevertheless it could fulfil this function only given the validity of two basic presuppositions: first, that existence was necessarily predicated on a substantial amount of pain and hardship; and second, that the human capacity to overcome these was very limited. The weakness of the ER as an ethical challenge, then, lies in the fact that both these presuppositions are contingent.

Thus the problematic of the ER seems to be this: at first it was taken

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By which I take it he means philosophers who claim that moral action has a sufficient basis in rational formulae

for granted that those who affirmed it would necessarily be of the species of the ethically heroic and triumphant; but now it appears possible that the mediocre and the failed are also capable of such affirmation. That is, it is possible to envisage the mundane man, the man who (by Nietzsche's lights) is of no account, affirming his actions, precisely in virtue of his lack of spiritual grandeur, his incapacity for spiritual crisis. Another deleterious possibility is the eternal recurrence of the slave consciousness, possessed by the kind of individual who affirms pain on moral-theological grounds (to do with the value of suffering); or the return of the frivolous and ethically shallow man, who embraces life rather like a child who wants to go on a ride over and over again. Moreover, if the ER is understood as a global thesis, as more than an ethical thought-experiment, then the eternal recurrence of the 'small man' becomes no longer a possibility, but a necessity. And this causes difficulties, because it undermines Zarathustra's (and - *in propria persona*-Nietzsche's) distinction between 'necessary' and 'superfluous' individuals. 'Superfluous' individuals are portrayed as congeneric with the 'many-too-many', the 'rabble', i.e. the Nietzschean damned; 'necessary' individuals are prototypes of the *Übermensch* ('Great human beings are necessary, the epoch in which they appear is accidental', TWI p107). But, in the light of the ER, the superfluous are made to appear necessary - and this leads Zarathustra into the seeming absurdity of claiming that some people are perforce 'more necessary' than others. So it seems that the doctrine of ER has implications which could be taken as militating against the whole tenor of Nietzsche's ethical thought¹¹.

However, despite the lacunae which are definitely present within both

¹¹ ' "The man of whom you are weary, the little man, recurs eternally" The greatest all too small! - that was my disgust at man! And eternal recurrence even for the smallest! that was my disgust all existence' (Z p236);

' But I once asked, and my question almost stifled me: what, does life have need of the rabble, too?

Are poisoned wells necessary, and stinking fires and dirty dreams and maggots in the bread of life?

Not my hate but my disgust hungrily devoured my life!' (Z p121)

the ER and the CI, neither doctrine is irredeemable. Much can be salvaged from both conceptions. First, the ER. The eternal recurrence of the 'small man' is accounted for by Nietzsche using his further idea of 'the great economy of the whole'. This idea resembles that outlined in the previous section, whereby pain is necessary for pleasure (according to a relation of mutual dependency). Nietzsche explicates this notion of a total ethical 'economy' at TWI p56: 'that economy in the law of life ... derives advantage even from the repellent species of the bigot, the priest, the virtuous man - what advantage? - but we ourselves, we immoralists, are the answer to that...' Given this understanding, which pictures the 'ascending line of life' as dependent on and benefitting from the 'descending', the supposed flaws of the ER are made to look like virtues. Thus at EH p343 Nietzsche can go so far as to declare: 'Even Christianity becomes necessary: only the highest form, the most dangerous, the one that was most seductive in its No to life, provokes its highest affirmation - me'.

Therefore the 'little man' is given a useful rôle, and his existence assumes an (albeit instrumental) value. Perhaps the real strength of the ER, though, lies in the strength of its ethical assumptions, despite the criticisms of them made above. That existence does entail hardship and pain seems reasonable, as does the assumption that the weak and *décadent* will on that account be incapable of either reconciliation to or affirmation of their lives. That is, the ER will serve as an adequate guide to who, in Nietzsche's terms, is noble or base, strong or weak, healthy or sick. Similarly, the moral assumptions which Kant puts great weight on in his use of the CI are not implausible. Given his tendency to identify rational egoism as the main threat to moral action, the CI serves his purposes well, in that its requirement of universalisability stops the rational egoist in his tracks by forcing him to view himself as patient as well as agent (and thereby as victim of his own proposed course of action). In this respect, as a way of giving force to the question 'How would you like it?', the CI is a powerful weapon in Kant's hands, given his prior understanding of the mainspring of immorality.

Furthermore, the CI is by no means free-standing within Kant's moral philosophy. It is bolstered and given content by a whole series of supplementary moral rules, precisely those rules which Bradley found lacking in the 'form of duty': namely hypothetical imperatives, the principle of autonomy, imperfect duties to oneself, etc. Indeed it seems that Kant's system bears witness to the truth of the claim that in order to will *qua noumenon*, one will already have to have undergone a process of moral formation. Thus it could be maintained that there is an insight implicit in Kant's moral philosophy, even if it is not *his* insight, that moral action necessarily presupposes membership of the 'moral realm'. That is, the rational moral agent cannot become that which he is by following some rational procedure, and moreover a moral disposition is not something created *de novo* by considering one's behaviour in the light of a rational formula. If these insights can be attributed to Kant, then his achievement is even greater than was supposed.

But they cannot reasonably be attributed to him. Rather, such insights are consequent upon consideration of the weaknesses of his moral system, not its actual content. This kind of consideration is evident in Nietzsche's work, albeit sporadic and mocking. Indeed, it seems right to say that, given the moral and ethical purposes of both philosophers, the ER achieves Nietzsche's far more successfully than the CI achieves Kant's. Nietzsche openly admits the rationale of the ER (that it is designed as an ethical sorting mechanism, dividing the strong from the weak); and he fully realises its corollaries, as is clear from Zarathustra's disgust. Kant, by contrast, does not openly admit the moral presuppositions of the CI, and evidently expects the formula of universal law to be morally far more substantial than it is; furthermore, he never appears to recognise its shortcomings.

And yet this picture of the relations between the ER and the CI is incomplete in one crucial respect. Although the ER serves Nietzsche's purposes well in the ways mentioned above, this still leaves the question: within what ethical framework do these purposes receive their meaning and

raison d'être? The framework, it seems, is one within which an individual's ethical concerns need not extend beyond himself. The ER makes reference to individual lives, and in such a way that they are understood as ethically discrete entities. There is, in other words, no clear recognition within the formula of ER that 'your life' is intimately connected with the lives of others. There is thus no clear recognition that 'my life' is a life in virtue of being a life amongst others. And this is because all value is seen to lie in endurance and strength, to the extent that other individuals appear to be turned into instruments, useful to the degree that they promote one's strength, and minimise one's weakness.

It is at this juncture that Kant's CI demonstrates its rational superiority. This superiority lies beyond the formula of universal law, in Kant's positing of the doctrine of the end-in-itself: 'Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means' (G 429). Kant posits this 'practical imperative', and claims it is a requirement of 'pure practical reason'. Whether it is, and what such a claim amounts to, are both highly contentious issues. But what such an imperative achieves, together with the universalisability requirement, is the realisation that ethical existence is meaningless when deprived of a social context. And despite the labyrinthine rationalism which characterises a good deal of Kant's moral thinking, this realisation is a vital one, and one (I maintain) never properly gained by Nietzsche. For Nietzsche's ethical vision is, as indicated by the doctrine of ER and beyond it, a profoundly asocial one.

This fact is attested to by his placing all ethical value on the creation of a 'stronger type'. Society is, for Nietzsche, a means to such a type. But it cannot be said to have any real value beyond that. For instance, he claims at GM I 17 that 'The well-being of the majority and the well-being of the few are opposite viewpoints of value'. The possibility that such

viewpoints may coalesce does not seem to be countenanced by Nietzsche¹². And at Z p297, Zarathustra goes further: 'The Superman lies close to my heart, he is my paramount and sole concern - and *not* man: not the nearest, not the poorest, not the most suffering, not the best'¹³. The asocial vision reaches its apotheosis in another passage from Z, shortly after Zarathustra asks '... does life have need of the rabble, too?': 'And like a wind will I one day blow among them and with my spirit take away the breath from their spirit: thus my future will have it'. The problem is that such a future, high on the mountains and away from the 'unclean men', is perforce a barren one. It necessarily precludes any meaningful influence on the part of the Superman, such that his victory must be hollow, and his triumph without object (he triumphs *in vacuo*). Therefore it seems, in sum, that the implied Nietzschean entailment from autarky to autarchy is a far from necessary one. The ethical self-stultification outlined above, moreover, I would argue, has its seeds in the ethical priorities implicit in the ER. And even if Kant's CI cannot be held to constitute the basis of a coherent moral system, it does at least bear witness to the fact that individual and society form an ethical symbiosis, and that rather than society being *eo ipso* inimical to the interests of the individual, it sustains him and is the condition of his having a meaningful existence.

¹² 'Self-overcoming is demanded [by morality], *not* on account of the useful consequences it may have for the individual, but so that the hegemony of custom, tradition, shall become evident in despite of the private desires and advantages of the individual: the individual is to sacrifice himself - that is the commandment of morality of custom' (D 9)

¹³ At WM 766 Nietzsche identifies what he calls a 'basic error' - 'to place the goal in the herd and not in single individuals! The herd is a means, no more!'; and to counter what he describes as 'faith in the community as the saviour' (JGB 202), he looks forward to the time when 'society and the morality of custom at last reveal *what* they have simply been the means to: then we discover that the ripest fruit is the *sovereign individual*' (GM II 2)

In the last chapter, Nietzsche's attack on Kant was seen to be aimed at his conception of the categorical imperative [CI]. In particular, it was aimed at two formulations of the CI: the central formulation of universal law, and the second formulation of the end-in-itself. Yet Nietzsche's anti-Kantian polemic goes further and deeper, specifically in his criticism of the third formulation of the CI¹⁴, that of the Autonomy of the Will: 'Never ... act on any maxim except such as can also be a universal law, and hence such as the will can thereby regard itself as at the same time the legislator of universal law' (G 434). This formulation makes it clear that not only is Kant's idea of autonomy wholly compatible with moral action, in fact it is implicit in it. Nietzsche's conception of autonomy, by contrast, is of something wholly at odds with Kantian morality. This is made evident at GM II 2, where Nietzsche asserts that '"autonomous" and "moral" are mutually exclusive'. His reasons for saying this are both complex and crucial to his arguments against Kant's moral philosophy as a whole, but it is only given an understanding of Kant's arguments concerning autonomy that a proper assessment of those reasons becomes possible.

Before trying to establish the precise content of Kant's notion of *Die Autonomie des Willens*, what seems beyond doubt is that he took it to play a pivotal rôle in his moral philosophy. At G 440 he calls it the 'Supreme Principle of Morality', and at KPV 33 he says that 'The autonomy of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws and of the duties conforming to them'. So Kant deliberately presents moral autonomy as foundational within his metaphysics of morals, as the linchpin of his system. Likewise he describes the concept of freedom (in the preface to KPV) as the 'keystone of the whole architecture of the system of pure reason and even of speculative reason'. Why this should be so remains obscure so long as

¹⁴ As derived from the *Grundlegung* by H J Paton (The Categorical Imperative, ch.5)

autonomy of the will is not understood as deriving its analytical purpose from (what Kant thought was) the vicious nature of its opposite, heteronomy of the will.

Moral heteronomy is condemned at G 441 as 'the source of all spurious principles of morality'. Such principles are spurious, Kant contends, because the mode of their generation is illicit: they are designed as means of attaining certain objects of volition. That is, their rationale is wholly instrumental in nature. They are practical ways of achieving particular ends, and as such may be based on mere 'incentive', 'interest' or desire for satisfaction. For Kant these constitute (at best) insufficient grounds, or (at worst) outright immoral grounds for action - and this is testified to (he claims) by the fact that they could never be transformed into categorical imperatives, only hypothetical imperatives. As he puts it at G 441, 'The moral [categorical] imperative must therefore abstract from every object to such an extent that no object has any influence at all on the will, so that practical reason (the will) ... may ... show its commanding authority as the supreme legislation'.

Kant's delineation of heteronomous willing and its injurious consequences can seem obscurantist, and this is because it occurs within a complex web of mutually-supporting and multi-layered reasonings. But fundamentally his condemnation of heteronomy rests on a strong claim about origination: the moral law is moral in virtue of being derived from pure rationality, it is '...unconditionally commanded as a law without borrowing anything from experience' (KPV 31). The heteronomous willer must accordingly have impure motives, in that his principles always 'borrow' from experience; his actions are rooted in the 'sensuous' rather than the 'supersensuous' world, in 'natura ectypa' as opposed to 'natura archetypa' (KPV 43). Thus Kant's dichotomy between the 'pure world of the understanding' and 'sensuous nature' informs a parallel dichotomy between 'spontaneous', free causal action and determined, natural causality. The latter is 'alien' to the rational will, but perforce the heteronomous will is subject to such determination. Therefore Kant claims

at G 444 that 'The law of nature under discussion is always merely heteronomy of the will; the will does not give itself the law, but a foreign impulse gives the law to the will'.

There is much to argue with here. To begin with, although the dichotomies Kant posits are thought-provoking and even attractive, they appear tendentious in the extreme and dubiously monolithic. In the conclusion to KPV, Kant claims that '... we may, in repeated experiments on common sense, separate the empirical from the rational, exhibit each of them in a pure state, and show what each by itself can accomplish'. Yet it seems likely that such a neat separation is illusory, so that 'each by itself' could accomplish nothing - this seems inevitable, at least, in the case of the 'pure understanding'. Even allowing such a rigid separation for the sake of argument, there appears no reason *ex hypothesi* for holding that desires and inclinations *ei ipsi* are immaterial to the moral law ('... desires and inclinations ..., because they rest on physical causes, do not of themselves agree with the moral law, which has an entirely different source', KPV 84); or for assenting to the concomitant thesis that the 'law of morals' shows itself 'most notably' in suffering and self-abnegation (KPV 156).

All these specific objections are, in the end, reducible to one central objection to Kant's form of argumentation: he derives gratuitous moral conclusions from a metaphysically suspect theory of causality. The radical autonomy he ascribes to the rational will does not seem necessarily to entail moral action in accordance with the categorical imperative and for the sake of duty alone. That is, even if the principle of autonomy is granted, namely that the spontaneous causal action of a free will must be in accordance with self-imposed law, it does not follow that this law must be a *moral* one, if 'moral' here is intended to have fully-fledged Kantian content. Paton, then, is right in judging that '... for Kant, we are free so far as we are capable of obeying the moral law' (The Categorical Imperative, p214), but this begs the question of *why* autonomous willing is so intimately connected with moral agency, and on what grounds transcendent^{tal} freedom of the will

(`independent of all empirical conditions´) entails the willing of universal law.

No clear answer seems to be forthcoming. The same argumentative *impasse* appears to have been reached as that in the last chapter, where the universalising categorical imperative was seen to bear a merely contingent relation to moral maxims, such that it could be said equally to sanction varieties of immoralism. That is, the formal premises contained within the imperative of Autonomy cannot generate the moral conclusions Kant wants them to. The difference, however, between this present *impasse* and the former is that this time Kant shows himself to be highly aware of his ineluctable slide into the fallacy of *petitio principii*. This awareness is implicit in a passage towards the end of the *Grundlegung* (453), which is remarkable for its lucid diagnosis of the unbridgeable gap between rational formula and moral import. It thus seems worth quoting *in extenso*: `... there might be a hidden circle involved in our inference from freedom to autonomy, and from this to the moral law - this is to say that we had perhaps laid down the idea of freedom only for the sake of the moral law in order subsequently to infer this law in its turn from freedom, and that we had therefore not been able to assign any ground at all for this law but had only assumed it by begging a principle which well-disposed souls would gladly concede us but which we could never put forward as a demonstrable proposition´.

This line of criticism, both succinct and penetrating, looks to have devastating consequences for Kant´s formula of Autonomy. In short, it seems unanswerable. But Kant remains undaunted, and does proceed to give himself an answer: `But now we see that when we think of ourselves as free, we transfer ourselves into the intelligible world as members and know the autonomy of the will together with its consequence, morality´. This abrupt retort, however, which serves to conclude a whole section of argument, carries far less weight than the criticism which precedes it. By comparison, it strikes the reader more as a species of *ex cathedra* assertion than of reasoned, sequential argument. This is because it appeals *faute de*

mieux to some form of epistemic intuition (‘... now we see ... know ...’), and makes a hurried transition from premises to conclusion by means of a connective (‘together with’) which is capable of mere syndesis but is incapable of doing any explanatory work. So it seems that the principle of Autonomy, which Kant lauded as the ‘supreme principle of morality’, bears no necessary relation to morality as he understands it.

Nietzsche saw that Kant’s conception of autonomous willing led him into *aporia* (or the closest to *aporia* that Kant ever got). For Nietzsche this eventuality was hardly surprising, though, given that he took Kant’s idea of autonomy to be radically misconceived. Kant had introduced autonomy as a kind of liberation from the ‘sensible world’, a freedom from servitude to the empirical realm. But he had gone on to use it as a means of re-imposing a form of subjection, namely subjection to the moral law. Hence the ostensible paradox invoked by Paton (who nevertheless does not represent it as such) that ‘... for Kant we are free so far as we are capable of *obeying* the moral law’ [my italics]. For Nietzsche this notion of freedom did not partake only of an insidious paradoxicality, it constituted what he saw as the antithesis of true freedom. True freedom was that belonging to the ‘sovereign individual’, described at GM II 2 as ‘... like only to himself, *liberated* again from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral’. In other words, any Kantian attempts to reconcile the claims of morality with those of autonomy were doomed, indicative merely of a prior moral agenda. Autonomy had, as it were, acted as an excuse for Kant to assert his moral doctrines more vigorously - and Nietzsche was determined to reassign it to its proper place within the ethical sphere.

What was that proper place? Nietzsche takes literally Kant’s definition of autonomy given at G 440 - ‘Autonomy of the will is the property that the will has of being a law to itself’. What he rejects is the qualification which Kant adds to this definition in parentheses: ‘... (independently of any property of the objects of volition)’. For whereas Kant sees autonomy as being undermined by any reference to ‘empirical conditions’, Nietzsche sees it (I suggest) as being undermined by contact

with *other wills*. That is, while Kant portrays 'foreign impulses' and 'alien causes' as deriving from the world of 'sensuous nature', Nietzsche understands them as deriving from the world of other agents. Thus Nietzsche's conception of autonomy could be reconstructed by changing Kant's formulation so: 'Autonomy of the will is the property that the will has of being a law to itself (independently of the wills of others)'. And in this way it becomes clear why Kant's notion of autonomy is so inimical to Nietzsche - because it demands that others' wills be given consideration, indeed that autonomy be founded on such consideration. This can be seen within the imperative of Autonomy: 'So act that your will can regard itself at the same time as making universal law through its maxim'. Such universal law, whether it be made or obeyed, *must* involve giving due weight to the will of others. And therefore Nietzsche is bound to reject Kant's idea of autonomy, given that it presupposes a prior acceptance of that morality of other-directedness enshrined in the universalising CI.

Before attempting to establish the exact content of Nietzsche's idea of autonomy, it is perhaps worth dealing with two objections he raises against the doctrine of universalisability, that which is assumed in Kant's imperative of autonomy. Both objections are put forward at GS 335, although they occur elsewhere as well. The first one runs as follows: 'What? You admire the categorical imperative within you? This "firmness" of your so-called moral judgement? This "unconditional" feeling that "here everyone must judge as I do"? Rather admire your selfishness at this point. And the blindness, pettiness, and frugality of your selfishness. For it is selfish to experience one's own judgement as a universal law'. This passage could plausibly be understood as an attack on Kant's CI of autonomous action. Yet I do not think Nietzsche meant it to be a serious attack, on the grounds that it seriously misrepresents Kantian autonomy. This is because Kant never presents his imperative as allowing an imposition of one's personal preferences upon others. On the contrary, the CI is intended to make such an imposition morally unthinkable. The CI is seen by Kant as a thought-experiment whereby judgements cannot be universalised

merely in virtue of being 'one's own', but rather on account of their meeting various external criteria - such as being purely rational, willed in a 'kingdom of ends', etc. (the fact that these criteria may be question-begging surely does not impugn the present point). Not only, then, does Nietzsche here misconstrue the content of Kant's principle of Autonomy, he also indulges in what sounds like forced and disingenuous rhetoric about 'selfishness', which seems out of place and to have more in common with opinions expressed in KPV (e.g. '...selfishness, natural and active in us even prior to the moral law, is restricted by the moral law to agreement with the law', 73).

The objection outlined above is misguided, therefore, and cannot properly amount to more than an argumentative *bêtise*, because Nietzsche treats the imperative of Autonomy as a means of promoting 'self-conceit', rather than a means of quashing it ('... the moral law strikes down self-conceit', KPV 73). He chooses to forget that Kantian autonomy is subject to severe restrictions, the kind of restrictions which inspired him to resurrect what he took to be a genuine autonomy of the will. A more serious objection to the doctrine of universalisability, however, is encountered later on in GS 335, one which maintains that the very notion of universalisation depends on inadmissible premises: '... there neither are nor can be actions that are the same; ... every action that has ever been done was done in an altogether unique and irretrievable way, and ... this will be equally true of every future action; ... as one contemplates or looks back upon any action at all, it is and remains impenetrable'. This thesis is intriguing, but seems difficult to quantify. It appears to be claiming that an 'ultimate individuality' attaches to every action, such that no relation of identity could possibly hold between one action and another. This is a strong claim, and one that requires justification.

What could be taken as justifying Nietzsche's claim might come in the form of a doctrine of causal opacity. That is, we are more or less ignorant concerning the causal genesis of our actions, and we are thus forced to conclude that '... the law of their mechanism is indemonstrable'.

Given this state of affairs, it is reasonable to hold that 'all actions are essentially unknown' (D 116) or even 'unknowable' (GS 335), and that therefore any identity-claims made about them must be wholly unwarrantable. But this line of thought relies very heavily on the assumption that the character of an action is wholly determined by its causal history. And this is not, I think, intuitively obvious. There seems no *prima facie* reason for saying that one 'action' could not admit of more than one causal history, or that two 'actions' could not have causal antecedents which were the same. Actions are 'picked out' independently of the details of their causality and, moreover, we do talk happily of the 'same actions' being performed by different agents and by the same agent. No alternatives seem available (indeed Nietzsche's picture appears to licence the idea that no individual could do the same thing twice, or even once - that is, how on this picture is 'an action' identifiable at all?).

Nietzsche's claim here may be a more modest one, to do with the fallibility of our interpretations of action ('Actions are *never* what they appear to us to be!', D 116). But it seems to be a more stringent hypothesis, and one with wider implications. These implications are vital in that they touch on the nature of Nietzschean autonomy. Yet they cannot be assessed before a fuller understanding of this autonomy is reached, and it is therefore to the task of attaining the latter that I now turn.

As was argued earlier, the Kantian rational agent is as he is because he obeys the universal legislation of the moral law; and he is an autonomous agent in so far as he can at the same time view himself as a legislator of that law. But Nietzsche understands this, it seems quite reasonably, as a paltry kind of autonomy. What does such autonomy amount to, he maintains, if it is more or less synonymous with subjecting oneself to an external moral law? At this point it is necessary to clarify Nietzsche's attitude to *law* as such. For Nietzsche law is something imposed from outside, almost always to the detriment of the individual, and detrimental because it issues from a source external and alien to the individual. This picture (however questionable) is implicit in his description of the

development of Christianity, whereby ‘... antinature itself received the highest honours as morality and was fixed over humanity as law and categorical imperative’ (EH p332). Similarly, he holds that when you subscribe to such a law, ‘you are its *victim*’ (GS 21); moreover, at GS 117 he says that it is characteristic of contemporary individuals that they ‘... experience law and submission as compulsion and loss’. So law is equated with submission, and as such is condemned by Nietzsche.

But this is true only to the extent that Nietzsche views law as *externally* imposed. If it is imposed *internally*, i.e. by the individual himself, then it receives Nietzsche’s approbation. For this sort of imposition is precisely the corollary of Nietzschean autonomy, which enjoins the individual will to be ‘... a law to itself’ (in Kant’s words, but not according to their sense). Thus submission to one’s own law is the mark of autonomy for Nietzsche, the kind of submission characteristic of the *herrliche Mensch*: ‘It will be the strong and domineering natures that enjoy their finest gaiety in ... constraint and perfection under a law of their own’ (GS 290). Accordingly Zarathustra exhorts his audience to embrace the antithesis of that ‘antinatural’ law which was ‘fixed over humanity’ by Christian teaching: ‘Can you furnish yourself with your own good and evil and hang your own will above yourself as a law? Can you be judge of yourself and avenger of your law?’ (Z p89).

This notion of self-judgement is of course a natural consequence of Nietzschean autonomy - if I am capable of issuing my own laws, then I am equally capable of enforcing them (or rather, I am the *only* person capable of such - no one else (perhaps) can be said to be privy to my laws). It is this picture which informs Zarathustra’s discussion of self-discipline at Z p137: ‘All living creatures are obeying creatures ... he who cannot obey himself will be commanded’. So Zarathustra’s ideal is the person who issues commands and imperatives to himself, and obeys them - an ethical microcosm, who transmutes what was an inter-personal process into an intra-personal process. Thus he declares that this person ‘... must become judge and avenger and victim of his own law’, echoing nicely Nietzsche’s

remark at GS 21 that the law of 'moral virtue' has only *victims*: this time, however, victimisation is seen as justified and commendable. In similar vein Nietzsche supports his idea of a tribunal of the self by reference to Wagner - 'Enough that his life is justified before itself and remains justified' (GS 99). In this way Nietzsche presents 'justification before the self' as the *paradigm*, if not the only true form of justification.

So to re-affirm the contrast between Kant and Nietzsche. For Kant, my autonomy consists in the fact that I obey the universal moral law, the CI, and that I am able to understand myself as *willing* such a law. This willing makes sense only given that others too engage in an identical type of willing, because the object of our wills is a *universal* law. For Nietzsche, by contrast, I am an autonomous agent if and only if I can will my own individual law, my own CI. And the conditions necessary for my doing so make no reference to the will of others, for they too should will their own CIs, independently of my will. Thus he holds up as exemplary the individual who posits 'his own ideal' and who 'derive[s] from it his own law' (GS 143). Such an individual acts in accordance with 'The profoundest laws of preservation and growth', which 'demand ... that each one of us devise *his own* virtue, *his own* categorical imperative' (AC 11). And Nietzsche goes on to say 'A word against Kant as moralist. A virtue has to be our invention, our most personal defence and necessity: in any other sense it is merely a danger'

That Nietzsche characterises his virtues as a form of 'personal defence' against the 'danger' of Kantian virtues is germane to the discussion of autonomy. This is because Nietzsche is committed to the view that 'universal law' and 'individual law' inevitably militate against each other (as was claimed at the end of chapter two), that there is no possibility of their complementing each other. Universal law is merely a means of subjecting the individual, of denying him his rights, even if Kant and his followers did not realise or intend this to be the case. Thus at GS 21 he speaks of the 'moral' virtues as turning the individual into a 'devoted *instrument*' of 'public utility', and hence into a human version

of the 'sacrificial animal'. The praise of such virtue is, then, 'the praise of something that is privately harmful - the praise of instincts that deprive a human being of his noblest selfishness and the strength for the highest autonomy'¹⁵. The 'herd' in their weakness 'obey ... existing law', whereas the 'sovereign individual' creates a law for himself (WM 279), thereby defending himself by means of 'a bolder private morality' (GS 23).

But given the above exegesis of Nietzsche's idea of autonomy, one question must receive an adequate answer: namely, what does it mean to say that an individual follows and administers 'his own law', that he creates his 'own CI', or that he abides by a 'private morality'? For on Kant's understanding, the notion of a 'private CI' is a *contradictio in adiecto*, since the logic of the CI demands that it apply to more than one person. Nevertheless, the idea of a rule of behaviour which only one individual follows is not *prima facie* solecistic. Nietzsche may be adverting to the notion of ethical consistency, the determination to stick to a pattern of action come what may. This kind of determination seems to be what Zarathustra is suggesting at Z p213: 'not good taste, not bad taste, but my taste, which I no longer conceal and of which I am no longer ashamed'. And this is consonant with the anti-universalising gravamen of Nietzschean autonomy, as Zarathustra makes clear - 'But he has discovered himself who says: This is my good and evil: he has silenced thereby the mole and dwarf who says: "Good for all, evil for all"' (Z p212).

So Nietzsche may be advocating a mode of behaviour whereby one styles or gives shape to one's character, such that one does not break any of one's own rules¹⁶. The self-regulating individual will therefore be the

¹⁵ That Nietzsche associated autonomy with strength suggests that the autonomous individual will easily meet the challenge of eternal recurrence

¹⁶ nb GS 290: '*One thing is needful.* - To "give style" to one's character - a great & rare art!' Nehamas places great emphasis on this aspect of Nietzsche's critique, with reason. But, as with the criteria for individual 'lawfulness', the criteria for someone leading an artistically unified or integrated life seem ultimately to rest on

self-vindicating individual. However, the problem with this analysis is that it stipulates that the tribunal of self is the sole tribunal, and that there is no further court of appeal. Even if an individual's 'own laws' are open to scrutiny, he must be their final arbiter. And thus in the final analysis only he can judge whether he has broken his rules or not: this (for Nietzsche) being perfectly legitimate, given the assumption that all that really matters is to be justified in one's 'own eyes' (GS 99). Yet this state of affairs is deeply suspect. For it seems quite possible that any action will be deemed lawful as long as it stems from one individual. Or rather, from one individual who acts authentically, genuinely, autonomously, and thus eschews any influence from external laws: '... being honest in evil is still better than losing oneself to the morality of tradition, ... a free human being can be good as well as evil' (Richard Wagner in Bayreuth p94). That is, lawfulness becomes a matter of individual *fiat*, while the only constraint on action which remains is that it does not entail 'losing oneself' to any 'alien' virtues. Moreover, if actions are 'infinitely individual' (GS 354), as Nietzsche maintained above, then only the particular individual concerned is seen to be capable of judging when his actions contravene his rules, or (more fundamentally) how to characterise his actions and even when to say an action has occurred.

Therefore Nietzsche's idea of autonomy seems to tend towards incoherence, in that it deprives laws and rules of the logical space in which they can function, and thereby renders them (at best) superfluous or (at worst) nonsensical. This conclusion seems warranted by his praise for Napoleon, whose virtue consists in the fact that *everything* he does and says conforms to the 'law of his being' - according, that is, to himself:

'I have the right to answer all accusations against me with an eternal "That's me". I am apart from all the world and accept conditions from nobody. I demand subjection even to my fancies, and people should find it quite natural

when I yield to this or that distraction´
(GS 23)

The point being, I take it, that any `accusation´ of unlawfulness directed at the Nietzschean self-legislator is likely to fail given the nature of Nietzschean autonomy.

In the last chapter it was maintained that, for Kant, what marks out the autonomous agent is that he has a purely rational will; whereas for Nietzsche what is distinctive of the autonomous agent is that he has a purely individual will. And it was claimed that Kant's idea of pure rationality is tendentious in that it is made to import moral notions which are extraneous to rationality (as generally understood), and thus also to autonomy; and that Nietzsche's idea of an individual who follows or breaks his own laws could be accused of incoherence. But what was not tackled was the question of *how* the Kantian agent comes to attain such pure rationality, or how the Nietzschean agent comes to attain his pure individuality. An answer to this question should entail a deeper understanding of Kantian autonomy and Nietzschean autonomy, in that it should explicate the genesis of these latter as described by both philosophers. It will be the task of this chapter, therefore, to arrive at such an answer.

The question outlined above could be reformulated as: what kind of *Bildung* do Kant and Nietzsche take to be most successful at fostering autonomy? Kant for one makes it clear that he believes the connection between moral education and autonomy to be an intimate one: "Practical" or moral training is that which teaches a man how to live as a free being (On Education [OE], *Intro.*). Thus he places the problem of how to educate the young centre-stage, calling it the "... greatest and most difficult problem to which man can devote himself" (OE *Intro.*) - and this because "Man can become man only by education", and "... with education is involved the great secret of the perfection of human nature". Such perfection is, presumably, tantamount to perfect rationality, such that if an ideal system of education were achieved, it would be devoted to the inculcation of purely rational thought and behaviour. How, then, might such a system be realised?

To start with, to use the word 'inculcation' in this context is

question-begging, in that it implies *ab initio* that respect for the moral law and a proper recognition of duty are not wholly natural to children, that no one can take their being rational moral agents for granted. Indeed, it would seem that if the latter could be taken for granted, moral *Erziehung* would lose its *raison d'être*. But Kant equivocates on this issue. At OE 105 he says that 'In teaching a child we must first begin with the law which is in him', and at OE 76 he judges that '... on the whole we should try to draw out [children's] own ideas, founded on reason, rather than to introduce such ideas into their minds'. Consonant with this view is that expressed at OE 78, that '"Maxims" ought to originate in the human being as such'; moreover, in an earlier chapter entitled 'Instruction (Culture)', Kant goes so far as to say that children could learn to walk, swim, and even write by themselves ('The child might invent his own alphabet..., which he would afterwards only have to exchange for other signs' (!), OE 42). However, as will hopefully become clearer, such practical and moral 'innatism' runs counter to the thrust of Kant's thinking about educational development.

This is because Kant adheres to a strong doctrine which could be labelled 'The discreteness of the moral realm'. Alasdair MacIntyre has called this doctrine 'The autonomy of morals' (in Hume on 'Is' and 'Ought', p47)¹⁷, but seeing that we have been discussing the autonomy of *agents*, perhaps it would be safer to avoid this description. What the doctrine maintains is that the realm of the moral is wholly divorced from the realm of the empirical, which is said to include desires, inclinations, feelings, and other 'sensuous' phenomena. Given this dichotomy, young children are perforce excluded from the moral realm, since all they are seen to be capable of are desires, inclinations and feelings. They are, therefore, pre-moral creatures, or (worse) non-moral creatures. And this picture accords with what Kant says at KPV 75: 'In the subject there is no *antecedent feeling* tending to morality; that is impossible, because all feeling is sensuous, and the desires of the moral disposition must be free from every

¹⁷ Perhaps following G. Ryle, Dilemmas p125

sensuous condition´; hence `... no kind of feeling, [even] under the name of a practical or moral feeling, may be assumed as prior to the moral law and as its basis´.

So, for Kant, young children lack rational wills, and consequently are independent of the moral law. And since `Unruliness consists in independence of law´ (OE, intro.), the only way to cope with them is through discipline. Thus Kant insists that the first stage of the educative process must include physical discipline (`At the beginning ... the child must obey blindly´, OE 54). `Talk´ cannot be efficacious, because young children either cannot understand it or are incapable of acting on it (`It is ... useless to talk to a child of generosity, as it is not yet in his power to be generous´, OE 95). Although Kant does sanction what he calls `breaking in´ or `mechanical training´, he also recognises that severe discipline should be eschewed because it encourages an `*indoles servilis*´, just as spoiling a child encourages an `*indoles mercenaria*´ (OE 83). Nevertheless, he never seriously doubts that discipline and punishment constitute a necessary and invaluable part of a young child´s education.

After the initial stage of the educative process, that consisting of `mechanical training´, there follows one of `moral training´. Or as Kant puts it elsewhere in OE, `breaking in´ is superseded by moral `enlightenment´. The question arises, then, of *how* `mechanical constraint´ is replaced by `moral constraint´ - that is, of how the transition from having (quashed) sensuous impulses to having moral dispositions takes place. Kant says that `Children ought not to be full of feeling, but they should be full of the idea of duty´ (OE 98) - but how is such a moral sea change to be effected? For the non-Kantian, surely, this question is relatively easy to answer: he could say that `mechanical training´ is a species of moral training, and that after a while external sanctions are internalised (albeit slowly), such that internal sanctions result. But for the Kantian, this line of thought is illicit, because there is no recognition implicit in it of a division *toto caelo* between the `moral´ and the `sensuous´. That is, it is not consistent with the doctrine of `the discreteness of the moral realm´.

This doctrine affirms the moral law as `... unconditionally commanded as a law without borrowing anything from experience or from any external will´ (KPV 31). Thus `mechanical training´, on this view, cannot be a form of moral training, because it is essential to the former that it `borrow´ *both* from experience *and* from some external will. Kant goes on to confirm his doctrine at KPV 147: `... the disposition from which actions should be done cannot be instilled by any command´, for if it could be, `... most actions would be done from fear, few would be done from hope, none from duty´. In this way he strengthens his doctrine by asseverating that moral actions are peculiarly motivated: an action is moral if and only if it is done from duty. `Mere legality´, the doing of actions in accordance with the moral law, is insufficient. Therefore it follows that `mechanical training´ is automatically excluded from the genus `moral´, because it is constitutive of such training that the trainees involved do *not* act `for the sake of duty´. They act from a variety of motives - fear, hope, the desire to please another, the desire to obtain a particular object. And none of these, for Kant, could be moral motives.

This conception of moral motivation creates difficulties for Kant´s idea of moral education, because it pictures the educative process as consisting of two types of training which are mutually exclusive. That is, it cannot but represent that process as a radically discontinuous one, such that it becomes hard to understand it as a unified process at all. Yet Kant remains adamant in his support of the doctrine of `the discreteness of the moral realm´, precisely that doctrine which opens up a `motivational gap´ in the course of *Erziehung*: `Morality is something so sacred and sublime that we must not degrade it by placing it in the same rank as discipline´ (OE 78); `All will be spoilt if moral training rests upon example, threats, punishments, and so on. It would then be merely discipline. We must see that the child does right on account of his own "maxims", and not merely from habit; and not only that he does right, but that he does it because it is right. For the whole moral value of actions consists in "maxims" concerning the good´ (OE 72).

It is the exhaustiveness of the claim made in the last sentence - 'the whole moral value' - which is remarkable. Moreover, it is an exhaustiveness mirrored in a claim made at KPV 79: 'A maxim is thus morally genuine only when it rests on exclusive interest in obedience to the law'. Here it seems reasonable to doubt whether anyone (let alone a child) could have such an exclusive interest; and, even if such an exclusive interest were possible, whether it could bear any meaningful relation to those 'sensuous' interests prevalent during the initial stage of the educative process. What is not open to doubt is that Kant clearly does think that acting for the sake of the moral law alone is possible. He says that motivation is moral only if it is based on '... representation of a law simply as to its form and not on account of any object of the law' (KPV 80); in other words, it is the 'legislative form' of a law and not its 'material' which is '... the only thing which can constitute a determining ground of the (free) will' (KPV 27). Given this definition of moral motivation, it becomes easier to see why Kant's philosophy of education places so much weight on rules: for example, he suggests schools employ a 'catechism of right conduct' (OE 97), which would contain moral rules (e.g. about paying debts and telling lies) supposed in and of themselves to be motivating; and he reaffirms this putative motivational self-sufficiency at OE 71 - 'It is necessary to have rules for everything which is intended to cultivate the understanding. It is very useful to separate the rules, that the understanding may proceed not merely mechanically, but with the consciousness of following a rule'.

However, while Kant does think 'purely moral' motivation to be possible, he does not think it is comprehensible (in the sense of 'rationally explicable'). He makes this plain at G 460: '... there is for us men no possibility at all for an explanation as to how and why the universality of a maxim as a law, and hence morality, interests us'. Having made this (seemingly momentous) admission, he goes on to assert that, notwithstanding such inexplicability, the moral law just is rationally overriding, '... since it has sprung from our will as intelligence and hence

from our proper self´ (G 461). And he takes *this* mode of explanation to be the best available. No doubt it is the best available, assuming one accepts Kant´s notion that the explanation of moral behaviour is logically independent of all other types of explanation. But if one does not accept this notion, then the *explanans* given at G 461 is likely to be seen as a severe case of *ignotum per ignotius*. For surely it is open to a pupil reading his `catechism of right conduct´ to object that he does not find his `proper self´ to be coextensive with any Kantian moral self, and that therefore he cannot understand as morally motivating the `legislative form´ of the rules contained therein. This objection could be re-expressed in the following way: Kant´s account of moral motivation renders such motivation psychologically unintelligible. Consequently, it becomes very difficult to see how or why children can develop into morally autonomous rational agents, if the latter are motivated in the way Kant says they are.

So Kant´s account of moral motivation has deleterious consequences for his account of moral *Bildung*. He says that `the ideas of duty and law´ must be `developed´ or `formed´ (OE 102, 104), and that they must `come in´ (OE 86) at some stage - but it is hard to grasp the nature of such a process. He does admit the need for `preparatory guidance´ and `leading strings´ in order to found the `pure moral motive´, and to cultivate `genuine moral dispositions´ (KPV 152-3): but he simultaneously undermines the possibility of any such cultivation. For instance, he institutes a complete divorce between happiness and the `moral principle´: the latter `... can be clearly shown only by removing from the drive to ... action everything which men might count as part of happiness´ (KPV 156). Indeed, Kant judges suffering to be central to the moral virtues, which he says can influence people only `in their purity as drives unmixed with any view to welfare, because it is in suffering that they most notably show themselves´ (KPV 156). Accordingly he pictures moral action as foreign to human nature, `... not as a manner of acting which we naturally favour or which we sometime might favour´ (KPV 81): hence it is characteristic of the moral law to humiliate and subject, rather than to be in any way

eudaemonic.

This notable absence of 'leading strings' in Kant's writings finds its apotheosis in his treatment of religion. He puts forward a 'universal' (as opposed to a 'revealed') religion (OE 76), whereby God is reduced to a necessary postulate of pure practical reason, a practical concept 'revealed' by the moral law. That is, he makes religion wholly subordinate to and detachable from the 'moral realm', such that moral education is seen to contain a religious element merely *per accidens*, and not *per se*. Thus he defines religion as '... the law in us, in so far as it derives emphasis from a Law-giver and a Judge above us. It is morality applied to the knowledge of God' (OE 105). Given religion's morally menial status, then, Kant is content that religious education be imparted 'from early youth' (OE 109), and largely as a form of anthropology ('... in order that when [children] see others praying, and so on, they may know to whom they are praying, and why', OE 109). But this degradation of religion completely deprives it of its rationale, and thereby renders it nugatory for the purposes of what was called 'preparatory guidance', or moral cultivation. Therefore once again Kant is seen to rule out a psychologically intelligible source of moral motivation.

If given Kant's account of moral motivation it is hard to see how one could become a moral agent, doing one's duty for duty's sake, then it is not hard to understand the nature of such duty. In short, it is *universal*. That is, my duty is mine in virtue of being that of everyone. And this idea informs Kant's philosophy of education: 'Uniformity can result only when all men act according to the same principles'; education must be based 'on the idea of cosmopolitan universal good' (OE intro.). 'Moral training', Kant says, is directed at 'good ends', which are 'necessarily approved by everyone, and which may at the same time be the aim of everyone' (OE intro.). This emphasis on universality, present both in G and KPV, now receives an educational foundation: education in universal duty will, Kant implies, promote social cohesion. Although he claims that 'All culture begins with the individual', and criticises those rulers who treat their

subjects as instruments in their power, it is clear that maintenance of *society* is Kant's primary educational goal. Thus he says at OE 62: '... though the child may develop his own individuality, he should do so only as a member of society - in a world which must, it is true, be large enough for him, but also for others'. And in similar vein he avers that a child's liberty should be 'perfect', but only to the extent that it is compatible with that of others.

This Millian notion leads Kant to approve of public education, in that it demonstrates the 'limits imposed upon us by the rights of others' (OE intro.). Hence he disapproves of private education, because it fosters 'family failings', and (crucially) neglects 'preparation for the duties of a citizen'. This concern with being a good citizen is reflected in the fact that Kant stresses the importance of 'Discretion' ('Klugheit'), a person's ability to 'conduct himself in society'; and 'Refinement' ('Zivilisierung'), one's mastery of etiquette. So for Kant, it seems, if something like an educational 'ethic' were possible, it would be one of social utility. Thus he states that the law of duty is superior to inclination, because the former '... will be of great use to [children] throughout their life' (OE 82). And his preoccupation with usefulness leads him to make some startlingly blinkered judgements, such as that novels should '... be taken away from children' because they cannot be 'of service' to them 'in real life' (OE 69).

Nothing could be more ruinous to education, in Nietzsche's eyes, than subservience to the requirements of social utility. In the first lecture of The Future of our Educational Institutions [FE], one of his *personae*, referring to his university coterie, remembers with pride '... how little we [were] actuated by thoughts of utility ...How useless we were!' (pp31-2). The kind of usefulness Nietzsche has in mind is clearly related to worldly advancement - and thus he decries '... the all too frequent exploitation of youth by the State, for its own purposes - that is to say, so that it may rear useful officials as quickly as possible' (FE p31). So Nietzsche sets himself against precisely that universal duty which was lauded by Kant, that 'levelling' rationale, whereby '... individuality is reproved and rejected by

the teacher in favour of an unoriginal decent average´ (FE II). For Nietzsche takes it as self-evident that if duty is universal, then everyone must be capable of fulfilling it. And accordingly, if everyone is capable of satisfying the goal of education, then education must be pitched at a dispiritingly mediocre level (or worse). This is surely the force of what Zarathustra says at Z p77: `I call it the state where everyone, good and bad, is a poison-drinker´. In other words, state education `democratises´ what Nietzsche calls `the rights of genius´ (FE I p34) - and this state of affairs is unacceptable. The crux of Nietzsche´s point is that `... only an exceedingly small number of people are destined for a true course of education´, and that therefore `The education of the masses cannot ... be our aim; but rather the education of a few picked men for great and lasting works´ (FE III). Thus it seems that for Nietzsche, `universal education´ amounts to a contradiction in terms.

If German educational institutions are ineluctably devoted to the dictates of Reichism, then it follows (given the set of value-judgements above) that they ought to have no future at all. All efforts must instead be devoted to the fostering of geniuses, or what Nietzsche calls `original men´ in Schopenhauer as Educator [Sch] (p174), or in his later writings `higher men´. And this assorts with what he claims elsewhere. For instance, at Sch p142: `... the procreation of genius - ... is the goal of all culture´; and at Sch p161: `Mankind must work continually at the production of individual great men - that and nothing else is its task´. The exclusive character of the latter claim recalls that of Kant´s claim at OE 72 (`... the whole moral value of actions consists in "maxims" concerning the good´). But Nietzsche, like Kant, sticks to his strong claim, and goes on to strengthen it. At Sch p162 he declares that society´s `... *only* concern is the individual higher exemplar, the more uncommon, more powerful, more complex, more fruitful´; and to the question `... how can your life, the individual life, receive the highest value, the deepest significance?´, he gives the answer - `Certainly *only* by your living for the good of the rarest and most valuable exemplars, and not for the good of the majority´ [my italics].

The question arises, then, of how all this is to be achieved. If, as Nietzsche holds, *Erziehung* as it stands is 'essentially the means of ruining the exceptions for the good of the rule', and *Bildung* is 'essentially the means of directing taste *against* the exceptions for the good of the mediocre' (WM 933), then it seems imperative that new educational institutions be established to remedy this situation - which is indicative of a 'culture false to the root' (FE intro.). For Nietzsche stipulates that there are '... only two exact contraries: institutions for teaching culture and institutions for teaching how to succeed in life' (FE IV). Since these two kinds of institution are depicted as mutually exclusive, and since the first kind does not yet exist, it follows that institutions of 'true culture' will have to be created *de novo*. These will not be 'modern' or 'up-to-date', but rather 'born again' (says Nietzsche, FE intro. p10). Nietzsche realises the pressing nature of such a project, and speaks of '... the necessity for an institution which will enable us to live and mix freely with the few men of true culture' (FE IV p115). And he affirms this idea of a 'true cultural institution' in an impressive passage from Twilight of the Idols (p74), which is worth quoting at length: 'What is the cause of the decline of German culture? That "higher education" is no longer a privilege - the "democratism" of "culture" made "universal" and common' ... 'What the "higher schools" of Germany in fact achieve is a brutal breaking-in with the aim of making, in the least possible time, numberless young men fit to be utilised, utilised to the full and used up, in the state service. "Higher education" and *numberless* - that is a contradiction to start with. All higher education belongs to the exceptions alone: one must be privileged to have a right to so high a privilege. Great and fine things can never be common property: *pulchrum est paucorum hominum*'.

However, although Nietzsche points to the possibility of institutions designed to provide a truly higher education (in his evaluative sense), the workings of such institutions remain obscure. It is clear that if the state is as he says it is, then the truly cultured should 'grow untended' by it and 'depart from the universities' (Sch 190, 192). But what type of institution

could receive them? For it seems questionable whether *any* institution could provide adequately for their needs and desires, let alone be such as to 'produce' or 'procreate' their kind. This objection is voiced by the budding philosophers portrayed at FE IV: 'Where then are we to look for the beginning of what you [the *Lehrer*] call culture ... how can we devise educational establishments which shall be of benefit only to those select few?' This question is extremely pertinent for a number of reasons, and these will therefore constitute the subject-matter of the rest of this chapter.

It is pertinent because the way in which Nietzsche characterises 'these select few' makes it evident that they could not be formed or sustained by any institution. To begin with, just as Wagner had instituted the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, so it is clear that Nietzsche wishes to institute the *Gesamtmensch*. That is, his 'select few' appear to be outstanding not merely within certain fields, but across them. Thus David Cooper (in *Authenticity and Learning: Nietzsche's education philosophy*, p126) thinks that Nietzsche takes the paradigm of his *Gesamtmensch* to be Goethe, whom he calls 'the most beautiful expression of the type [man]' (WM 883). Indeed, Nietzsche is full of praise for Goethe, who not only wrote plays, verse and essays, but was also an accomplished theatre director, botanist, anatomist and colour-theorist. But the Goethean ideal of a polymathic 'artist-philosopher' (WM 795) appears quite limited compared to how Nietzsche envisages his 'select few' elsewhere. This can be seen in the preface to FE, where he declares that his text is intended as a rallying-cry 'to battle'. That is, his real ambition is to promote a species of intellectual heroes, who necessarily could not be accommodated within any institutional framework. Thus he claims that 'the highest that man can attain to is an *heroic* [life]' (Sch p153). But what sort of heroism does Nietzsche have in mind?

As the mention of 'battle' indicates, the Nietzschean hero is more often than not portrayed as a kind of intellectual commander or leader. Hence he says that '*Actual philosophers... are commanders and law-givers: they say "thus it shall be!"*', it is they who determine the wherefore and

whither of mankind´ (JGB 211). And this picture is consonant with that given towards the end of FE, where he offers the reader a metaphor for intellectual leadership in the form of a genius `conductor´ who inspires his orchestra (his followers) with unanimous and demoniacal enthusiasm (FE V p141). This image of the intellectual leader naturally associates the latter with a quasi-militarism. Accordingly Nietzsche calls Schiller an exemplary `fighter´ (FE intro. p11), just as he refers to Schopenhauer as a `good and brave´ fighter (Sch p144); and he judges that `... there is no good scholar who does not have the instincts of a good soldier in his makeup´ (WM 912). It is owing to his lack of the military virtues, indeed, that Goethe comes in for criticism: `If [he] had a little more muscle-power and natural wildness, all his virtues would be greater´ (Sch p152). By contrast, Schopenhauer is praised for having `... the first thing a philosopher needs: inflexible and rugged manliness´ (Sch p180). In this way Nietzsche invokes the notion of `*furor philosophicus*´ (Sch p181), which he envisages as superseding the mundane and paltry `*furor politicus*´, i.e. the passion for serving the state. And he associates such philosophical hegemony within the political arena with the Greek polis, in which he says `The State was for ... culture not a supervisor, regulator and watchman, but a vigorous and muscular companion and friend, ready for war´ (FE III)¹⁸

So Nietzsche describes antiquity as the `incarnate categorical

¹⁸ At GM III 4, by contrast, Nietzsche counsels against any miscegenation of the `philosophical´ and the `political´, of the intellectual and the `actual´: he identifies `... a confusion to which an artist himself is only too prone: as if he himself were what he is able to represent, conceive, and express. The fact is that if he were it, he would not represent, conceive, and express it: a Homer would not have created an Achilles nor a Goethe a Faust if Homer had been an Achilles or Goethe a Faust ... he may well attempt what is most forbidden him, to lay hold of actuality, for once actually to be. With what success? That is easy to guess´. Indeed, Nietzsche´s whole picture of Philosophy is at odds here with the `School for Leaders´ picture: `virtues of the philosopher - ... his bent to suspend judgement ..., his will to neutrality and objectivity, his will to every "*sine ira et studio*"´ (GM III 9)

imperative of all culture´ (FE V p128), on account of its realisation that `... love of truth is something fearsome and mighty´ (Sch p194). The Greeks realised, he contends, that true philosophy is concerned with *power*, such that a great `... source of the heroic wells within it´; and he quotes with approval Emerson´ s dictum that a thinker is akin to a `conflagration ... in a great city´, whereby `no one knows what is safe, or where it will end´ (Sch p193). This image of the intellectual hero as a creator of dangerous pyrotechnics is transferred to that which he knows at Sch p153: `... his knowledge full of blazing, consuming fire and far removed from the cold and contemptible neutrality of the so-called scientific man´. And this picture of the intellectual hero as the subject of perilous and highly volatile knowledge informs another aspect of Nietzschean heroism: its tendency towards a form of magnificent immolation. This takes it even further beyond the bounds of institutional life. For instance, the philosopher in FE celebrates the `... instinct towards heroism, towards sacrifice ... submission to the discipline of genius´ (IV p114); and at Sch p153 Nietzsche refers to the `Schopenhauerian man ... exalted high above all sullen and ill-humoured reflection, always offering himself as the first sacrifice to perceived truth and permeated with the awareness of what sufferings must spring from his truthfulness´. So for Nietzsche, it seems, to be `consecrated to culture´ (Sch p163) involves far more than expertise in or mastery of various disciplines: it involves a quasi-religious dedication to one´ s calling. Thus he maintains that `... mankind ought to seek out and create the favourable conditions under which ... great redemptive men can come into existence´ (Sch p162); and declares that `the root of all true culture´ is `the longing of man to be reborn as saint and genius´ (Sch p142)¹⁹.

¹⁹ Although Nietzsche heralds the arrival of the `redeeming man´ at GM II 24, his attitude to intellectual martyrdom elsewhere in GM is a hostile one: the philosopher `... thinks it in bad taste to play the martyr; "to suffer for truth" - he leaves that to the ambitious and the stage heroes of the spirit´ (GM III 8). And at GM III 11, he associates `self-sacrifice´ with the propensities of the ascetic priest and his ilk

Therefore it appears that Nietzsche's 'select few' are not merely intellectual heroes, they are spiritual heroes as well. Given this, the hypothesis that they could lead a worthwhile existence within an institution comes to look altogether untenable. For like the Christian saints before them, Nietzschean saints show themselves to be drawn to solitude and the life of the hermit. For example, at FE I p35 Nietzsche's philosopher speaks of the demanding and dangerous life of a 'hermit of culture'; and at Sch p179 Schopenhauer is described as a hermit, despite the fact that his name is greater than that of Hegel. Similarly and instructively (in the light of David Cooper's point above), Goethe is portrayed as a solitary: 'Up to now there has not yet been any German culture. It is no objection to this statement that there have been great hermits in Germany (e.g. Goethe); for these had their own culture' (WM 791). This incipient equation between 'solitary' and 'genius' is upheld in many of Nietzsche's works. For instance, at Sch p182 he refers to solitude as 'that wonderful and perilous element in which the Greek philosophers were able to grow up'; and at Z p77 Zarathustra says that 'The earth still remains free for great souls. Many places - ... are still empty for solitaires and solitary couples'. At JGB 44 Nietzsche proclaims that '... we are born, sworn, jealous friends of solitude ... we free spirits!', and expresses the hope that *a fortiori* his long-anticipated 'new philosophers' will be 'something of the same type'; and at JGB 212 he states explicitly that '... the philosopher will betray something of his ideal when he asserts: "He shall be the greatest who can be the most solitary" ' ²⁰.

The reason Nietzsche posits this intimate association between solitude and greatness is surely clear: he has reached the point at which he cannot see how the *Gesamtmensch* can be as he should be if he remains within

²⁰ Although Nietzsche characterises isolation at GM II 24 as allowing a 'penetration into reality', and remarks at GM III 18 that the strong are 'naturally inclined to separate', he judges at GM III 14 that solitude is no more than *faute de mieux*: '... therefore let us have good company, our company! Or solitude, if it must be!'

society. His requirements and its demands are just incompatible, such that he can survive only in an 'inward cave': 'for philosophy offers an asylum to a man into which no tyranny can force its way, the inward cave, the labyrinth of the heart' (Sch p139). But if this state of affairs obtains, then it seems all the more difficult to see how education in 'true culture' is possible. For education *eo ipso* seems to presuppose some kind of social context. This dilemma leads Nietzsche to the view that true education can take place only between one individual and another: 'Great success ... is reserved above all to him who wants to educate, not everybody or even limited circles, but a single individual' (D 194). In this way a 'great educator' is 'powerful enough to draw up to his lonely height' those whom he teaches (WM 980). Indeed, given the nature of Nietzschean *Kultur*, educators must ensure that their pupils can meet the pre-requisite of cultural achievement: 'I have gradually seen the light', says Nietzsche, 'as to the most universal deficiency in our kind of cultivation and education: no one learns, no one strives after, no one teaches - *the endurance of solitude*' (D 443).

It is hopefully now plain how far Nietzsche's mission of 'Concentration of education for the few' (FE intro. p13) has taken him from Kant. This can be brought out, perhaps, by a contrast of metaphors. Kant judges that whereas a solitary tree 'grows crooked and spreads wide its branches' (clearly meaning this description to be pejorative), trees in the midst of the forest grow 'tall and straight, seeking air and sunshine from above' (OE intro.). Thus he implies that life within society and according to its strictures is salutary and desirable. Nietzsche, however, places all value on solitary growth, growth uninhibited by the presence of others: 'Culture is ... the removal of all the weeds, rubble, and vermin that want to attack the tender buds of the plant, an outstreaming of light and warmth' (Sch p130). So while Kant pictures the source of generation as lying outside individual plants, Nietzsche pictures it as lying within them. And this

difference is crucial, because it points to the radically aseitic²¹ nature of Nietzsche's educational ideal: that is, he believes that the true *Gesamtmensch* or 'higher man' or 'original man' is necessarily *ineducable*. Just as he has his own laws (as was argued in the last chapter), so too he has his own culture. Therefore the only true education is that which can *liberate* this culture: 'Your true educators and formative teachers reveal to you what the true basic material of your being is, something in itself ineducable and in any case difficult of access, bound and paralysed: your educators can be only your liberators ... Culture is liberation' (Sch p129-30).

This stark conclusion, whereby education becomes a 'means of finding oneself' (Sch p130), is consistent with Nietzsche's claim at JGB 213 that 'What a philosopher is, is hard to learn, because it cannot be taught'. That is, whereas Kant adheres to the doctrine of 'The discreteness of the moral realm', Nietzsche ends up embracing the doctrine of 'The discreteness of the individual realm': and both doctrines, albeit in very different ways, undermine the *possibility* of education. Hence when Nietzsche talks of men having to '... prepare within themselves and around them for the birth of the genius and the ripening of his work', or their '... degree of profound kinship and involvement with the genius' (Sch p176), it is hard to see what such involvement could amount to - besides care and concern lest they get in his way²². Indeed, it seems reasonable to conclude along with the students in FE that 'it ... seems to us that such persons [geniuses] know how to find their own way' (pp104-5), and that therefore all one can and should do is to leave them alone. But this is, of course, to assume that the notion of an aseitic genius, of an absolute autodidact, is a coherent one - and Nietzsche gives us no reason for thinking

²¹ Concise OED definition of 'Aseity': '(Metaphys.) independent or underived existence'

²² cf Zarathustra's words at Z p52, which raise the same problem - 'The creator seeks fellow-creators, those who inscribe new values on new tables'

so. On the contrary, it seems better understood as a conceptual chimera, born of the tensions implicit in Nietzsche's educational thought: between the desire for an institution to 'produce' *Gesamtmenschen*, and the realisation that such people cannot be produced; between the desire for a spiritual commander, and the realisation that if such a person were to attain great influence, then such influence would no longer be worth exerting, and the person no longer be fit to command.

What the doctrine of 'the discreteness of the individual realm' appears to leave Nietzsche with, then, is a solitary being, whose 'culture' appears unshareable, 'an indivisible, uncommunicating atom, an icy rock' (Sch p144), '... the richest of men in the solitude of a desert!' (HAH 2 II 320). In other words, it leaves his ideal of the 'higher man', whether *qua* leader and hero (e.g. Napoleon), or alternatively *qua* prodigious polymath (e.g. Goethe) without sufficient foundations, thereby making that ideal necessarily unrealisable.

Section three:

A coherent conception?

At the end of the last chapter it was claimed that if the content of Nietzsche's thought undermines the possibility of education, then this fact is intimately connected with his doctrine of the 'discreteness of the individual realm'. This connection can be brought out further by looking at a passage from JGB 231, where Nietzsche identifies what he claims makes an individual an individual, calling it 'an unchangeable "this is I"'. This *principium individuationis*, he implies, is coextensive with that which is 'right down deep', '... something unteachable, a granite stratum of individual fate, of predetermined decision and answer to predetermined selected questions'. That an individual possesses an unteachable core suggests he is already in possession of something akin to a self *before* any education is begun. And this seems confirmed by a passage already quoted: 'Your true educators and formative teachers reveal to you what the true basic material of your being is, something in itself ineducable ... : your educators can be only yours liberators' (Sch p129).

So true education is characterised as a form of liberation, a freeing of one's true self, and thereby a 'means of finding oneself'. That such a process constitutes a *discovery* implies that there was a self already there to be discovered. And this is consonant with much of what Nietzsche says about the development of the self: for example, 'What does your conscience say? - "You shall become the person you are"' (GS 270, echoing not only Pindar, but also the subtitle of *Ecce Homo* - 'On How One Becomes What One Is'). At WM 334 Nietzsche goes further, and claims that education is in fact inimical to the development of individuality: '... one will become only that which one is (in spite of all: that means education, instruction, milieu, chance, and accident) ... One becomes a decent man because one *is* a decent man'.

Therefore Nietzsche adverts to the possibility that becoming educated may preclude becoming a substantial individual - the two processes can militate against each other. This suggests that the most substantial

individuals, the 'very few', those at the top of the order of rank, will have the most ambivalent attitude to education. To them, it will represent a constant (if not always overt) threat, a threat to their individual integrity. But what does this integrity consist in? It partakes of a very stringent conception of individuality, whereby an individual is (perhaps) best pictured as a highly fortified citadel, which, if it is penetrated by any alien element, is at risk of destruction. Thus every effort must be made to preserve it from external forces, to retain its purity. This picture, which portrays all adulteration as originating from outside the self, I shall call (in line with earlier descriptions) that of the 'pure individual'.

Nietzsche expands his picture of the pure individual in a number of ways. First, he describes what undermines his *ego ipsissimum* ('innermost self', HAH 281). Because he represents the virtue of the 'moralists' as being 'made to dominate' (WM 304) and as a form of tyranny (WM 354), he warns against any capitulation: 'a caution against being overpowered, exploited - one of life's instincts of self-defence' (WM 399). The defence Nietzsche recommends is literally self-defence, moreover, in that any submission to 'virtue' is seen as *eo ipso* destructive of the self. In this way pity is characterised as '... a squandering of feeling, a parasite harmful to moral health ... an infection' (WM 368). Given Nietzsche's idea of the self as concentrated power, pity is automatically impugned as a dissipation of that power, and ruled out as being either natural to or affirmative of pure individuality.

So the evil of submitting to alien evaluations is balanced by the evil of voluntarily wasting the resources of the self (and, as in the case of pity, one can entail the other). This wastage takes several forms. For instance, Nietzsche describes it as 'losing oneself': 'To desire - that now means to me: to have lost myself' (Z p182); 'being honest in evil is still better than losing oneself to the morality of tradition' (GS 99). Instead of 'dissolving' into something *outside*, Nietzsche counsels remaining 'within' oneself (D 549). Such a course is not open to 'active men': 'They are active as officials, businessmen, scholars, that is to say as generic creatures, but not

as distinct individual and unique human beings´ (HAH 283). Nor is it open to `men of faith´, who are necessarily dependent men, `... such as cannot out of [themselves] posit ends at all. The believer does not belong to *himself*´ (AC 54). Even artists are at times seen to be denied the Nietzschean virtue of self-possession: `[the artist] possesses only a fixed quantity of strength: that of it which he expends upon *himself* - how could he at the same time expend it on his *work*? - and the reverse´ (HAH 21, 102). Thus Nietzsche proposes a stark and ineluctable choice - `Either abolish your reverences or - *yourselves!*´

Therefore in delineating the characteristics of the pure individual, Nietzsche sets up a very rigid distinction between self and other, *individuum* and world. Indeed what forms the basis of his attack on `traditional´ morality is that it makes man treat himself `not as *individuum* but as *dividuum*´ (HAH 57), that is, as merely a *part* of the human world: `not as an individual, but as a member of the whole, as a cipher in a majority. - So it comes about that through his morality the individual *outvotes* himself´ (HAH 21, 89). Hence the possibility of finding one´s meaning *through* being `a member of the whole´ is presented as entirely undesirable. The pure individual finds his meaning through being `firmly rooted´ in himself (WM 296), and feeling `satisfaction and fullness in *himself*´ (GS 300). His individuality is maintained if he retains his `personal infinity´, such that `only what is his and nothing alien may appear to his eyes´ (GS 291). And `alien´ is defined as anything which does not derive from an individual´s unique self, which requires him to depend upon and `sacrifice himself´ to that which is non-self (D 9). This amounts to a doctrine of strict ethical aseity, whereby being *independent* is understood as being completely self-sufficient, autarkic: `We ... shall grow and blossom out of ourselves´ (GS 99); `Virtues are as dangerous as vices in so far as one lets them rule over one as authorities from without and does not first produce them out of oneself, as one should do, as one´s most personal self-defence and necessity, as conditions of precisely our own existence and growth, which we recognise and acknowledge independently of whether other men grow

with us under similar or different conditions´ (WM 326).

Opinions are equally required to be unique to each pure individual: ´I believe that everyone must have his own individual opinion ..., because he himself is an individual, unique thing which adopts a new posture towards all other things such as has never been adopted before´ (HAH 286). Given that an opinion is genuinely individual, Nietzsche continues, it can never engender a ´universally valid concept´ - such a concept would be ´impersonal´ or ´semi-personal´, and deserve a negative evaluation. What could be called (following Nietzsche´s formula) ´personally valid concepts´, on the other hand, derive from a ´real ego´, ´accessible to ... and fathomed by´ one individual alone (D 105), absolutely *sui generis* (EH p262). That ´personally valid concepts´ make reference to something Nietzsche is in no doubt, it seems: they refer to and are descriptive of a pure individual´s inner world - as Zarathustra puts it, ´the spirit sundered from the world now wins *its own* world´ (Z p55).

That Nietzsche endorses the notion of a ´personally valid concept´ which could not be ´universally valid´ has interesting implications for his views on language, consciousness and communication. At GS 354 he spells out what he takes to be the relation between consciousness and communication - ´consciousness has developed only under the pressure of the need for communication´. He then makes a series of value-judgements about communication itself, which inform his idea of consciousness as basically ´superfluous´. Communication involves a linguistic ´bridge´ between human beings, and *ipso facto* undermines the uniqueness of individuals, ensnaring them in a ´net´ of common, debased, herd-inspired evaluations (´all contact between man and man - "in society" - must inevitably be unclean. All community makes ... "common"´ (JGB 284). It follows, then, that ´consciousness does not really belong to man´s individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature´. His true nature is ´incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual´, such that a proud, solitary human being ´would not have needed´ consciousness. Thus communication and consciousness can serve only as a source of debased

evaluations, `thorough corruption, falsification, reduction to superficialities, and generalisation´.

Nietzsche´s conception of the rôle of communication in furthering the vicissitudes of human interaction leads him to put forward two remedies. First, he suggests that individuals reform their language. This may be what Zarathustra is referring to when he says of the `higher men´ that `They are discovering new words´ (Z p320), words no longer tainted with herd-evaluations; or what Nietzsche means when he judges that `the individual ... has to interpret in a quite individual way even the words he has inherited´ (WM 767). Secondly, he suggests reforming language out of existence as the only way of *purifying* it. Zarathustra again hints at this - `Now you have [your virtue´s] name in common with the people and have become of the people and the herd .../ You would do better to say: "Unutterable and nameless is that which torments and delights my soul ..."/ Let your virtue be too exalted for the familiarity of names´ (Z p63). That is, the only real solution to the corruption of language is silence. And this conclusion is supported by many of Nietzsche´s remarks. At GS 244 he says that `Even one´s thoughts one cannot reproduce entirely in words´, so that Pyrrho´s combination of laughter and silence is judged to be not `the worst philosophy´ (HAH 211, 213), and Abbé Galiani is said to be profound on account of his tendency to silence (JGB 26). But these observations are tame compared with those at WM 810 and TWI pp92-3, which portray language as inherently misleading and false to individuals´ experience: `words dilute and brutalise; words depersonalise; words make the uncommon common´; `We no longer have a sufficiently high estimate of ourselves when we communicate. Our true experiences are not garrulous. They could not communicate themselves if they wanted to: they lack words. We have already grown beyond whatever we have words for. In all talking there lies a grain of contempt. Speech, it seems, was devised only for the average, medium, communicable. The speaker has already *vulgarised* himself by speaking´.

The characterisation of the pure individual as an `uncommunicating

atom´ seems therefore (once again) to be forced on Nietzsche, and it is I think forced on him by his implicit adherence to the doctrine of `the discreteness of the individual realm´. For just as this doctrine was seen in chapter four to undermine the possibility of education, so too it appears to undermine the possibility of anything recognisable as communication. And this surely must preclude that greatness, whether of someone like Goethe or of someone like Napoleon, which Nietzsche wishes to commend and to foster. That is, while there can be no doubt that Nietzsche intends his `higher individuals´ to be men like the former, the force of his analysis of what it would be to be truly individual seems to exclude the possibility of such men coming into being.

In other words, the nature of his `higher exemplars´ or `original men´ finds no coherent basis in his positive account of the nature of individuality. If Nietzsche´s philosophy does contain such an analytical hiatus - and it has been the contention of this thesis that it does - then the precise source of this hiatus must be identified. I suggest that the only satisfactory way of achieving this is to employ a Kantian form of argument, namely a transcendental argument, concerning the origin of value. For if there is one underlying thesis common to all Nietzsche´s pronouncements on the nature of the pure individual - that he has his own laws, his own virtues, even his own culture - then it is that he has his own *values*. Or as Nietzsche puts it, he `creates´ his own values, which are `original´ to him. The subject of the Conclusion will therefore be the *possibility* of such originality in valuation.

Our evaluations - All actions may be traced back to evaluations, all evaluations are either original or adopted - the latter being by far the most common. Why do we adopt them? From fear - that is to say, we consider it more advisable to pretend they are our own - and accustom ourselves to this pretence, so that at length it becomes our own nature

Daybreak 104

There are not two parties, like ... nobles and the common people, but rather one family of speakers pursuing the life of reason at different stages of development; and the later stages of development depend upon the earlier ones

Paul Grice, *The Conception of Value* (p99)

If there is one, overriding question concerning value and evaluating, it is perhaps this: how is valuing possible, that is, how is it possible that we come to value one thing rather than another, or one person rather than another? It does not seem that an answer to this question could be adequate if it did not recognise the ability to evaluate as the outcome of a *process*. That is, the notion of valuing remains opaque so long as it is treated as a spatio-temporally restricted phenomenon (an agent approves or disapproves of X *tout court* - without any explanation of how such an attitude became possible for him). This would be to assimilate evaluation to a simple physical phenomenon (e.g. a loud bang) which requires little in the way of a causal history for us to understand it. So if the ability to evaluate is the outcome of a process, what kind of process is it, and how did it begin?

The process is, I suggest, one of education, precisely the kind of process the possibility of which (it was claimed) is undermined by Nietzschean critique. And such a process can, perhaps, safely be said to begin at birth. The fact that it begins at birth points to a crucial feature of

how we learn to value things: namely, the beginning of the educative process cannot make use of deliberative rationality, given that such a capacity is not developed until a later stage. So it could be said that the fact that we come to evaluate depends on an initial stage which is necessarily non-rational: our parents *instill* in us certain attitudes to the world (and our place in it) by non-rational means. The nature of these means are perforce more or less crude - encouragement, reward, physical signs of approval on the one hand; and punishment, physical signs of disapprobation on the other. In short, those who bring children up show them that certain things and modes are *sanctioned*, and others not. This initial stage of the educative process could therefore be likened to Kant's stage of 'discipline', with the important difference that no opprobrium attaches to it for being (in Kant's sense) 'non-moral'. Rather, it constitutes the crucial first stage of a moral process.

Children will then, under normal circumstances, *react* to various sanctions, and learn to expect some kind^s of sanction as opposed to others. Moreover, they should come to see that they apply not only to themselves but to *other* children as well. In this way the educative process allows them to see themselves as agents amongst other agents, not as wholly different. Given such a normal upbringing, it does seem that fear plays a valid rôle in the instilling of value - before the possibility of making value-judgements is realised, that is. As John Casey has pointed out²³, people are taught that there are proper objects of fear, and teaching relies on the fact that we can feel fear *and* respect for our educators²⁴. Fear can be a mere reaction to an external threat, but it need not - it may be entailed by that awe which we come to feel for those who inspire in us love and the desire to obey.

If such an analysis makes sense, then it could be said that fear comes in two varieties: fear under the aspect of the good and useful, and harmful or damaging fear, fear induced *for no good reason* (here we may talk of

²³ Pagan Virtue

²⁴ Kant's notion of '*Ehrfurcht*' is perhaps close to this

‘scaring’). However, even given such a picture of the educative process, the problem still remains of *how* reactive attitudes and mere responses to external sanctions are transformed into values that we hold. A value must be internal to my view of the world, i.e. the reason I embrace it must be that I find it intrinsically worthwhile, and warranted by the phenomenon in question. For example, no one would say that Saddam Hussein valued the sovereignty of Kuwait if the only reason he did not violate its sovereignty was the threat of external sanction (viz. retaliation by the US). The latter motivation is clearly compatible with his setting no value on Kuwait’s sovereignty at all. So, in effect, Saddam remains at the childish stage of being *compelled* to comply with a practical evaluation, while still not recognising it²⁵: in other words, in his case the external sanction has not (yet) been transformed into an internal one.

The precise way in which response is transformed into value cannot be tackled here, nor (I think) need it be: all that need be granted is that some such transformation occurs, and within the developmental framework delineated above. Given such an (albeit rudimentary) structure of value, we should be in a better position to understand Nietzsche’s approach to the problem of value. At Daybreak 104 he claims that most people ‘arrive’ at their evaluations, ‘as *children*, and rarely learn to change [their] view; most of us are our whole lives long the fools of the way we acquired in childhood of judging our neighbours, (their minds, rank, morality, whether they are exemplary or reprehensible) and of finding it necessary to pay homage to their evaluations.’ So Nietzsche thinks here that most of us remain at a stage akin to the initial stage of the educative process, even if unwittingly so. He specifically says that the reason for our ‘homage’ is *fear*, and it seems evident that he takes this fear to be of the harmful variety²⁶.

²⁵ Whether Kuwait’s sovereignty should be valued is another question, which is open to rational deliberation

²⁶ cf D9 - ‘What is tradition? A higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands what is *useful* to us, but because it *commands*.
- What distinguishes this feeling in the presence of tradition from the

However, Nietzsche's analysis requires elucidation. He speaks of our 'evaluations' in this context, and yet, if the argument given above was cogent, then attitudes arrived at in such a manner would not qualify as evaluations. They would still be closer to reactions and responses to external sanctions, the authority of which would be seen as lacking justification. So Nietzsche has assimilated 'evaluations' to pre-rational responses, a move indicated by his use of the word 'fools'. Most people have, he implies, been duped into their notion of 'value' - in fact, they are still (*mutatis mutandis*) in the position of children, and if they think otherwise, they are deceiving themselves. And this picture of radical self-deception is developed at Gay Science 335. Here he attacks the notions of 'duty' and 'conscience' as they are understood now, and says, 'Your understanding of the manner in which moral judgements have originated would spoil these grand words for you'. That is, what the majority take to be their 'values' are better understood as cowardly, ignorant, or blind responses, such that the average man, far from being an *echt* valuer, deserves to be likened to 'a flatterer and coward who is afraid of the commander. Or ... a dunderhead who obeys because no objection occurs to him'.

At this point it seems worth stressing the justice of Nietzsche's diagnosis. Surely he is right to judge that to the degree that someone's 'evaluations' are childish (in the sense outlined above) they are more or less empty, and not worthy of the name. Thus he is justified in his identification of this phenomenon, and in his subsequent excoriation of it. But where he lacks justification, I think, is in his taking the phenomenon to be so pervasive. And the reason he takes it to be so widespread lies in the stringency of his conception of what it would be to be an *echt* individual.

feeling of fear in general? It is fear in the presence of a higher intellect which here commands, of an incomprehensible, indefinite power, of something more than personal - there is superstition in this fear - '. I came across this revealing passage thanks to Nehamas (p204)

That is, given his criteria for pure individuality - and, by extension, for pure evaluation - it becomes difficult to see how anybody could come to be a 'pure valuer'. This view itself clearly stands in need of justification.

In the same way as Kant's doctrine of 'the discreteness of the moral realm' was held to render problematic how someone could become a truly moral agent (in Kant's sense), so (I hold) Nietzsche's doctrine of 'the discreteness of the individual realm' renders problematic how someone could become a true valuer (in Nietzsche's sense). For, given the nature of Nietzschean pure individuality as described *passim* in preceding chapters (and especially in the last chapter), external influences on the self are pictured as *ei ipsi* constituting a threat to such individuality. Hence Nietzsche tends to portray any acceptance or internalisation of those influences prevalent in the initial stage of education (or thereafter) as tantamount to capitulation and unworthy surrender. In the terms of Daybreak 104, the adoption of values is seen to entail the undermining of one's originality in evaluation.

Nietzsche reaches this position because he takes as his paradigm of influence the exertion of power. Given this model of the nature of influence, it is understandable that he analyses the predicament of the majority as akin to the predicament of children (who, it seems fair to say, *are* wholly subject to the power of their elders). The difference, however, between the power-relations instantiated in the educative process and Nietzschean power-relations is that the latter appear devoid of benevolent intent. They demonstrate rather a clash of opposing forces, a battle between various 'quanta' of achieved power - and assuming this situation to obtain, it becomes reasonable to defend the 'citadel' of individuality unflinchingly, and to resist its sacking at all costs. Accordingly Nietzsche describes the 'grand politics of virtue' (WM 304) solely in terms of 'domination', 'force', 'seduction', 'intoxication' and 'tyranny', and identifies as the sole motive of the moralists of community the 'instinct for self-preservation' (WM 315). The basis of this picture of internecine strife, moreover, is given at WM 70 - 'Against the doctrine of the influence of the

milieu and external causes: the force within is infinitely superior´ - a nice description, in that `superior´ in this instance carries both a quantitative and a qualitative sense.

If to adopt values is *pari passu* to succumb to (perhaps) quantitatively superior but (doubtless) qualitatively inferior forces, then it is incumbent upon the Nietzschean individual to create his own `original´ values. And this looks plausible and reasonable given Nietzsche´ s dichotomy between adoption and originality: but what remains to be seen is whether the dichotomy itself is well-founded. A lot hangs, surely, on the precise meaning in this context of `originality´. If it is taken to mean `being different´, then it looks easy enough to achieve. But difference *per se* seems to have no intrinsic worth, unless in the sense in which it has worth for a rebellious adolescent (but even here not any old difference will do - and besides, adolescents tend to behave in surprisingly *similar* ways). It seems, rather, as if Nietzschean originality is far more exacting in its requirements, which is to be expected, given it informs his conception of pure, autonomous individuality: `the "individual" stands there, reduced to his own law-giving, to his own acts and strategies for self-preservation, self-enhancement, self-redemption´ (JGB 262); `... individual happiness springs from one´ s own unknown laws and prescriptions from without can only obstruct and hinder it´ (D 108); `The individual is something quite new which creates new things, something absolute; all his acts are entirely his own. Ultimately, the individual derives the values of his acts from himself´ (WM 767); `But must our evaluation of another ... at least not proceed from *us*, be our *own* determination?´ (D 104).

What these passages show, I think, is that Nietzsche conceives of an evaluation as something an individual should both *produce* and *possess*. His paradigm of a value is something that belongs to someone, someone´ s property (as it were), immune to depredation from without. This is brought out when he says that, `if you have a virtue, and she is your virtue, then

you have her in common with nobody²⁷ - such possession being possible only if the virtue in question `originates´ with its possessor. This striking idea explicates further Nietzsche´s opposition to adopting values, for it is usually no doubt true that if one adopts something rather than engendering it, then that thing can never properly be said to *belong* to you, be your *own*. For instance, if a couple adopt a child, that child may become their child, but never their *own*. What is at issue here is whether such a model of production, possession and ownership is applicable to value. The analysis given at the beginning of this Conclusion suggests, I think, that it is not. There it was argued that it is in the nature of value that it has its *origins* in adoption: that is, if one holds a particular value x, x is in no way undermined as *one´s own* given that it is an adopted value, or that others hold it as well.

This view of value should not be taken to imply that all the values an individual holds are adopted in an educative process involving pre-rational response to external sanctions. That would be absurd, since it is clear we can and do hold different values from our parents. What it does imply is that any values we do hold would not be available were it not for such a process. That is, as adults we can assent to or dissent from the values instilled in us, and it is constitutive of us as adults that we have this ability. We can adjust our evaluations if we find they do not `fit´ the phenomena in question (that is, of course, what Nietzsche did vis-à-vis the Church). But it is nevertheless a condition of such adjustment and dissent that we have something to adjust or dissent from: that is, the ability to assess values presupposes a prior formation of the self, such as is carried out in the educative process.

So it could be said that the unformed self will be an uninformed self. Without an initial formative process, the self remains incapable of evaluative engagement with the world (and thus without any `citadel´ to defend). So

²⁷ Echoing Zarathustra at Z p63: `if you have a virtue and it is your virtue, you have it in common with no one´

any notion of absolute originality in the realm of value must be illusory. Of course such a notion need not automatically be attributed to Nietzsche, but it does appear that his idea of the *ownership* of value leads him in this direction: i.e. a value is mine only in so far as it *belongs* to me, where this `belonging to´ relation entails one of `issuing from´. But what meaning can be given to a value being mine in virtue of my holding it? At Gay Science 335 Nietzsche urges his reader to create `for yourself an ideal of your own, your very own - for that could never be somebody else´s and much less that of all, all!´ - and this accords with his saying that if a virtue is yours, `... then you have her in common with nobody´. But how could it be impossible for somebody else to hold an ideal as well as you, where `somebody else´ covers everybody there is? This could be the case, surely, only assuming that everyone else is constituted in such a radically different way from you that they are necessarily excluded from sharing any values with you. If this looks unacceptable, then Nietzsche´s alleged impossibility itself appears impossible (something recognised implicitly when he uses the phrase `somebody else´)²⁸.

Given the nature of value (that an educative process is a necessary condition of its existence), it seems therefore that it is *eo ipso* something shared, not something which admits of being someone´s self-created property. Moreover, it is only given that values are inherently shareable that Nietzsche´s `higher men´, whether of the Goethean or of the Napoleonic type, become possible. That is, it is because of and not despite the fact that values are shareable that Goethe could become the polymath-genius he was, or that Napoleon could influence and inspire those he did. It was only because both men did *not* hold aseitic, `infinitely individual´, `original´ values, and only because they came to express or embody the apotheosis

²⁸ *A fortiori* Nietzsche´s brief adumbration of `original evaluation´ at D 104, in terms of assessing a thing `according to the extent to which it pleases or displeases us alone and no one else´, also raises the question - how could something be such as to please or displease only one individual?

of certain common values, that they managed to achieve the greatness and renown they did. It must therefore be the conclusion of this thesis that there is nothing within Nietzsche's positive account of the nature of individuality to make such achievement explicable, and everything within his account to render it impossible.

... the Nietzschean conception of intellectual heroism [is] of an `aristocracy´ that is not the head of an organic body, but is distinguished by complete isolation, independence and daring - a head without a body

Michael Hamburger
From Prophecy to Exorcism (p127)

It has been the aim of this thesis to show that Nietzsche´s conception of the nature of individuality is fundamentally at odds with what were called (in section one) his `central values´. And it is at odds with them both in their abstract, uninstantiated form (as embodied in the challenge of Eternal Recurrence - *vide* chapter one), and in their concrete, instantiated form (as exemplified by figures such as Goethe and Napoleon). This is not because Nietzsche´s analysis of individuality posits a contrary `table of values´, or rival set of ideals, but rather because it proves itself incapable of generating values altogether. The Nietzschean individual is claimed to have his own virtues, his own laws and `his own justice that is beyond appeal´ (WM 962) - but, if the arguments given above carry any weight, then virtues, laws and justice are such as they are only in virtue of being shared, thus rendering the *vis natura* of Nietzschean individuality illusory. Indeed, given that Goethean or Napoleonic greatness is necessarily consequent upon deep understanding of a common culture, it seems that Nietzsche´s conception of individuality perforce does not begin to account for such greatness.

If Nietzsche´s writings do evidence such an inextricable conflict between an illusory conception of aseitic individuality on the one hand, and a whole concatenation of values relating to well-constitutedness and cultural achievement on the other - whereby neither finds an adequate basis in the other - then there would seem to be no viable synthesis possible, but merely an irresolvable incommensurability. In fact I do think that Nietzsche´s work embodies such an incommensurability, born of an admiration for certain

modes of life together with a misguided understanding of the pre-requisites of those modes. But the impossibility of synthesis does not preclude the possibility of syncretism, a possibility made actual by Nietzsche via his notion of the *Übermensch*. For what the 'overman' represents, I take it, is Nietzsche's attempt to reconcile the demands of pure individuality with the demands of his cultural ideals. And the result of such a reconciliation cannot but amount to a syncretic ideal, which (unfortunately for it) embodies the conflict just adverted to within Nietzsche's philosophy.

This contention requires justification, of course. What justifies it, perhaps, is the realisation that the analytical impetus of Nietzsche's conception of individuality takes him in the wrong direction. Having identified certain social institutions he took to be detrimental (such as institutional Christianity and the institutions of the Reich), Nietzsche proceeded to locate their deleterious essence not in the fact that they were particular kinds of institution, but in the fact that they were *social*. Hence he is led to posit what could be called various 'individual institutions', such as individual virtues and laws, which were claimed above to lack foundation. They lack foundation, and thus they also lack real content - for instance, Nietzsche declares: 'I recognise virtue in that ... it does not desire to be recognised ... it does not communicate itself ... it does not propagandise - ... it permits no one to judge it, because it is always virtue for itself' (WM 317). But such putatively inward, autarkic virtue necessarily lacks substance, and means that the overman is prevented from finding his significance within the social world²⁹. As Alasdair MacIntyre says at the end of *After Virtue* (p257), 'the *Übermensch* ... finds his good nowhere in the social world to date, but only in that in himself which dictates his own new law and his own new table of the virtues'. Moreover, this judgement would be fully in accord with my line of argument if MacIntyre's 'but'

²⁹ cf 'But the "higher nature" of the great man lies in being different, in incommunicability, in distance of rank, not in an effect of any kind' (WM 876); 'That one does not know how to make any use of it *perhaps even* pertains to greatness ...' (TWI p114)

were replaced by a `because`.

MacIntyre`s fundamental point, I think, is that the `social world` is the only world. And that therefore the healthy flourishing of any individual must be intimately connected with the good health of the society he inhabits. But Nietzsche nonetheless persists in portraying the two as mutually invidious: `mankind in the mass sacrificed to the prosperity of a single *stronger* species of man - that *would* be an advance` (GM II 12); `The essential thing in a good and healthy aristocracy is, ... that it does not feel itself to be a function (of the monarchy or of the commonwealth) but as their *meaning* and supreme justification - that it therefore accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of innumerable men who for its sake have to be suppressed and reduced to imperfect men, to slaves and instruments. Its fundamental faith must be that society should *not* exist for the sake of society but only as foundation and scaffolding upon which a select species of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and in general to a higher existence` (JGB 258). The question here is surely, what `higher task`? That is, what is to be the *telos* of Nietzsche`s exemplars? The answer to this, however, is far from clear. Indeed, Nietzsche`s texts appear to be remarkably reticent on this issue. But unremarkably so, I would argue, in that his delineation of the nature of individuality deprives them *nolens volens* of a *telos*³⁰. Whereas both Goethe and Napoleon found their ends within a social world of which they demonstrated a profound understanding and to which they recognised themselves as intimately bound³¹, Nietzschean

³⁰ Nehamas claims (p228) that such deprivation is both understandable and admissible, on the grounds that what Nietzsche really requires of his exemplars is that their lives exhibit some form of artistic coherence, thus rendering their specific *teloi* irrelevant. But contrary to Nehamas, I think that such a requirement can be no more than specious: for what are the criteria for such coherence, and who is to say when they are satisfied? It seems that Nietzsche`s exemplars must be relied on to give the right answers here (*tant pis*)

³¹ Nietzsche appears aware of this in the case of Goethe, at TWI p112-3: `he did not sever himself from life, he placed himself within it ... in the faith that only what is separate and individual may be rejected,

overmen seem burdened with a recalcitrant social body with which they display no common purpose and to which they can propose no alternative.

At this point it is perhaps important to note a similarity with the analytical trajectory of Kant's moral philosophy. While Nietzsche's doctrine of 'the discreteness of the individual realm' alienates his true individuals from the social world and deprives them of substantial purpose, Kant's doctrine of 'the discreteness of the moral realm' seems to divorce moral goodness from moral practice, and to denigrate the salience of moral action. This at least appears to be the force of what Kant claims at the opening of the *Grundlegung* (394): 'A good will is good not because of what it effects or accomplishes, nor because of its fitness to attain some proposed end; it is good only through its willing, i.e. it is good in itself ... Even if, by some especially unfortunate fate or by the niggardly provision of stepmotherly nature, this will should be wholly lacking in the power to accomplish its purpose; if with the greatest effort it should yet achieve nothing, and only the good will should remain ... yet would it, like a jewel, still shine by its own light as something which has full value in itself. Its usefulness or fruitlessness can neither augment nor diminish this value'. Kant's phrase 'good in itself' is reminiscent, moreover, of Nietzsche's 'virtue for itself' (at WM 317 above). So Kant's doctrine seems to lead him to embrace a form of moral 'inwardness' not dissimilar from that associated with Nietzsche's pure individuality. However, I suggest its consequences prove less dangerous for his philosophy as a whole, because Kant never abandons the realisation that the notion of 'good' can function properly only within a social context, and that a 'good will' is such only given that it bears a certain relation to other wills. Hence, despite the worryingly aseitic

that in the totality everything is redeemed and affirmed'. But such valuable awareness on Nietzsche's part is counteracted by a similar yet vitally divergent passage at WM 95, in which he equates 'individual' and 'totality' - thus reaffirming his doctrine of 'the discreteness of the individual realm': '[Goethe sought] to form a totality out of himself, in the faith that only in the totality everything redeems itself and appears good and justified'

implications of the above passage, the effects of the doctrine of 'the discreteness of the moral realm' prove ethically less self-stultifying than Nietzsche's parallel doctrine.

If Nietzsche's conception of individuality, whereby 'our ideas, our values ... grow out of us with the necessity with which a tree bears fruit' (GM Preface 2), undermines the possibility of meaningful action within a social world, can it have any real influence, can it teach us anything? Here it seems worth stressing that what is widely taken to be Nietzsche's main influence, on the ideology of Nazism, owed almost nothing to the actual content of his works, and almost all to crude, highly selective and vicious interpretation of those 'central values' adumbrated in chapter one (mainly owing to his sister - there is, I believe, no evidence that Hitler ever read Nietzsche's writings). Nietzsche's anti-Reichism, and his philosemitism ('Jews among Germans are always the higher race', EH p262n), would be enough to render his works useless to any conscientious Nazi ideologue. But, given that Nietzsche's 'central values' have clearly been misappropriated and twisted to suit various odious purposes, is there any reason for thinking that his conception of individuality has ever been properly appropriated?

If this thesis is to remain true to its main line of argument, then it would be inconsistent to allow that Nietzsche's conception admits of proper appropriation by anyone, owing to the fact that it has been claimed to be an incoherent conception. Yet Michael Hamburger's trenchant and powerful book From Prophecy to Exorcism, which traces Nietzsche's (mainly literary) influence, provides various examples of people who took themselves to be adhering to his conception and to be living by it. I think it is therefore worthwhile briefly to relate a few of those examples, in order to show how an incoherent conception cannot but engender further incoherent conceptions.

First, Martin Heidegger. Hamburger quotes an address (p22) which Heidegger gave to his university students in 1933, shortly after the Nazi party had imposed a whole new set of rules and regulations on German

universities. Following some rather impenetrable remarks on the 'Wesen' of the university, Heidegger declares that 'To give oneself laws is the supreme freedom'. This conforms with Nietzsche's strictures concerning individual autonomy, and yet it completely belies the ethical reality of Heidegger's and his students' situation: he is representing as self-legislation that which is clearly legislation by external authority. Notwithstanding the absurdity of this representation, what it points to, I think, is the incoherence of the idea of self-legislation itself. It is only because it is an incoherent, unquantifiable notion that Heidegger can use it for his own (dubious) purposes - that is, it is sufficiently devoid of content to allow him to make use of it in line with his own rhetorical legerdemain. Lest this be taken to say more about Heidegger's argumentative sleight of hand than Nietzsche's (and I do not want to tar Nietzsche with an alien brush), a second example is in order.

Hamburger goes on to give a description (p56f.) of post-unification Germany, which he judges to have 'succeeded in creating a new State, but not a new society and a new culture'. In fact, he contends that the Reich became so overbearing, with its new 'religion' of efficiency and devotion to power, that 'Culture had become divorced from society'. All power had come to be associated with the machinery of State, and Hamburger claims (surely with justice) that 'It is the discrepancy between power and culture that exasperated Nietzsche' (*vide* his impassioned attacks on the 'utilisation' of young men for the purposes of the Reich bureaucracy in FE). Given this situation, many others saw and felt the justice of Nietzsche's exasperation. But like him, instead of trying to alter the social power-structure they considered so malign, and thereby endeavouring to change its rationale, they retreated into what Hamburger calls 'power-protected inwardness' - that is, they tried to arrogate all power to what they took to be *Kultur*.

Accordingly Hamburger speaks of a civilisation in which 'creative vitality, intelligence and imagination, the very things that had once sustained it, came to be seen as intrinsically anti-social'. And he gives as an example

the case of the Expressionist Gottfried Benn, who he says demonstrated 'a Nietzschean distaste for "levelling" democracy and a total incapacity to believe that there was any vital connection at all between art and society'. This can be seen in Benn's definition of *autonomous art*: 'Works of Art are phenomena, historically ineffective, without practical consequences. That is their greatness' (p122). Benn's definition of his creed of *Artistik* also bears witness to this notion of self-sufficient art: 'the attempt of Art to experience itself as a meaning within the general decay of all meaning'. All these sentiments, I suggest, owe much to Nietzsche's conception of individual autonomy, which gives licence to the notion of wholly aseitic meaning and value³². But they are equally problematic. For literature and poetry (Benn's concern here) would seem to presuppose a thorough engagement with and knowledge of social praxis, rather than a retreat from it. Hence his triumphing in the paradox of greatness-through-inconsequence appears hollow and false. Likewise the idea that art could 'experience itself as a meaning' would seem to militate against a necessary pre-condition of meaning - namely, that it be something shared, not something entirely circumscribed and discrete.

Gottfried Benn's notion of self-sufficient art finds its philosophical counterpart in Heidegger's notion of self-sufficient thought. Hamburger quotes from Heidegger's Über den Humanismus (1954), a letter written to M Jean Beaufret of Paris, in which he dissociates himself from all ethical systems he views as 'humanistic' (including Christianity, Marxism and Sartrean existentialism), on the grounds that they are all at root 'metaphysical'. And of his own thinking he writes that 'it has no result. It has no effect. It is sufficient to its own nature [Wesen] merely by virtue of being [indem es ist]'. There are two things to be said about this, I think.

³² Moreover, Nietzsche often appears to connect his 'new table of values' with aesthetic values: e.g. 'Our religion, morality, and philosophy are decadence forms of man. The *countermovement: art*' (WM 794); 'An anti-metaphysical view of the world - yes, but an artistic one' (WM 1048)

First, the passage strikes the reader as disingenuous, given the extent of Heidegger's oeuvre and of his influence. It partakes of a similar disingenuousness to Nietzsche's at GM *Preface 2*, except that Nietzsche's tone is more strident: having compared the creators of values to trees bearing fruit, he demands - 'Whether *you* like them, these fruits of ours? - But what is that to the trees! What is that to *us*, to us philosophers!' Secondly, and more importantly, Heidegger's ostensibly modest and self-effacing avowal seems at base to be entirely lacking in content. Whilst the first two sentences are inoffensive in their denial of any influence (cf Benn - 'historically ineffective, without practical consequences'), the third sentence seems to claim the force of Benn's further statement - 'That is their greatness'. But what is it for a philosophy to be 'sufficient to its own nature merely by virtue of being'? Sufficiency implies an adequacy in satisfying certain criteria, but what criteria is Heidegger invoking when he talks of 'being'? I would say precisely none, because there are none to be invoked (if a philosophy is sufficient in virtue of being, then any philosophy is sufficient). In other words, Heidegger's third sentence, far from implying 'greatness', is instead thoroughly vacuous.

I do not want to accuse Nietzsche of Heideggerian vacuity, and indeed to do so would amount to an ignorant calumny. Nietzsche is a verbal artist, and could never have penned a sentence such as the one discussed immediately above. Nietzschean vacuity, I suggest, takes far subtler and more insidious forms - but it nevertheless occurs. For instance, at WM 962 he says of the 'great man': 'There is a solitude within him that is inaccessible to praise or blame, his own justice that is beyond appeal'. This sentence may be taken as unobjectionable *prima facie*, but only at the cost of not taking it seriously - that is, of not understanding it as giving expression to a conception of individuality endemic to Nietzsche's work. What Nietzsche seems to want is to insulate and isolate his 'great man' from the value-judgements of the outside world. It deserves to be noted that not only is this meant to free him from blame and guilt, but also from praise and judgements of innocence: so Nietzsche is fully aware that his

doctrine of 'the discreteness of the individual realm' is not ethically one-sided in its effects - he realises that such insulation must cut 'great men' off from *all* value-judgements that originate beyond them.

Thus it appears that Nietzsche wishes the 'great man' to constitute an ethical microcosm, issuing his own laws and dispensing his own justice³³. Furthermore, his executive and judicial decisions will be incorrigible, unassailable³⁴ - in virtue of being his. It seems, then, that the same deliberative point has been reached as when Heidegger declared his philosophy to be 'sufficient to its own nature merely by virtue of being'. Where Heidegger is more reasonable is in using the word 'merely', thereby recognising the thinness of his criteria; where Nietzsche is more reasonable (in my reconstructed argument) is in adding the word 'his', thereby giving the semblance of some more substantial criteria. But what are these criteria? How will the 'great man's laws and judgements prove sufficient, that is, what criteria will they have to satisfy in order to demonstrate their validity? And surely the only answer which is forthcoming is: those criteria which the 'great man' chooses. This answer is thus reminiscent of the words which Nietzsche reports Napoleon as saying at GS 23 (quoted before at the end of chapter three): 'I have the right to answer all accusations against me with an eternal "That's me". I am apart from all the world and accept conditions from nobody'.

The *punctum saliens* of my criticism is that such a 'right'³⁵ and such apartness are fictitious, whereas what is real is non-acceptance. For the notion of a 'right' presupposes a vastly complex set of social relations

³³ cf WM 382 on the 'moral man' - 'he is a type in regard to morality, but not a type in himself; a copy, a good copy at best - the measure of his value lies outside him'

³⁴ nb WM 878 - 'how should you be able to evaluate him [the higher man], since you cannot know him, cannot compare him?'

³⁵ cf JGB 43, where Nietzsche endorses a proposition he attributes to his 'future philosopher': '"My judgement is my judgement: another cannot easily acquire a right to it" - '

and practices (of which, I would maintain, Napoleon showed a profound grasp); and being `apart from all the world´ is an empty notion, whether taken literally or metaphorically. Accordingly, the laws and virtues of the `great man´ Nietzsche invokes must be *wholly parasitic* upon a knowledge of those relations and practices referred to above, if they are to have any content. And yet if they are thus parasitic, Nietzschean radical aseity will have shown itself to be illusory: that is, it will have shown itself to be a purely negative conception, designed to counter certain social ills, yet in itself precluded from having any ameliorative effect upon them. In this way, Zarathustra´ s claim that `the spirit sundered from the world now wins *its own* world´ (Z p55) must prove to be groundless: rather, it wins nothing, or nothing more than an ethical void. Just as Benn´ s art, and Heidegger´ s philosophy win nothing by being divorced from that which gives them meaning and substance³⁶.

It seems, then, that there is much to be said for Michael Hamburger´ s dictum contained in the epigraph above. Nietzsche´ s conception of individuality, instead of providing a rational basis for and explaining the nature of his `great men´ - the greatness of whom, in either their Goethean or Napoleonic forms, I do not think many people would dispute - deprives them of such a basis and renders their nature inexplicable. In the terms of Hamburger´ s metaphor, he leaves them a head but deprives them of a body. Not that such a body is irretrievable or illusory: only that if we want to learn the nature of that body, we will have to look beyond Nietzsche.

³⁶ Similarly, I think it is fair to say, Kant´ s analysis of morality wins nothing by severing itself from all desire, inclination and incentive. Or rather, it wins a world in which moral action, by being provided with a wholly etiolated rationale (the legislative form of moral law), comes to seem more ratiocinatively opaque than it might have done before

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