NIETZSCHE’S PREFACE TO PHILOSOPHY

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Thesis Abstract

Nietzsche's philosophical practice is best understood as a set of practical exercises in preparation for the transformation of modern social life. Rather than providing pedagogical dogma or verifiable theses about the world, Nietzsche's life and work serve as an example of an attempt to abolish philosophy as an autonomous practice. His writings are examples of experiments and spiritual exercises with the aim of positing new tasks for his readers who are tasked with embarking on an adventure of subjective metamorphosis.

As the title of this thesis asserts, Nietzsche’s work is best understood as a preface to a new philosophy, to which, after a thorough re-evaluation of the philosophical tradition, Nietzsche only provides some basic foundational co-ordinates. The thesis elaborates this by focusing on Nietzsche’s earliest philosophical writings, which serve as orienting guidelines to interpret his more mature re-elaborations of similar ideas, and hence as a foundation upon which to begin philosophizing in a different way. In addition, the thesis discusses Nietzsche’s own Prefaces to some of his books, in which he articulates his philosophical practice most clearly in order to re-affirm the experimental and provisional nature of most of his central ideas. The thesis itself is therefore also a preface to this future philosophy, and future inquiry, insofar as it highlights the preliminary and preparatory nature of Nietzsche’s philosophical practice.

In this way the thesis both seeks to articulate the framework in which Nietzsche's philosophy becomes coherent and examines the ways in which Nietzsche's texts perform the redefinition and deconstruction of philosophy he attempted to complete by provoking a similar attempt in the reader.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

i the thesis comprises only my original work towards the MA except where indicated in the Preface,

ii due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used,

iii the thesis is less than 40 000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices
Acknowledgments:

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ABBREVIATIONS OF NIETZSCHE'S TEXTS

AC. *The Antichrist*, 1888

BGE. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 1886

BT. *The Birth of Tragedy*, 1872

D. *Daybreak*, 1881

DD. *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*, 1888

EH. *Ecce Homo*, 1880

GM. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 1887

GS. *The Gay Science*, 1882 (Part Five, 1887)

HH. *Human, All too Human*, 1878

T&L. *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, 1872

TI. *Twilight of the Idols*, 1888

UM. *Untimely Meditations*, 1873–76

WP. *The Will to Power*, 1968 (posthumous)

Z. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 1883–85

All editions and translations by Cambridge University Press except for:

Nietzsche's Preface to Philosophy
Preface

‘Perhaps it is only in a very restricted sense that philosophy starts with a question. It might be more correct to say that it tries to arrive at a question’ – Paul Von Tonregen

Nietzsche's philosophical project was never completed due to his untimely mental collapse and subsequent early death. Yet, his philosophy is unfinished not merely because he stopped writing as a result of his breakdown but also because it is a continuous attempt to bring to consciousness an ever developing and changing struggle that language is not always equipped to articulate – the process of life itself. Instead of developing an alternative philosophical system, Nietzsche struggles to extricate himself from all existing philosophical systems whilst attempting to live long enough to tell the tale. His writings therefore serve only as provisional and preparatory experiments, making way for the right type of people to bring about the transformation of the modern social relations and institutions dependent on and reproducing the philosophical tradition inherited from post-Socratic culture. Far from an example of a philosophical life ‘his whole philosophy, then, would be a preface to the experiment of life itself.’

As the title of this thesis asserts, Nietzsche’s work is best understood as a preface to a future philosophy, to which, after a thorough re-evaluation of the philosophical tradition, Nietzsche only provides some basic foundational co-ordinates. The provisionality of his philosophy stems

1 It is common in the literature to claim that Nietzsche's thought comprises a system and that he even has an 'ontology'. This is partly due to the misreading of Nietzsche by Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's lectures on Nietzsche are fascinating and justly influential, but they no longer serve as important a purpose as when first conceived. Heidegger's ontologically reductive interpretation, aimed at salvaging Nietzsche from an equally reductive biologicist appropriation by the Nazis, is guided by his insistence that the task of an interpreter is to unveil the central 'teachings' and doctrines of every philosopher. In the case of Nietzsche this kind of reading is likely to obscure the more important experimental and practical intentions of his thought. See Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche, in four volumes ed. and trans., David Farrell Krell (Harper, 1991). For a contemporary approach that attempts to read Nietzsche as a systematic metaphysician see John Richardson, Nietzsche's System (OUP, 2002).

2 This striking and accurate description is provided by Paul Von Tonregen. See ‘‘Ich Bin Darin […] Ego Ipsissimus […], Ego Ipsissimum’’. Nietzsche's Philosophische Experimente Mit Der Literarischen Form Der Vorrede,’ Nietzsche Studien, Nov 2012, Vol. 41, Issue 1, pp1-16).
from Nietzsche's diagnosis that our world is still living in the shadow of dead gods. In light of
this situation, anything more than a provisional approach would pretend to have overcome the
cultural habits of millennia in one fell swoop and, out of haste, risk re-establishing that which it
is so eager to overcome.

This thesis shares this modesty in its aims and is therefore also a preface to this future
philosophy, and future inquiry, insofar as it highlights the preliminary and preparatory nature of
Nietzsche’s philosophical practice. The thesis does this by focusing on Nietzsche’s earliest
philosophical writings, which serve as orienting guidelines to interpret his more mature re-
elaborations of similar ideas, and hence as a foundation upon which to begin philosophizing in a
different way. In addition, the thesis discusses Nietzsche’s own Prefaces to some of his books, in
which he articulates his philosophical practice most clearly, in order to re-affirm the
experimental and provisional nature of most of his central ideas. In this way the thesis both seeks
to articulate the framework in which Nietzsche's philosophy becomes coherent and examines the
ways in which Nietzsche's texts perform the redefinition and deconstruction of philosophy he
attempted to carry out by provoking a similar attempt in the reader.

Nietzsche's philosophical project is best understood as a set of practical spiritual exercises in
preparation for the transformation of modern social life. Rather than providing pedagogical
dogma or verifiable theses on the world, Nietzsche's life and work serve as an example of an
attempt to abolish philosophy as an autonomous practice. His writings are examples of
experiments and spiritual exercises with the aim of promoting new tasks for his readers. These
‘philosophers of the future’ are tasked with embarking on an adventure of subjective
metamorphosis through developing a tangible philosophical practice rather than a merely
reflective art.

In response to the untenability of traditional philosophical questioning, Nietzsche undertakes to
make his own life an experiment on the uses and disadvantages of philosophy, with the aim of
transmitting this experiment to his readers. Nietzsche makes a correlation between himself and
the vast array of social and cultural problems he attempts to overcome in himself through his
writings. ‘My writings speak only of my overcomings: ‘I am in them, together with everything
that was inimical to me, ego ipsissimus’ (HH II, Preface, § 1).\(^3\) He offers himself as a stand-in human being upon which the problems of the age are played out. In order to overcome those problems, Nietzsche has to overcome himself insofar as he is implicated and suffers from them. As Daniel Conway correctly observes, ‘In order to complete his critique of modernity, that is, he enlists himself to stand for humanity as a whole.’\(^4\) The example given by this literary experiment is not to be mistaken as a solely literary achievement but as testimony to the experiences of Nietzsche’s own life. Nietzsche’s philosophy is to be understood as a continuous experiment, performed on his own body, utilizing only his own physiological and intellectual resources (which for him are one and the same) in which the problems of the modern age seek resolution. To the question ‘How should Nietzsche be read?’ we offer the answer that one should attempt to repeat his gesture and perform a perpetual ‘attempt at a self-criticism’\(^5\) by living one’s life as a series of experiments that have as their goal: metamorphosis through self–overcoming.

Nietzsche's genealogical project consists of a scholarly, ethical and political dimension. These three distinct practices cohere into a unified a way-of-life:

**Scholarship:** The investigation into the man-made origins and histories of modes of life.

**Ethics:** The practical evaluation and experimentation of these acquired traditions of culture through a total transformation of one’s own habits with the aim of developing an-other way-of-life.

**Politics:** Openly communicating these attempts at transformation and their results by practicing this way of life with others with the aim of transforming society as a whole.

In this thesis the terms ‘philosophical practice’ and ‘genealogy’\(^6\) are used interchangeably to refer to Nietzsche’s work. Rather than an explicit commentary on Nietzsche’s book *On the*

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\(^3\) Please note: all quotations from Nietzsche are italicized. Throughout the thesis I will be using the abbreviations listed at the beginning of the thesis for Nietzsche’s texts in line with common practice in Nietzsche scholarship. Similarly, due to the numerous translations and editions of his work currently available, numbering is provided according to the aphorism and sections being quoted rather than by page number. Aphorisms and Sections are indicated by the symbol §.


\(^5\) The title Nietzsche gave to the Preface to BT upon re-publication in 1886.
Genealogy of Morals the thesis is a preparatory study of the preconditions for and practice of self-overcoming as an element of a much broader and socially oriented philosophical practice that Nietzsche's demands.

The use of the phrase philosophical practice to describe Nietzsche’s work is not meant in the way in which contemporary philosophically inspired therapists or counselors refer to their practice or strictly to the tradition of philosophy that Pierre Hadot has revived in his studies of Hellenic Philosophy as a way-of-life. Despite some of the resemblances, and the undeniable insight and therapeutic benefit these emerging philosophical practices and interpretations have contributed to our understanding of Nietzsche, his practice does not correspond either to a form of individually-focused therapy, due to his emphasis on historical investigation and total social and political transformation, or to philosophy as a way-of-life in the tradition of the ancients, due to Nietzsche's rejection of the possibility of achieving a correlation between objective moral knowledge and living the good life, or the desirability of such a correlation. My position is elaborated throughout the thesis and summarised in the conclusion. I believe a proper conceptual study of what Nietzsche means by practice or praxis in relation to the history of these terms has not been carried out. This is in part due to the fact that Nietzsche never uses these terms himself to describe what he is doing. Implicit to his approach is an overcoming of the dichotomy between theory and practice as traditionally understood. Due to the long and complicated history of both terms such a study is beyond the scope of this thesis which aims to clear the ground for a proper future evaluation.  

It is most common when discussing genealogy to refer to the text Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals as the prime example of his method. An influential example is Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in Language, Countermemory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, ed., Bouchard (Cornell University Press, 1977). Indeed, the analysis of the origins of punishment, asceticism and the ideas of good and evil are at the forefront of Nietzsche's philosophy but he only starts using the word genealogy to refer to his practice upon publication of GM in the late 1880's. Nonetheless, the argument this thesis puts forward is that the foundations for the method were prepared conceptually much earlier in Nietzsche's life, as he himself describes in GM (Preface,1-3). As summarized by Chiara Piazzesi, for the Nietzsche of 1887, “The main issues remain basically the same: recognizing our extraneousness from ourselves in those very judgments and categories that are most familiar to us, analysing the conditions in which the values that structure our (moral) perception of the world developed, and questioning their value (the value of values), their effect on life itself, and their nature as signs or symptoms of a certain form of life etc.”. See Chiara Piazzesi “Greed and Love: Genealogy, Dissolution and Therapeutic Effects of a Linguistic Difference in FW 14” in Nietzsche on Instinct and Language, ed., Constancio and Mayer Branco (Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

A study of these terms in relation to Nietzsche’s philosophy has not been undertaken in the scholarship about him. For a thorough general introduction to the history of the terms, neglecting Nietzsche, see Nicholas Lobkowicz,
Nietzsche’s work is a form of philosophical practice insofar as his books are not to be read as a series of propositions, dogma, or arguments, but as invitations to experiment with a range of perspectives, attitudes, styles and ways of living. The reader should not stand back but must undergo the philosophical labor that the texts perform. Nietzsche’s writings are performative through their stylistic variety; ranging between aphorism, essay, poem, treatise and back again and exhibiting a great subtlety of rhythm and metaphor. The musicality of the texts is a deliberate attempt on Nietzsche’s behalf to blur the distinctions between propositional language and rhetoric, poetry and prose, cognition and imagination.

The thesis is divided into three chapters:

The first chapter analyses some of the central philosophical concepts that Nietzsche critiques, to make way for his different understanding of philosophy, and which serve as theoretical principles to guide his experiments and to direct his readers. These are: the critique of anthropomorphism, the rejection of teleology, and the presumed a-historical nature of propositional language. Early in his life Nietzsche spent a lot of effort in writing more traditional studies of philosophical terms as part his apprenticeship and it is in this period, between 1868 and 1873, that his philosophy already takes shape at a conceptual level. Central to Nietzsche's criticism is a reckoning with the Kantian tradition he absorbed through his reading of Schopenhauer and F.A. Lange. Inspired by their mutual interpretations of Kant, Nietzsche became increasingly critical of the inherent cognitivism and anthropomorphism of Kant's epistemology. It is through this critique that Nietzsche will begin to develop his physiologically grounded genealogical method.

The rejection of anthropomorphism is at root of Nietzsche's critique of the alleged centrality of human concerns and motivations to the rest of the natural world and that is why he goes on to

\[\text{Theory and Practice: The History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx, (University of Notre Dame Press, 1967). For an introduction to the emerging method of philosophical therapy or counseling known as Philosophical Practice, which attempts to incorporate Nietzschean approaches, see Shlomit Schuster, Philosophy Practice: An Alternative to Counseling and Psychotherapy (Greenwood Publishing, 1999). Two other major proponents of this type of practical philosophical therapy are Lou Marinoff, Plato not Prozac! (Quill Publishing 2000) and Peter Raabe, Philosophical Counselling: Theory and Practice (Praeger Publishing, 2000). For a recent attempt to utilise the notion of practice as ‘Anthropotechnics,’ as the basis for a philosophical anthropology, see Peter Sloterdijk's You Must Change Your Life, trans., Wieland Hoban (Polity Press, 2013). (University of Notre-Dame Press, 1967). For a reconstruction of the way in which philosophy was understood as a life practice in the ancient Western world see the works of Pierre Hadot, in particular What Is Ancient Philosophy?, trans., Michael Chase (Harvard University Press, 2004).}\]
prepare a dissertation on the history of teleology in German philosophy. The critique and rejection of teleology and finality in nature will become central aspects of Nietzsche's adoption of metamorphosis and self-overcoming as rival philosophical projects to the prevalent ideas of self-development and fulfillment, premised as they are on an understanding of history as redemption.

Central to the critique of self-mastery (the dominant value of Western culture according to Nietzsche) is the critique of language. Nietzsche argues that desire for mastery and domination is behind the mistaken belief in the objectivity of propositional language. This mistake is premised on a misunderstanding of the physiological and metaphorical origins of linguistic expression. This theory lies behind Nietzsche's emphatic rejection of 'truth' as an outcome of linguistic description. The metaphorical nature of linguistic expression is what allows him to uncover the history of science and morality as a series of socially and historically produced lies, myths and pragmatically serving customs that have mistakenly been apprehended as true laws of reality, determining human conduct. If tradition consists of a series lies that we mistakenly take to be truths, genealogy in the form of self-overcoming and philologically executed historical investigations of origins becomes a necessary correction for any naive adoption of essential definitions of human nature or identity. Without belief in truth, there can be no 'true believers'. This critique also grounds Nietzsche's rejection of historical and cultural theories that propose to lead the species to its fulfillment and eternal happiness, just as much as it is an antidote to the nihilistic rejection of any project for humanity. The critique of language explains the way in which Nietzsche goes about practicing his own self-transformations. The derivative and metaphorical nature of language is central to his critique of truth and subjectivity and thus fundamental to his refashioning of critical philosophical practice as subjective metamorphosis.

The second chapter of this thesis is a study of Nietzsche's practice of self-overcoming as a subversion of the dominant role that truth plays in philosophy and way in which this subversion allows him to practice philosophy as psychological unmasking. Nietzsche seeks to make a connection between the style and personality of a thinker and their form of historical consciousness or philosophical method. The chapter therefore focuses on the way in which Nietzsche does this in his text *On the Uses and Disadvantages of Philosophy for Life* (UM, II). This attempts to implicate the reader in an ethical practice of self-critique in order to transform
the reader's belief in the value of truth and the aims of knowledge. In this way the text is a first early example of the potential of Nietzsche's genealogical practice.

Nietzsche's critical delineation of types of historical consciousness does not only apply to the way in which other philosophers construct their own work and personality but also to the way in which they interpret Nietzsche's own writings. Thus the critique of history developed by the historian in question reveals their own personal history of critique, that is, the measure of self-critique practiced by the historian in question. Nietzsche's critique of truth thus serves as a guide to a proper reading practice of his own philosophy and hence as an important element in the preparatory exercise his work asks his readers to perform. In order to do justice to his ideas Nietzsche himself practices what he preaches and exposes in his writings his own prejudices and transformations through his rhetoric. That style betrays temperament is a crucial aspect of his evaluation of philosophical expression. It is necessary to perform the critical exercise that Nietzsche asks the reader to engage in by exposing the reader to the temperament of the author. This allows for the reader to understand and criticise himself or herself more immediately and openly by taking a risk. This is for the sake of affording the reader with an opportunity to make a more honest appreciation of the ideas in question, and their own prejudices, on their way to 'self-overcoming.'

The third chapter shows how Nietzsche performs this self-critique by writing critical Prefaces to his own published books upon re-publication in 1886. The Prefaces of 1886 serve as a laboratory for studying Nietzsche’s philosophical practice, insofar as it is expressed in writing. Through the Prefaces, he highlights the lack of correspondence between human experiences and the accepted way of understanding and explaining them at any given time. The way in which Nietzsche's prefaxes undermine the meanings of his own books and re-contextualise the events of his own life provides an example of the way in which he wishes his readers themselves to experiment with their own lives through genealogical inquiry. 8

8 One could have chosen Nietzsche's ‘autobiography’ Ecce Homo as a test case, but this is unsuitable for a number of reasons. Firstly, the text is very complex in its strategies of expression and would require a treatment that is not possible within the limits of this thesis. Secondly, the text is composed as a communication of the results of Nietzsche's transformations and as an indication of new positive and productive stage of writing. It is in the Prefaces, however, that we see the strategies Nietzsche employs as part of his preparation for that new stage. For this reason, a discussion of the Prefaces is more revealing for our purposes. For a recent and productive discussion of Ecce Homo as an example of Nietzsche's historical method see Anthony K. Jensen, Nietzsche's Philosophy of History (CUP, 2014).
From his personal case Nietzsche will draw a general conclusion: language cannot be the only medium through which to practice the ‘philosophy of the future.’ If the problem then is the relationship between life and language, the challenges handed down to us by Nietzsche’s philosophy should be addressed not only through language but also through other practices such as music, dance, cultural rituals, conspiratorial politics and other forms of non-linguistically oriented activity.

Despite initially operating within the dominant modes of the established philosophical tradition, Nietzsche strayed too far from this path and turned his back on it. He became an independent thinker that should not be placed into any philosophical tradition, but rather understood as he himself wished: as an event that ‘splits the history of humanity into two parts’ by undermining the very need for philosophy as hitherto understood. What could Nietzsche's Dionysian wisdom consist of other than calling into question the very institution of philosophy and the media responsible for its dissemination by learning to live with a critical relationship to the value of truth? Nietzsche's work asks us to set new tasks for our age by facing the actual and practical problems of our own lives, without sentimentality, insofar as they are necessarily reflective of our own time. His work is an attempt at a new beginning, an attempt to invent new tasks for his readers, and not an attempt at finding more meaning in old ones. It is towards furthering this attempt that this thesis is offered as a contribution.

9 The sub-title Nietzsche chose for his own book BG is ‘Prelude to the Philosophy of the Future’.

10 Nietzsche indeed had more explicit political ambitions towards the end of his active life. Due to his growing notoriety, mainly through the efforts of the Danish philosopher Georges Brandes and the Swedish playwright August Strindberg (with whom Nietzsche had a brief exchange of letters), Nietzsche's gained renewed confidence in his mission. After many years of depression, these correspondences inspired him to articulate in clearer and more direct language his conspiratorial ambitions to form a ‘party of life’. The party, once established conspiratorially would attempt to influence the course of European history. It is beyond the scope of this work to analyse in detail these attempts as our focus is on the philosophical means internal to Nietzsche's method of thinking rather than his more overtly political tactics. For a detailed and illuminating discussion of the ‘party of life’, see Hugo Halferty Drochon, ‘The Time Is Coming When We Will Relearn Politics,’ Journal of Nietzsche Studies, No. 39, (Spring, 2010).

11 In a more joking tone, Nietzsche explains in a short staged dialogue from The Gay Science why he nonetheless continues to write as part of his philosophical practice: But then why do you write? - A: I am not one of those who think with a wet quill in hand; much less one of those who abandon themselves to their passions right before the open inkwell, sitting on their chair and staring at the paper. I am annoyed or ashamed by all writing; to me, writing is nature’s call - to speak of it even in simile is repugnant to me. B: But why, then, do you write? - A: Well, my friend, I say this in confidence: until now I have found no other means of getting rid of my thoughts. - B: And why do you want to get rid of them? - A: Why do I want to? Do I want to? I have to. - B: Enough! Enough (GS, § 93).

12 EH, ‘Why I am Destiny,’ § 8.
Introduction: ‘Life is no argument.’

Through recognizing that the practice of philosophy, historically understood, is a cultural symptom of a specific and degenerate social arrangement, Nietzsche's work becomes the conspiracy of an ‘isolated individual, who uses the means of his class not only against his own class, but against the existing form of the human species as a whole’. A conspirator then, not a therapist or an educator, and most importantly, not a ‘philosopher’.

Nietzsche's conspiracy acquires its power by forcing the tension between the uses and disadvantages of philosophy to breaking point. Offering himself up as a testament and gift to posterity on the hazards of the examined life, a counter-Socrates, Nietzsche puts his own life at stake by examining relentlessly and meticulously the effects of philosophical examination on his health and habits. His physiologically grounded critical project therefore adopts and subverts the same means through which philosophy has managed to articulate itself as a human practice – consciousness and language. Nietzsche's approach does not exclude active questioning but recognises the artificiality and historically dependent nature of language and conceptual thinking. Language and concepts for him do not articulate reality in a higher or better way but rather construct a particular form of experience that is presented as being morally superior and epistemologically clearer. Nietzsche seeks to uncover both the supposed superiority of this mode of experience along with the benevolence and sincerity of the motivation behind those who

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1313 GS, § 121.

14 Pierre Klossowski Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle, trans., Daniel W. Smith (University of Chicago Press, 1997). That Pierre Klossowski understood this already in the context of a stifling atmosphere of late 60s Marxist and rationalist platitude in regards to Nietzsche's legacy, is a testament not only to Nietzsche’s genius but also to Klossowski's own. At that time, in the early days of the ‘Nietzsche Renaissance’, Nietzsche’s work was understood, by official Marxist dogma, as a class based conspiracy against the proletariat. Or in the case of official, normalised and medicalised rationalism, a case of delirium or insanity. Believing that they are reversing the trend, contemporary attempts to rehabilitate Nietzsche’s reputation in academia or as a therapist of culture is a mixed blessing. Whilst allowing for more honest evaluation of his work, without the baggage of anti-Nazi hysteria or Marxist dogma, these authors seem to forget one crucial thing that we must, along with Klossowski, never forget – Nietzsche was a conspirator against culture.
promote it. His diagnostic approach is at its most unnerving when he questions the health of those who accept the claims of this philosophical tradition or way of life.

Reifying what are historically generated phenomena as human ‘faculties’, the philosophical tradition has held language and consciousness hostage by tying their development to the liberation and destiny of the human species. Opposed to teleological thinking in all its forms and the anthropomorphism it depends on, Nietzsche wishes to dethrone both consciousness and language as privileged features of human life by releasing them from their captivity as faculties and returning them to the flux of historical and physiological development.

From this perspective Nietzsche diagnoses what he saw to be the fundamental characteristic of Western Culture - the ultimately moralistic attempt of rendering the world explicable and perfectible through rational inquiry - as a pathological symptom of a profound sickness:

‘Every philosophy that ranks peace above war, every ethic with a negative definition of happiness, every metaphysics and physics that knows some finale, a final state of some sort, every predominantly aesthetic or religious craving for some Apart, Beyond, Outside, Above, permits the question whether it was not illness that inspired the philosopher’ (GS, Preface, § 2)

The efforts to ward off the fundamental lack of correspondence between human endeavors and the nature of things is not only mistaken but malicious. Far from a happy progression of enlightenment and release from domination, this attempt at establishing clarity and peace is maintained through the concerted and violent efforts to maintain social life through ‘systems of cruelty’ (GM, II, § 3) dependent on the spiritualization of suffering. Having heralded the now commonplace belief in the Death of God, or, the lack of correspondence between human cultural experiences and the nature of things, Nietzsche claimed that nonetheless we still live in the shadow of this God, as an aphorism titled ‘New Struggles’ warns us:

15 Nietzsche's contention is that contrary to still current popular opinion Socrates' questioning does not inaugurate or cause the development of dialectical tradition but rather that his radical and fanatical questioning is a late and derivative development and thus a symptom of a profound spiritual disorientation as a result of the increasing rationalisation of Ancient Greek culture. See BT, § 14, § 15 and TI ‘The Problem of Socrates’. 
‘After Buddha was dead people showed his shadow for centuries afterwards in a cave, - an immense frightful shadow. God is dead: - but as the human race is constituted, there will perhaps be caves for millenniums yet, in which people will show his shadow. - And we - we have still to overcome his shadow!’ (GS, § 108).

So, even after the ‘Death of God’ we are far from exiting this ‘system of cruelty’ and insist on orienting our culture around attempts to keep existential disorientation at bay at any costs, rather than celebrating this lack of correspondence as a permanent feature of life.

For Nietzsche, the history of rational culture thus appears as a refined form of torture, albeit with unexpected and interesting outcomes of which the history of philosophy is but one. Nietzsche is unequivocal when he explains what this effort entails: ‘The meaning of all culture is the reduction of the beast of prey ‘man’ to a tame a civilized animal, a domestic animal...’ (GM, I, § 11). Nietzsche equated this domestication with the creation, in the case of Western history, of the calculable, consistent and communicable human being- the 'sovereign individual'- who, due to his or her ability to make promises, renders him or herself useful to the interests of those wielding power.

Understood from this perspective, the history of philosophy is nothing but the repeated attempts on behalf of cultural reformers to transform the framework through which human life becomes communicable and measurable; becomes governable. The different philosophical schools and theories are seen as competing methods and practices in governing and regulating the irreducible and unfathomable experience of human existence. Philosophy therefore, far from being a tool for the liberation or enlightenment of the human, is one of the leading tools within the ‘dark workshop’ (GM, 1, § 14) of rational culture that attempts to make life transparent by creating a
correspondence between experience and communicability.\textsuperscript{16} It is from within this ‘dark workshop’ that Nietzsche's own philosophical practice struggles to find an exit.

Philosophical practice as traditionally understood is therefore part and parcel of what Nietzsche defines as Socratic optimism and thus but another chapter in the sordid history of the will to truth – the noxious proposition that knowledge=virtue=happiness, or the ‘Unshakable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but of even correcting it’ (BT, § 15). Nietzsche takes aim at this prejudice by investigating the belief structure that renders such an idea possible.

At first glance it might seem strange that the cure for optimism is a merciless critique and conspiratorial mission. Would it not be enough to make a better argument? But this would already accept the terms of the debate set by the philosophical tradition Nietzsche rejects. Indeed, Nietzsche's project appears very strange if we understand optimism to be what its practitioners profess it to be: a benevolent attempt to render service to the species. For Nietzsche argues that, despite the naïve and simple minded belief of positivists, the triumph of rationalism is not due simply to the historical success of scientific demonstration; this success is only possible if one believes in its necessity in the first place. Thus, instead of demanding a widening of scientific inquiry with the aim of the progress of knowledge, Nietzsche calls for a ‘Gay Science’ that, by understanding the physiological underpinnings of metaphysical and moral systems, would seek not to dominate the world through quantification and measurement but rather enhance life by de-anthropomorphising nature, and along with it the human species, and thus making room for other than human, all too human, concerns.

\textsuperscript{16} This understanding of the history of philosophy has been articulated in recent years by Giorgio Agamben, who continues Nietzsche's project through an investigation of the ways in which Western politics attempts to implicate the human being in language as a means of ensuring the governability of the species. What Nietzsche describes as conditions for the creation of sovereign individuals in \textit{The Genealogy of Morals} is elaborated by Agamben, via a detour through Foucault and Arendt, as the process in which politics becomes articulated through a separation between the humanity and non-humanity of living beings, or between the speaking and the non-speaking human being. Politics, for Agamben, is the process of the anthropomorphisation of the human animal. It is clear that, despite distancing himself from Nietzsche, perhaps due to his being influenced by Heidegger's one-sided interpretation, Agamen's project elaborates in theological and ontological terms what Nietzsche proposes in his philosophy. See, Giorgio Agamben, \textit{Homo Sacer}; trans., Daniel Heller-Roazen (SUP, 1996), \textit{The Open – Man and Animal}, trans., Kevin Attel (SUP 2003) and \textit{The Sacrament of Language}, trans., Adam Kotsko (SUP, 2010).
Likewise, Nietzsche does not succumb to a simple historicist theory of competing claims for hegemony, which claims that rationalism is but the victorious religion of a triumphant social class, managing to conquer its equally eligible rivals. Rather than seeking a method of reconciliation, whether through interaction and dialogue, or through initial violence that aims at eventual harmony, Nietzsche calls for an overthrow of the very beliefs that make such an interpretation of history possible: the belief in the inherent rationality of competing world-views and the belief in the progressive nature of history.

Instead, Nietzsche argues that the triumph of rationalism was made possible due to its ‘moral character’. For what are the beliefs in progress, gradual human improvement, and the plausibility of a total understanding of the natural world and society if they are not symptoms of an incurable spiritual and civilizational optimism? ‘Is scientific method perhaps no more than fear of and flight from pessimism? A subtle defense against - truth? Or, to put it in moral terms, is it something like cowardice and insincerity?’ (BT, ‘An Attempt at Self-Criticism’, § 1). For Nietzsche, this world historical optimism is a symptom of a sickness that seeks to hide its condition, a will-to-power that lies about its intentions. Optimism, and its manifestation in rationally motivated enterprises of the pursuit of perfection (science) and the pursuit of profit (capitalism), is a historical phenomenon that indicates a profound crisis on behalf of its adherents. This crisis Nietzsche understands to be the result of an inability on behalf of the majority of humanity, both historically and in the present, to accept the fact of its own cosmic insignificance, relative weakness and the total lack of symmetry between the nature of human-beings self-understanding and desires for themselves and the real nature of things. Arrogance parades as truth, and optimism and anthropomorphism walk hand in hand towards an abyss. It is the desire for human domination that launches the project of humanisation of the earth.

Nietzsche, following Spinoza (whom he admired) wagers that optimists are those who, failing to recognise the history of humanisation, will constantly only see what they were already looking for: a sign of recognition from the world around them. Denying both history and society, optimists think that what they find to be theirs, must have always been theirs and what is possessed by others, they will always lack. This optimism is therefore articulated either as naïveté and stupidity on behalf of the possessor, or as resentment on behalf of the possessor to
A pessimism of strength leads Nietzsche to reorient philosophical inquiry from a universalised need based on the belief in its own virtue and eventual fulfillment,\textsuperscript{17} to a pursuit based on an inquisitiveness that is not concerned with recognition; a transformative and disruptive form of wisdom. The Socratic philosophical ethos stems from the blackmail of supposedly having no other options and proclaims in philosophically eugenicist tones that ‘the unexamined life is not worth living’.

For the majority of philosophers in the Socratic tradition, resisting philosophical wisdom is a sign that one has lost their head. Rather than turning philosophy into a guillotine that we are condemned to place ourselves under, without understanding the charges and no matter what the conditions, Nietzsche adopts philosophy as a graceful but difficult challenge that we should engage in; an acrobatic exercise - to save our heads.

Nonetheless, despite Nietzsche's critique of propositional language, and the presumed virtues of philosophical reflection, he does not abandon either thinking or writing but indeed becomes a virtuoso of both and is a wonderful stylist of the mind and on the page. It is precisely due to the

\textsuperscript{17} On the way in which Aristotle ingeniously transforms Socratism, a nascent cultural movement into a universal human desire based on a 'will to know' see Foucault's analysis in Lectures on the Will to Know (Lectures at the College De France 1970-1971 and Oedipal Knowledge) trans., Graham Burchell (Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).
lack of any universal or metaphysical foundation for human endeavour that Nietzsche has faith in this kind of philosophical practice. Affirming both the necessity and artificiality of metaphysics (language and consciousness), and the tragic nature of all cultural endeavor, Nietzsche nonetheless devotes himself to philosophy as the tragic art *par excellence* and continues to practice philosophy through the media of intellectual concepts and language, rather than abandoning his written work, or, despite his conspiratorial ambitions, taking on a more deliberate 'criminal' relationship to society, or finding a different way to spend his time.

The strength Nietzsche drew from his pessimism eventually matured into a newly found faith. Nietzsche found his own kind of optimism: a deep wish that the people around him would awaken to the unprecedented cultural situation they found themselves in, with the onset of modernity, and take it upon themselves to consciously rebuild and experiment with their lives. Central to the methods of experimentation and evaluation that Nietzsche adopts and calls for is the practice of self-transformation, or metamorphosis. As practiced through the Prefaces Nietzsche attached to his books upon re-publication, and emphasised in the speech by Zarathustra titled 'On Self-Overcoming', Nietzsche proposes self-overcoming as a value that seeks to replace self-mastery as the central philosophical and cultural value of the West, and to pave the way for a future philosophy on the ruins of the old one.18

It is Nietzsche's hope that his reports concerning the uses and disadvantages of philosophy for life will lead to the development of a new type of philosophising and hence a new type of human being freed from the shackles and blackmails of Socratic culture. Nietzsche acquired this newly found faith in a future humanity, after his self-proclaimed triumph over misanthropy.19 It prompted the following intimate disclosure, titled 'Intellectual Conscience', which betrays a

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18 The possibility that Nietzsche’s work could be best understood in relation to the philosophical traditions of India, Japan and China, particularly Daoism and Zen Buddhism, or from a broader trans-cultural perspective is plausible and, due to exiting recent studies, very promising. These questions are beyond the scope of this thesis which discusses Nietzsche’s work primarily in relation to the European tradition he was rejecting. For an introductory discussion of these questions see, *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*, ed., Graham Parkes (University of Chicago Press, 1996). On Nietzsche’s relation to Buddhism see, Andre van der Braak, *Nietzsche and Zen: Self-Overcoming Without a Self* (Lexington Books, 2011) and Manu Bazzano, *Buddha is Dead: Nietzsche and the Dawn of European Zen* (Sussex Academic Press, 2006). On Nietzsche and Daoism, see the work of French sinologist Francois Jullien, in particular, *Vital Nourishment: Departing from Happiness*, trans., Arthur Goldhammer (Zone Books, 2008).

19 As described emphatically in D, Preface of 1886 and GS, Preface of 1886.
fidelity to an almost fanatic demand that still places him squarely in the Socratic tradition he was at pains to extricate himself from:

**Intellectual Conscience**

_I keep having the same experience and keep resisting it anew each time; I do not want to believe it although I can grasp it as with my hands: the great majority lacks an intellectual conscience - indeed, it has often seemed to me as if someone requiring such a conscience would be as lonely in the most densely populated cities as he would be in the desert. Everyone looks at you with strange eyes and goes on handling their scales, calling this good and that evil; nobody as much as blushes when you notice that their weights are underweight - nor do they become indignant with you; perhaps they laugh at your doubts. I mean: to the great majority it is not contemptible to believe this or that and to live accordingly without first becoming aware of the final and most certain reasons pro and con, and without even troubling themselves about such reasons afterwards: the most gifted men and the noblest women still belong to this 'great majority'. But what are goodheartedness, refinement, and genius to me when the person possessing these virtues tolerates slack feelings in his believing and judging and when he does not consider the desire for certainty to be his inmost craving and deepest need - as that which separates the higher human beings from the lower! I discovered in certain pious people a hatred of reason and I was well disposed towards them for that: at least this betrayed their bad intellectual conscience! But to stand in the midst of this rerum concordia discors and the whole marvelous uncertainty and ambiguity of existence without questioning, without trembling with the craving and rapture of questioning, without at least hating the person who questions, perhaps even being faintly amused by him - that is what I feel to be contemptible, and this is the feeling I look for first in anyone. Some folly keeps persuading me that every person has this feeling, simply as human. That is my type of injustice._ (GS, § 2)

The ‘injustice’ Nietzsche admits to is his expectation that everyone practice philosophy. Recognising that this expectation still betrays a fidelity to the Socratic condemnation of the unreflected life, Nietzsche re-orients his demands and shifts from an appeal to reason to a practice of metamorphosis. From Zarathustra's mouth the demand for intellectual conscience is refashioned as project of self-overcoming. Overcoming his own lingering Socratism, Nietzsche
has Zarathustra begin his transformation by questioning the motives of truth seeking: ‘Will to truth’ you call that which drives you and makes you lustful, you wisest ones? Will to thinkability of all being, that’s what I call your will! You first want to make all being thinkable, because you doubt, with proper suspicion, whether it is even thinkable’. (Z, part two, ‘On Self-Overcoming’).

Rather than of a condemnation of existence, Nietzsche has Zarathustra reveal that it is precisely the lack of justification for existence that is the secret to its mystery and majesty. Zarathustra continues his sermon by declaring that, through his own transformations he discovered that it is the joy in self-overcoming, and not the attempt to render the world thinkable, that is the befitting temperament for a philosopher: And this secret life itself spoke to me: ‘Behold,’ it said, ‘I am that which must always overcome itself. To be sure, you call it will to beget or drive to a purpose, to something higher, more distant, more manifold: but all this is one, and one secret. I would rather perish than renounce this one thing; and truly, wherever there is decline and the falling of leaves, behold, there life sacrifices itself - for power! That I must be struggle and becoming and purpose and the contradiction of purposes - alas, whoever guesses my will guesses also on what crooked paths it must walk! Whatever I may create and however I may love it - soon I must oppose it and my love, thus my will wants it’. (Z, part 2, ‘On Self-Overcoming’).

This joyful temperament animates Nietzsche's philosophical practice and is thus central to his broader project. Starting from a deep skepticism as the value and promise of philosophy as a way-of-life, Nietzsche gradually shifts towards a renewed faith in the possibilities of a different kind of philosophical practice. Rather than a cause for despair, Nietzsche's announcement that ‘God is Dead’, and along with him, the traditions supported by Socratic moralism, is a cause for celebration that makes philosophy possible again. In place of a search for truth, or an attempt to ‘improve man’s estate’, Nietzsche calls for an experimental philosophical practice that will throw off its humanistic crutches, its thoughtless optimism and the belief in its own virtue, and allow for a naturalistic, cautious and more honest transformation of individuals and cultures. It is the aim of the following three chapters to elucidate the form that this new philosophy might take. These chapters will attempt to provide the reader with the necessary orientation to continue with this experiment and take up Nietzsche’s philosophical practice as part of their own lives.
Chapter One – The History of Overcoming.

It is crucial to understand what philosophical conclusions Nietzsche draws from his early philosophical investigations into modern thought and to establish the importance these reflections had for him from the very beginning of his career. These conclusions would be developed, refined and transformed from guiding principles into a full blown critical social theory or genealogical method. It is important to present them in their nascent form in order to show that Nietzsche did not come to philosophy late but rather approached his philological academic teaching and research activities always already from within a very specific post-Kantian philosophical horizon, mediated through the teachings of Schopenhauer and F.A. Lange. Nietzsche's philosophy acquires its power by forcing the tension between the uses and disadvantages of philosophy for life to breaking point. This tension is generated by Nietzsche’s adoption of Kant's epistemological critique of metaphysics that affirms the impossibility yet inevitability of metaphysical speculation and knowledge. The tension thus generated will ultimately lead to Nietzsche's overcoming of the Kantian framework he inherited and towards the search for a practically oriented critical philosophy.

From the evidence in Nietzsche's letters, recent biographical studies, new and more complete English translations and scholarly reconstructions it is clear that from early in his life, Nietzsche had an ambition to become a philosopher. Already, as a student in Leipzig, Nietzsche was preoccupied with contemporary philosophical problems alongside his strictly philological and classical studies, lectures and publications. Nietzsche's philosophical ambitions were so pronounced that he applied, unsuccessfully, for the chair of philosophy at Basel in early 1870,

20 Julian Young, Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography (CUP 2010), George. J. Stack, Lange and Nietzsche, (Walter de Gruyter, 1983), James Porter, Nietzsche and the Philology of the Future (SUP, 2000), Claudia Crawford, The Beginnings of Nietzsche’s Theory of Language (Water de Gruyter, 1988), Christian J. Emden, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of History (CUP, 2008) and Paul W. Swift, Becoming Nietzsche (Lexington Books, 2005). Whilst the work of all these scholars is invaluable and crucial for a reappraisal of Nietzsche's life and thought, there is not much disagreement amongst them about the content and importance of the early philosophical writings but rather, differences in emphasis concerning the intellectual influences on Nietzsche's thoughts. My intention is to reconstruct the philosophical ideas Nietzsche develops, not in order to polemicise against rival interpretations about their content but simply to show that his philosophical studies played a significant role in his early development and that his mature philosophical practice was dependent on them to a large extent.
just before the decline in his status and reputation as a scholar following the scandal surrounding
the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche's discovery and intense preoccupation with
Schopenhauer in the mid-1860's is well known, as are his studies of materialism, pre-Platonic
philosophy, the origins workings of language and his indebtedness to a resurgent post-Kantian
philosophy, mediated through his encounter with the work of F.A. Lange. Nietzsche's interest in
philosophical questions was so strong that in 1868 he begins work on a dissertation on the
concept of teleology titled ‘The Concept of the Organic Since Kant', abandoned because he was
offered a professorship in Philology in Basel on the basis of his strictly philological publications,
without having to submit a doctorate.

Indeed, from the time Nietzsche reads F.A Lange's *History of Materialism*\(^{21}\) as early as 1866 he
never relinquished his interest in a Kantian inflected materialism and seeks to work through the
consequences of his interpretation of Kant throughout his life, despite overcoming the limitations
of this inheritance early on. It is clear that the standard periodisation of Nietzsche's career into an
eyear metaphysical aesthetic period, a middle positivist period and a late critical period does not
correspond to the fact that Nietzsche had figured out very early in his adult life his fundamental
philosophical presuppositions and that by the mid-1870s had already defined for himself his life
task and the means to achieve it. Rather, I would argue that the only accurate periodisation of
Nietzsche’s work is between an academic and a non-academic (or philosophical) period. What
changes most dramatically between the two periods is Nietzsche's own way of life and a shift in
the means he thought necessary to fulfill his task, but not the task itself. Having realised early on
that the only way of doing philosophy is through utilising its particular practices with the aim of
regenerating culture, Nietzsche initially subordinated his scholarly work to the Richard Wagner's
attempted ‘cultural revolution’. Growing disillusioned with both the man and the movement he
lead, Nietzsche refuses to subordinate his life to the aims of Wagnerism, leaves the university,
and begins to refashion philosophical practice with the aim of a much more far-reaching cultural
transformation.

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Nietzsche's debt to, and eventual overcoming of, Kantian critical philosophy, despite his own distaste for 'modern' values, makes him nonetheless a deeply modern thinker who seeks to have an impact on modern society through specifically modern means, that is, through a radicalised version of critical philosophy. Nietzsche's philosophical concerns and practice are the guiding thread through his life and writing and the unifying element to the two major emphases of his work: classical scholarship and modern social critique. Due to their mutual dependence on philosophy, these two emphases complement each other and express similar concerns, but articulated in relation to different historical settings and types of discourse. On the one hand Nietzsche investigates the intermingling of Dionysian and Apollonian myths and cultural forms in his attempt to identify the cultural preconditions for the decline of Greek tragedy and the historical triumph of rationalism. This emphasis is presented primarily through his philological work and academic publications culminating with publication of The Birth of Tragedy and lecture courses at the University of Basel. The second emphasis is the critique of modernity in which Nietzsche attempts to uncover the origin and the meaning of nihilism; the term he uses to describe the pathologies of rationalised modernity. These ideas publicly come to the fore increasingly from the time of Nietzsche’s early lectures on Education and his Untimely Meditations onwards. An examination of Nietzsche's notes and published studies from the period shows that it is impossible to say which emphasis precedes the other or whether it is possible to isolate one cultural diagnosis from another. It is incorrect to argue that Nietzsche transposes his critique of antiquity onto contemporary society, or transposes the latter onto the former. Rather, both perspectives emerge in conjunction to such an extent that for Nietzsche the critique of antiquity is part and parcel of the critique of modernity and that the problems of modern society are directly related to the way we handle the heritage of the Hellenic world. In this sense, the

22 By claiming Nietzsche is indebted to Kantian philosophy I am not trying to reclaim him as part of that intellectual tradition, Kantian or Post-Kantian or to argue for his belonging to any particular tradition. He is certainly more than any of those things. Whilst remaining indebted to numerous intellectual and creative sources Nietzsche's philosophy makes sense more in relation to how he tried to practice it than in relation to its adherence to any specific academic or intellectual tradition. For a scholarly account of Nietzsche's relationship to Kant see Kevin Hill, Nietzsche's Critiques: The Kantian Foundations of his Thought (OUP, 2003).

23 It is an unsurprising but nonetheless a magnificent vindication of Nietzsche's position that the work in which he bemoaned the triumph of Socratic rationalism and Hellenic academicism over Dionysian tragedy is the work that led to his academic demise.

same philosophical conclusions can be drawn from Nietzsche's analysis of Kant as from his discussion of Greek Tragedy: It is the combination of these two perspective that Nietzsche describes as 'tragic wisdom', which replaces the lust for power stemming from exhaustion of Socratic Optimism with a critical ethos that sheds cool light but does not attempt master.25

Is it not possible that Nietzsche, faithful to the intellectual climate of his time, is nonetheless an intellectual and pedagogue in the tradition of post-Kantian enlightenment, albeit, aesthetically inspired? His work could thus best be interpreted academically as part of an attempt to radicalize the Kantian critical project of cultivation but still faithful to its pedagogical aims and presuppositions: intellectually mediated criticism and a politics premised on the gradual but assured improvement of the species. This interpretation is tempting, as not only does Nietzsche occasionally appear to be addressing similar concerns, but it is widely known that his philosophical apprenticeship was conducted under the tutelage of arguably the two most prominent post-Kantian thinkers of his time – Arthur Schopenhauer and F.A. Lange, who despite their criticisms of Kant’s thought retained a fidelity to some of its central epistemological and anthropological propositions. Indeed, early in his career, Nietzsche engages in research on very Kantian problems and writes drafts for dissertations of Kant's concept of the 'organic', focusing on the concept of teleology in nature, and would seem to be working critically through the problems of Kantian epistemology and anthropology his whole life.

Nonetheless, Nietzsche was already at the age of 22 celebrating the 'free hand' given to philosophy to perform a cultural role larger than that afforded to it by the university or church.

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25 Amongst many examples in Nietzsche’s work of this dynamic perhaps the most telling is one of the earliest ones. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, considered to be Nietzsche's most historical text, we read the following exhortation in the midst of a meditation on ancient Tragic Pessimism: Let us imagine a rising generation with this fearless gaze, with this heroic attraction to what is monstrous, let us imagine the bold stride of these dragon-killers, the proud recklessness with which they turn their backs on all the enfeebled doctrines of scientific optimism so that they may 'live resolutely', wholly and fully; would not the tragic man of this culture, given that he has trained himself for what is grave and terrifying, be bound to desire a new form of art, the art of metaphysical solace, in fact to desire tragedy as his very own Helen, and to call out along with Faust: 'And shall I not, with all my longing's vigour, Draw into life that peerless, lovely figure?' (BT, § 12). Commenting on this passage, Nietzsche’s constant reminder that it is only for the sake of the present and future that we should engage in historical examination is re-enforced in the Preface he attached to *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1886. Here he remarks that the only possible purpose of adopting a Tragic Wisdom in the style of the Ancient Greeks is to serve the needs of our own lives. Criticising the mobilisation of the past for the sake of 'metaphysical solace' he tells the reader: ‘You ought to learn the art of this-worldly comfort first; you ought to learn to laugh, my young friends, if you are hell-bent on remaining pessimists. Then perhaps, as laughers, you may someday dispatch all metaphysical comforts to the devil – metaphysics in front.’ (BT, ‘Attempt at a Self-Criticism’, § 7).
Nietzsche rejected Kant's attempts to delimit the boundaries of philosophical practice by transforming it into a science of the critique of reason. Far from diminishing the ambition of philosophy, the Kantian critical system as Nietzsche understands it - through its physiological radicalisation by F.A. Lange - frees philosophy even more to serve a culturally regenerative role. As unsatisfied as Lange with the theoretical impasse of Kantian epistemology, Nietzsche will eventually transcend the false and ultimately idealistic dichotomy between materialism and idealism and adopt a practical conception of philosophy as a particular way-of-life rather than a solely scholarly or contemplative activity.

**On the Simultaneous Impossibility and Necessity of Metaphysics: The Physiology of Anthropomorphism.**

In 1866 the 22-year-old Nietzsche writes enthusiastically to his friend Count Von Gersdorff about a book he recently read by an ‘extremely enlightened Kantian and natural scientist’. This book is F.A. Lange’s recently published *History of Materialism* which Nietzsche read and re-read several times throughout his life in various editions and, as recent scholarship has affirmed, arguably forms the background not only to his transition from philology to philosophy but the source of many of his own ideas concerning the will-to-power, the eternal return, and the nihilistic structure of Christianity. The central philosophical problematic Nietzsche inherits from Lange is a Kantian one: the recognition of the inevitability of metaphysics, despite the recognition of its artificiality. Nietzsche reformulates this insight throughout his writings as the aesthetic dimension of human knowledge and practice: the necessity of creative fictions and falsity in human existence.

Nietzsche's philosophical practice is dependent on his adoption of a Kantian inspired philosophical materialism, a standpoint he developed with the aid of Lange's understanding of

26 Lange, Ibid.

the term. Nietzsche takes up this legacy, and, inspired by his encounter with ancient Greek atomism through his reading of Democritus, materialism acquires a more radical dimension, coming into its own as a philosophical doctrine adequate to the analysis of modern society. Despite being influenced greatly by Lange’s history and his more traditional definition of materialism, Nietzsche goes on to develop a sophisticated and radical materialism which is as sensitive to the dynamic nature of modern social life as Marx’s philosophy.

In his History of Materialism, an unfortunately neglected classic the importance of which is now firmly established in Nietzsche scholarship, Lange covers the history of materialist philosophy from ancient Greek atomism up to Kant, with further chapters on the development of political economy (in which importantly Marx is mentioned favourably despite Lange’s hostility to revolutionary socialism). Lange argues that traditional materialism is a form of thought that serves as the earliest attempt to conceive the world as a unity and rise above the naïve and vulgar impressions of the sense which led to a personalisation of nature.

Materialism, as a form of consecutive rational thinking, presents itself, throughout its history, as a struggle against religion and ideology: the false beliefs considered to be the purview of the mass of humanity.

Lange’s aim, in his monumental three-volume study, is, despite his admiration for the critical potential of the materialist tradition, to demolish the pretensions of traditional materialism to objectivity from a then resurgent neo-Kantian perspective. Fearing the ethical vacuum arising from a purely materialistic explanation of the world, true to his Kantian heritage, Lange argues

28 For a translation and commentary on Nietzsche’s ’Democritus Fragments’, see, Swift, op.cit.
29 See the studies mentioned above by Stack, Porter and Emden.
30 F.A. Lange, History of Materialism, Ibid.
31 This is why Lange, Nietzsche, and Karl Marx, despite their subsequent reformulations and radicalisations of this tradition, saw in the Greek atomism of Democritus the original form of materialism as it is based on an understanding of being as comprised of the smallest particles that require an empty space for them to move in. James Porter is the only scholar who has investigated Marx and Nietzsche’s respective interpretations of Epicurus and Democritus comparatively. Porter does not address the reasons behind the differences in Marx and Nietzsche’s interpretation and the consequences of this for their philosophical development. This is a line of inquiry which is need of development as part of a re-examination of Nietzsche’s legacy for Marxism. We can only explore this briefly as part of this thesis. See James Porter ‘Epicurus in the 19’Th Century: Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche’, in The Handbook of Epicurean Studies, ed., J. Fish and K. Sanders (OUP, 2012).
that, despite the claims of materialism to overcome metaphysics and achieve a true representation of reality, it repeats the same gestures of idealistic thought and ends up becoming just another variant of the metaphysics it claims to overcome. For Lange, this is because the concept of ‘matter’, as used by the materialist tradition in all its variants, is a postulate of the human mind, primarily serving cultural purposes, and thus ideal in its very nature. Lange claims that ‘materialism only becomes a complete system when matter is conceived as purely material – that is, when its constituent particles are not a sort of thinking matter, but physical bodies which are moved in obedience to merely physical principles, and being in themselves without sensation, produce sensation and thought by particular forms of their combinations.’

As James Porter explains, for Lange, the real world as material entity ‘is always, therefore an incoherency. Located within and not beyond the limits of thought, empirical and metaphysical entities are best described as the result of a process of “reciprocal determinations” and “blendings”- for instance between sensation and conception or between natural and biological processes and their anthropological (and anthropomorphising) correlates.’ Just as the body is only knowable as an optical image, despite its materiality, so ideas are explainable as originating in our material surroundings. We can never know matter without its conceptual representation and we can never know ideas without their material foundation. The Kantian background to this is obvious if we remember Kant’s dictum from the First Critique that concepts without intuitions are empty and intuitions without concepts are blind. As a reader of Darwin, Lange could not be satisfied with an idealist impasse of this sort and re-interprets the Kantian system by grounding it naturalistically as an evolutionarily justified organic system of representation. Lange concludes that because of the un-decidability between ideal and material explanations of the world, the two form an indispensable unity, the nature of which is based on the structure of philosophical reasoning itself, located firmly and squarely within and arising from the natural world.

The transposition of the Kantian system onto a naturalistic register would have a great influence on Nietzsche who by that time was a disciple of Schopenhauer, and thus sensitive to a philosophy grounded in an emphasis on the non-rational or naturalistic origins of reason. As early as 1866, when Nietzsche reads Lange for the first time, he formulated what for him were

32 Lange, Ibid., 4.
the essential lessons of Lange's History. He writes to Von Gersdorff that Lange's conclusions are summed up in:

‘The following three propositions:

1. The world of the senses is the product of our organization.

2. Our visible (physical) organs are, like all other parts of the phenomenal world, only images of an unknown object.

3. Our real organization is therefore as much unknown to us as real external things are. We continually have before us nothing but the product of both.’

Nietzsche then takes time to articulate exactly what is crucial about these insights and how they show that for all intents and purposes, philosophy is an aesthetic endeavor. Insofar as ‘the true essence of things – the thing in itself - is not only unknown to us; the concept of it is neither more nor less than the final product of an antithesis which is determined by our organisation, an antithesis of which we do not know whether it has any meaning outside our experience or not. Consequently, Lange thinks, one should give the philosophers a free hand as long as they edify us in this sense.’

The peculiar form of edification Nietzsche has in mind is not an idealistic one but a Dionysian inspired exposure to irrational experiences. Nietzsche, in light of his physiological interpretation of Kant, proposes a Dionysian vision of the human being as a pre-subjective animal of dreams, intoxication, pain, ecstasy and aesthetically driven irrationality. In The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music Nietzsche articulates the Dyonisian in terms of an overcoming of the ‘principium individuationis’ through the ritualised and rhythmic intoxication of collective life (BT, §1). It was only through normalisation and socialisation of these rituals by the creation of Tragic


35 Nietzsche, ‘Letter to Gersdorff, August 1886’, Ibid.

36 From early on Nietzsche articulated his philosophy in terms of a rejection of socialised individualisation. Despite his subsequent rejection of the Romanticism inherent in such a wholesale rejection, he would continue searching for a form of individual existence that did not depend for its coherence on the pressures and prescriptions of modern socialisation, determined as they are, by the demands of the Bureaucratic State and the Market.
Theatre and its festivals that Hellenic culture managed to maintain its vitality. In the same way in which Hellenic culture had to socialize these rituals in order to flourish, Kantian metaphysics serve a necessary culturally regenerative role in Nietzsche's adoption of a form of, what Sloterdijk aptly coined, Dionysian Materialism. As Sloterdijk formulates it in his fascinating study of Nietzsche’s materialism as developed in The Birth of Tragedy, what for Nietzsche ‘calls itself reality within the terms of an institutional discourse can be nothing other than a reality in place of a reality, an Apollonian explanation, ritualisation, and institutionalisation of the foundation of the world in accordance with the criteria of endurability and predictability.’

For Nietzsche, culture is already understood symptomatically - ‘the world of moral and political institutions is presented as a sphere of essential illusion, as form of self-composition of collective life, which, in order to endure itself, must symbolize itself, ritualize itself, and subordinate itself to values.’

Staying faithful to Lange's synthesis of materialism and idealism, Nietzsche will accept the impossibility but inevitability of metaphysical speculation as an element of culture. Yet, in a gesture opposite to Lange, who sought to salvage morality, Nietzsche uses materialism, despite the limits to objective pretensions, to question the historical formation of morality and consciousness as they are formed within and articulated in the form of Subjectivity. Based on this symptomatic understanding of cultural forms, for Nietzsche, metaphysics is ‘the utterly banal predicament of modern culture. Woven into that culture's own mythologies and ideologies, metaphysics for Nietzsche, is not something that can be dispelled but only disbelieved.’

37 Peter Sloterdijk, Thinker on Stage: Nietzsche’s Materialism, trans., Jamie Owen Daniel (UMP, 1989), 76.

38 Peter Sloterdijk, Ibid., 80.

39 James Porter, The Invention of Dionysus (SUP, 2000). I agree with the characterization of metaphysics as banal if this is taken to mean ubiquitous and obvious rather than insignificant. Accordingly we can agree with James Porter when he claims that for Nietzsche ‘metaphysical assumptions are operative in the very structures of thought, language and perception by which day-to-day experience is articulated’. By being operative, metaphysical assumptions are nonetheless historically or physiologically dependent, rather than necessary in a Kantian sense. Arguably, it was Nietzsche, more than any other thinker of his time, who tried to take seriously the consequences of the crisis of metaphysics, more commonly referred to as the death of God. In any case, we see here already Nietzsche's acceptance of the artificial yet necessary nature of metaphysics and hence the anthropomorphic nature of all human knowledge, as well as the recognition of the physiological basis of consciousness and language which would become crucial for his genealogical investigations of the 1880's.
It is Nietzsche’s radicalisation of materialism that is at the base of his reformulation of Kantian critical philosophy. Kant's critical project aimed at questioning the conditions of possibility of knowledge. He seeks to uncover what enables human beings to know objects in the way they know them. By critique, Kant does not mean ‘a critique of books and systems’ rather, ‘a critique of the faculty of reason in general, in respect of all the cognitions after which reason might strive independently of all experience, and the hence the decision about the possibility or impossibility of a metaphysics in general, and the determination of its sources, as well as its extent and boundaries, all, however, from principles.’ Arguing against dogmatic idealism and theologically grounded rationalism of his day Kant shows in *The Critique of Pure Reason* that the conditions determining the possibility of knowledge are internal to reason itself – that is they are generated by the synthetic cognitive operations of the human mind. For Kant, human understanding itself produces objects of knowledge. Objects are therefore appearances mediated through the forms of space and time, which are internal to the workings of the human mind, and the world only appears as objective to us because of the synthetic powers of our cognitive apparatus.

Having achieved a major critical breakthrough – a Copernican revolution in philosophy – by replacing theologically oriented epistemology with one grounded in human reason, Kant, according to Nietzsche, nonetheless relapses into another form of idealism. He merely replaces the role of God or nature as the guarantors of the coherence of experience with an anthropomorphism by enthroning an a-historical notion of humanity as the sole originator of knowledge. Kant performed the Copernican turn to safeguard the possibility of knowledge. In this sense he still believes in the value of truth and still believes in the superiority of human

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41 Kant wished to construe rational inquiry itself as a form of self-criticism. The social and political consequences of Kant's critical method was to secure the independence of human reason from its theoretical and political dependence on the Church or the absolutist state. Critique therefore is an attitude that demands the independent and public use of reason, to interrogate the present political, social and scientific norms and practices of society through rationally guided public debate based on evidence and argumentation without recourse to coercion or manipulation. Kant's aim was to allow for human beings to liberate themselves from non-rationally grounded external authority through a process of mutual criticism. The autonomy of reason is secured through its free public use that takes the form of mutual and agonistic argumentation. Kant's critical project therefore takes Enlightenment to be a 'public process that depends on particular structures of free debate', which are grounded in the self-legitimising structure of human cognition that is re-enforced through rationally grounded communication with others. For Kant, one is only free if one is free to argue with others publicly and to secure one's autonomy publicly and politically, and not only privately. The critique of reason is the flip side of the practice of reasonable critique, and part of the culture of enlightenment, and therefore needs to be understood as a politically motivated philosophical project. See, ‘What is Enlightenment?’ in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed., Reiss and trans., Nisbet (CUP, 1977).
reason as the sole source of truth in general (needless to say this also means for Nietzsche that Kant still believes in morality; he still believes in the truthfulness and virtue of human reason.)

It is precisely this attempt to secure human reason from the power and plenitude of nature, the attempt to generate an unbreachable gap between nature and human reason that Nietzsche subjects to criticism. Nietzsche accuses Kant of achieving the humanisation of nature at the price of doing so at one step removed. For Kant, insofar as human cognition grasps the world, it is only under the limits produced internally to the human mind. In this way epistemological certainty is acquired at the price of a more fundamental ignorance as to the nature of things themselves. Nietzsche makes the point that this occurs because Kant fails to ask: what is the moral value and natural origin of reason? Kant falls back onto an idealistic philosophy because he still privileges human cognition over any other aspect or function of the human organism.

Nietzsche does not deny that human beings produce the objects of their experience and he accepts what he terms the fundamental productive or 'plastic' power of the human being. As Nietzsche puts it, explaining the nature and necessity of anthropomorphic projection:

‘After all, what is a law of nature as such for us? We are not acquainted with it in itself, but only with its effects, which mean in its relation to other laws of nature- which, in turn, are known to us only as sums of relations. Therefore all these relations always refer again to others and are thoroughly incomprehensible to us in their essence. All that we actually know about these laws of nature is what we ourselves bring to them- time and space, and therefore relationships of succession and number. But everything marvelous about the laws of nature, everything that quite astonishes us therein and seems to demand our explanation, everything that might lead us to distrust idealism: all this is completely and solely contained within the mathematical strictness and inviolability of our representation of time and space. But we produce these representations in and from ourselves with the same necessity that a spider spins. If we are forced to comprehend all things only under these forms, then it ceases to be amazing that in all things we actually comprehend nothing but these forms. For they must all bear within themselves the laws of number, and it is precisely number which most astonishing in things.’ (T&L, § 1).

42 For Nietzsche’s most clearly articulated version of this argument see BGE, 1, § 11.
However, unlike Kant, Nietzsche does not attribute this plasticity to an unaided cognitive apparatus of reason, but to the human being in its organic totality as part of nature. Nietzsche does not wish to resort to any transcendent or supernatural principle or to any pre-critical metaphysics which champions materialism or idealism in a one sided fashion. Rather, the meaning of Nietzsche’s idealist-materialism (which he takes from Lange), his Dionysian materialism, is that this productivity or plasticity is an organic function of the human insofar as the human being is part of nature. He radicalizes Kant's critique by transposing it into a physiological register and turns the achievement of Kantian philosophy against itself.

For Nietzsche, this implies that we cannot locate the value and power of humanity in any one of the supposedly distinctive or unique faculties that are believed to separate human beings from the rest of nature and the animal kingdom, if these faculties are taken to be objective or grounded in a transcendent or unknown reality. Against Kant, who located the dignity of the human race in its moral autonomy, its separation from nature, Nietzsche, taking a cue from Lange's Darwinism,\(^{43}\) thinks the cognitive power of the human species is physiological in origin, but cultivated under social pressures. Nietzsche thought that it made no sense to, on the one hand, make the case that the laws of nature were projections of the human mind, and on the other, to argue that these projections are located as part of an objectively ascertained cognitive power of human origin. For Kant this power that separated human experience from natural causality, was located in consciousness as a synthetic being, and he therefore neglected to ask how this consciousness itself comes into being, that is, he neglected to take into account its organic and historical becoming. And so, as Andrea Rehberg puts it, Nietzsche thinks Kant did not realise that ‘This becoming-conscious is as much a function of an organism as any other of its physiological functions such as ingestion or digestion. Becoming-conscious occurs in the service of the organism, and is not intrinsically functionally superior to any other of its involuntary processes.’\(^{44}\)

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\(^{43}\) On Nietzsche's complex relationship to Darwinism see Dirk Johnson, *Nietzsche's Anti-Darwinism* (CUP, 2013). This book demonstrates that, despite being sympathetic at first to the naturalism of Darwinian evolution, Nietzsche rejected both the reductive and teleological assumptions and the moralistic judgments that followed and were prevalent in the interpretations of Darwin's theory, primarily as promulgated by Herbert Spencer.

Thus, far from consciousness being a proof of our dignity or uniqueness, mankind is only of any interest as a species because of the ways it shapes itself, understood naturalistically. This creativity, Nietzsche will come to understand in increasingly socio-historical terms. He asserts that if there is anything special or interesting about mankind, it is not located in the moral and rational superiority of the human species over other non-rational animals, but would have more to do with the infinite ways human beings have devised to punish, tame, subdue and defeat themselves and other species. For Nietzsche, the history of human self-generation is therefore not a mark of dignity but a sordid tale of infamy and brutal domestication.45

This history of infamy is one of the sources of Nietzsche's anti-humanism, his belief that 'man is something that should be overcome' (Z, §§ 3-5). For Nietzsche, the sense of human dignity or privilege should not be the foundation upon which culture and politics are based. Kant summed up his critical system, as a motto of Enlightenment, when he demanded to ‘have the courage to use your own understanding!’ 46 and thus attempted to elicit the powers of critique for moral, scientific and institutional regeneration. But in his attempts to provide a historical justification for Enlightenment, Kant removes the necessity for courage invoked in his demand by appealing instead to an idealistically grounded historical progress - a teleology of culture. For if mankind is indeed 'improving', and it is nature's own wish that enlightenment sweep the earth, one wonders why one needs courage at all. We can just sit back and enjoy the ride. Nietzsche, clearly aware of the connection Kant makes between the critique of reason and the project of enlightenment,47 realises that the legitimacy of that project rests on the legitimacy of an alleged teleology in nature and for the species. Seeking to undermine any sense of human chauvinism and self-satisfaction by exposing the anthropomorphic nature of all cognition as part of nature, Nietzsche undermines the progressive and humanistic pieties that underlie the ideological smugness of so called liberal,

45 This is the main focus of the three essays Nietzsche published under the title of On the Genealogy of Morals, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans., Carol Diethe (CUP, 1997).

46 Kant ‘What is Enlightenment’, in Kant’s Political Writings, ed., Reiss and trans., Nisbet (CUP 1997).

47 Whilst implicit in all of Kant’s post-critical writings, this connection is drawn out most explicitly in Kant’s historical essays, most of which are collected in Kant’s Political Writings, op cit.
socialist or democratic societies. If human knowledge is nothing more than 'human knowledge', that is, knowledge that has its origin in the physiological makeup of the human organism and grounded in the vital needs of that organism, there is no basis for thinking that humanity has any objectively granted or naturally guaranteed tasks, goals or meaning. The consequences of this are momentous: The human faculties and capacities privileged by the philosophical tradition, such as Will, Reason, and Consciousness are accidental products of natural selection and human history there is no justification for the assumption of a special or superior place for human beings on the planet over and above other species or life forms, or for the privilege of one type of human being over another. If philosophy is to shed its dependence on the anthropology of domination, if ‘man is something that must be overcome’ than the task for a physician of culture after the death of god is to develop a doctrine and practice that can teach human beings a 'new health'. The crucial question for us, following Nietzsche, is how it is possible to develop a science of health if one can no longer ascertain the laws of nature? That is to say, if there is no telos for the species – no naturally given task, goal or aim? For Nietzsche, Enlightenment comes not only from recognising the conditions for the realisation of reason but from recognising that there is no guarantee that this project is philosophically legitimate or guaranteed. If there is no reason or meaning in history, then the question becomes what to do with this knowledge, rather than any Kantian attempt to establish the objectivity of knowledge in the first place. In this case courage is needed much more than the free use of the understanding.
In 1868 Nietzsche begins writing a dissertation on ‘The concept of the Organic since Kant’ in which he explores the development of the idea of organism from Goethe to Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Nietzsche recognises that the very tenability of the concept of ‘organism' depends on the viability of a purpose or aim in nature that would allow for the disparate elements that make up a living being to be understood as in any way unified. This purposiveness is referred to as the teleology of nature. In his notes for the dissertation, Nietzsche criticises Kant for illegitimately assuming that teleological judgments could be used to explain the origins of organic beings. Despite Kant's recognition that the origin of the organism as a unity is outside the purview of the discursive intellect he thinks we can borrow by analogy a teleological explanation, and perceive the organisation of the organism as a unity. Nietzsche thinks Kant is mistaken when he assumes this implies a pre-existing rational plan that allows for the development of organisms, and hence a rational plan of nature. Discussing Goethe and Schopenhauer's different approaches to this issue, Nietzsche's reflections point to what would become a permanent feature of his thinking: the fundamental creative and artistic nature of human cognition which fabulates concepts and ideas which do not exist anywhere outside human experience. Nietzsche's rejection of the purposiveness of nature later leads him to develop a conflict theory of drives, which he will ultimately call 'will-to-power', and is central to his attempt to find a 'higher' goal for humanity.

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49 On Nietzsche's development of this theory the best account is that by Wolfgang Muller-Lauter who shows in great detail how Nietzsche, was influenced by Wilhelm Roux the founder of experimental and causal-morphological research in evolution, to which he gave the name ‘evolutionary mechanics’ a forerunner to contemporary evolutionary physiology. See Wolfgang Muller-Lauter, *Nietzsche: His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of His Philosophy*, trans., David J. Parent (University of Illinois Press, 1999). For a more poetic elaboration see Nietzsche’s note 1067 from 1885, in *WP*. It is worth reprinting in full as an example of how Nietzsche utilizes naturalistic language for the sake of philosophical illumination: ‘And do you know what ‘the
that, whilst understood physiologically, does not originate from any plan of nature but from the organic features creative human activity. If there is no plan of nature, there is no reason in history and so Nietzsche concludes, like Marx, that human action is determined primarily by the actions of human beings upon each other – that is, we make our own history. This is why Nietzsche begins to look for or invent a new goal for the species that will save it from the pathological state it has reached as result of two-millennia of mistaken belief in teleology, transcendental causes and other-worlds.

Taken from scientific theories of the development of organic matter, the concept of teleology was increasingly employed by philosophically oriented German intellectuals as a foundation for theories of historical development. What for Kant was a speculative justification for the 'cosmopolitan' development of society, as part of general political and social enlightenment, quickly became through Herder, Fichte, and Hegel a guarantee of the development and superiority of Culture (Kultur) over Civilisation, grounded in the work of human self-consciousness or in Hegel's terms, Geist. Eventually, as the 19th century progressed, these ideas became more and more associated with the social and national perfectibility of the German people and a justification for German superiority. Nietzsche was aware of these intellectual and
political developments from his student years and reading and in the late 1860's he began a dissertation on the concept of teleology from Kant to his time, seeking to examine whether teleology was necessary as an explanatory principle. Despite initially agreeing with Lange and Kant that teleology was an indispensable explanatory principle, or fiction inherent in our constitution as living beings, Nietzsche would grow skeptical of the necessity of utilising teleological explanations to both nature and history. Nietzsche critique focused on three problems arising from the contemporary debates:

First: the problem of a 'vital force' (Kraft). The idea of a teleology in organic beings depended on establishing a coherent notion of a 'vital force', or striving, that generated this teleology. The idea of a 'vital force' was gaining currency as a formative drive which served as 'an important explanatory model within the life-sciences of the nineteenth century', 51 which were increasingly focused on identifying goal-oriented activity within organisms. Nietzsche was not convinced that the concept of a 'vital force' had any purchase on reality as he accepted Lange's claim that this, like any attempt to understand nature scientifically, was an anthropomorphic projection, albeit a necessary one.

The second problem for Nietzsche was the artificiality of the distinction between the natural and social sciences. He notices that despite the widespread belief in this distinction, this did not stop theorists from smuggling bad principles from the natural sciences onto the social ones. The idea of teleology in history and nature is a case in point. There is indeed a philosophical problem not only in naively applying anthropomorphisms onto nature but also then to believe that these anthropomorphic ideas are adequate explanations of society. How can one simultaneously uphold a distinction between society and nature but nonetheless use the same types of explanation for both? The frictionless exchange of explanatory concepts from natural to social sciences refuses to take into account the critical principle that Nietzsche takes from his understanding of Kantian critical philosophy: that concepts are projections of the human cognitive apparatus. As we saw in relation to the reality of a 'vital force', Nietzsche would not accept the existence of objective natural laws, independent of human experience: ‘there is no uniform teleological world: but


51 Emden, op.cit., 65.
there is a creating intelligence. It is clear that he could therefore not accept the adoption of such principles, taken from the natural sciences, as explanations for historical phenomena. Nietzsche thus destabilizes the false distinction between the historically oriented disciplines and natural sciences because he undermines the plausibility of an objective 'natural' reality that is outside human or social reality. But rather than lapsing into skepticism he will use this destabilization as an impetus to criticize scholarly knowledge tout court and develop his own approach to being in the world which takes into account all aspects of human existence as a unified, albeit malleable because constructed, whole.

The third issue Nietzsche was concerned about was the political implication of smuggling teleology into the historical sciences. Ever cautious about the growing nationalization of the humanistic aims of science and its instrumentalisation for the aims of German self-justification, Nietzsche follows Burkhardt in the rejection of historical and nationalist optimism, ‘Optimism and teleology go hand in hand; both are concerned with disputing that the inexpedient is really something expedient.’ These last two principles would remain the impetus for Nietzsche's extensive critique of all moral and religious values and his attack on the belief in human worth, development and progress, culminating in the genealogical method and the attempt to transvaluate all values.

The problematisation of the necessity of teleology is, therefore, at the forefront of Nietzsche’s problematisation of morality. His uncertainty about the plausibility or necessity of teleological explanations would seem to be a first instance of Nietzsche's critical procedure and philosophical temperament. The uncertainty about teleological justification in nature becomes by implication an uncertainty about the aims of any human action. If there is no teleology in nature, if nature does not aim at some goal, then there is no clear teleology in human action, no clear justifiable end point or culmination and history appears as only the sum of all previous attempts at

52 Nietzsche, ‘Organic Since Kant,’ op.cit.

53 Ibid., 238.
inventing tasks and aims for the species. The fate of teleology therefore begets the inception of genealogy as a critical method that will aim to select between the different historical 'training regimes' of the human species with the aim of formulating an improved method of cultivation.

Nietzsche's critique of teleology makes it even more urgent for him to try and resolve the problems that emerge from the disenchantment of reason that follows the recognition of its historical contingency, which is why he embarks on a historical excavation – a genealogy – of the origins of depleted reason, hoping to discover the historical reasons that led to the decline of philosophy into narrow rationalism, that must rely on illegitimate teleology in order to rehabilitate itself; the lack of ends that masquerades as a final end. This is what later Nietzsche identifies as the problem of nihilism, which he defines as a historical, social and psychological situation in which 'The aim is lacking; 'why?' finds no answer'. (WP, § 2 spring-fall 1887).

In *The Critique of Pure Reason* Kant argued that a search for the principles of reason is primarily concerned with the question of how much can Reason cognize free of all experience? But he did not ask the question ‘How is the faculty of thinking itself possible?’ This, Kant asserted, would be an illegitimate use of reason itself. For Nietzsche, matters stand differently. Ignoring the second question means remaining trapped in the rules and procedures of synthetic cognition without attesting to their genesis and value.

**On the Metaphorical Origins of Reason.**

Nietzsche makes an early and significant attempt to investigate into the origins of thinking in this essay *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense* in which he derives the ‘faculty’ of thinking from the mystifications of language. Nietzsche is a thinker who attempts to liberate philosophical

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54 Kant, op.cit., 103.
practice from its captivity in the ‘prison-house of language’ (to borrow a phrase from Jameson). In Nietzsche's view though, genealogical investigations are a direct development of his understanding of the origin of language. Language is not a natural propositional system of signification but a physiologically derived tertiary phenomenon. It is has only been understood as an objective system of signification due to the pressures arising from the social regulation inherent to most forms of social interaction. It is only on the basis of this regulation that a concept like truth became possible in the first place as a guarantee for a certain type of regularity and efficiency within social structures.  

As Nietzsche put it, towards the end of his productive life, echoing his earlier studies:

‘In its origin language belongs in the age of the most rudimentary form of psychology. We enter a realm of crude fetishism when we summon before consciousness the basic presuppositions of the metaphysics of language, in plain talk, the presuppositions of reason. Everywhere it sees a doer and doing; it believes in will as the cause; it believes in the ego, in the ego as being, in the ego as substance, and it projects this faith in the ego-substance upon all things -- only thereby does it first create the concept of ‘thing.’ Everywhere ‘being’ is projected by thought, pushed underneath, as the cause; the concept of being follows, and is a derivative of, the concept of ego. In the beginning there is that great calamity of an error that the will is something which is effective, that will is a faculty. Today we know that it is only a word.

Very much later, in a world which was in a thousand ways more enlightened, philosophers, to their great surprise, became aware of the sureness, the subjective certainty, in our handling of the categories of reason: they concluded that these categories could not be derived from anything empirical -- for everything empirical plainly contradicted them. Whence, then, were they derived?

And in India, as in Greece, the same mistake was made: ‘We must once have been at home in a

55 Nietzsche articulates his earlier insights with greater focus on the social pressure effecting linguistic usage in GS, §§ 354 and 355.
higher world (instead of a very much lower one, which would have been the truth); we must have been divine, for we have reason!' Indeed, nothing has yet possessed a more naive power of persuasion than the error concerning being, as it has been formulated by the Eleatics, for example. After all, every word and every sentence we say speak in its favor. Even the opponents of the Eleatics still succumbed to the seduction of their concept of being: Democritus, among others, when he invented his atom. ‘Reason’ in language -- oh, what an old deceptive female she is! I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar’. (TI, ‘Reason in Philosophy’, § 5).

Thus the structures of various languages are an index of social domination. Understanding the connection between the social regulation of language and the maintenance of social order Nietzsche feared that we cannot get rid of God because we still have faith in grammar. He therefore chose to get rid of God by subverting the pretensions of propositional language through a genealogical critique of truth.56

Claudia Crawford has articulated in great detail the sources of Nietzsche's early understanding of Language, the consequences Nietzsche's theory of language would have for his philosophical output and how his own use of language forms a central part of his philosophical practice.57 As Crawford explains, contrary to the dominant Rousseauian understanding of language development at the time, for Nietzsche, ‘Because language and its grammatical forms first allow the fixing of concepts and the conceiving of philosophical knowledge in the most fundamental sense, any such philosophical knowledge will inevitably come up against the limits of its

56 This is a more radical approach than either remaining silent or to simply experiment with non-grammatical forms of linguistic expression. Both these approaches still betray a belief in the truthfulness of language; the former through avoidance, the latter through dissimulation. Nietzsche cannot be read as an example of a 'performative contradiction' as Habermas claims. That would only apply if Nietzsche had chosen the other two options that assert the propositionality of language with one voice, and deny it with another. Jurgen Habermas is perhaps misled because it is he who reads Nietzsche propositionally, therefore betraying a belief in the truth function of language. Nietzsche however does not appeal to the propositional power of language to begin with but to its creative metaphorical power. See Jurgen Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, trans., Frederick J. Lawrence (MIT Press, 1990).

57 Crawford reconstructs Nietzsche's work through meticulous readings of the same sources discussed earlier in the chapter. Beginning with an analysis of Nietzsche's critical engagement with Eduard Von Hartmann, and his meditations of the problems of teleology, she shows how Nietzsche is guided by his readings of Schopenhauer and Lange in developing his theories and shows how for Nietzsche, the critique of language and grammar prepares the way for access to the deepest philosophical problems. See Claudia Crawford, The Beginning of Nietzsche's Theory of Language (De Gruyter, 1988).
production’. Drawing explicitly on Crawford’s reconstruction, Nietzsche’s theory of language can be elaborated upon as follows:

1) Language is the result of an *unconscious* metaphorical process of communication. In that sense, the formulation and communication of words is secondary to an initial process of interpretation that takes place through the creation of images, generated by the nervous system in response to physical stimuli.

2) These images are articulated firstly through the use of non-grammatical sounds, gestures and movements, before being transposed into concepts and words. Language is the metaphor of a metaphor.

3) The unconscious formation of images is a creative process that is singular in each individual's case, prior to its communicability through language.

4) Linguistic and grammatical communication is the *conscious* use of language. This is a necessity rooted in the pressures and strictures of social life. The language of the community is therefore based on a series of metaphors which, having become conventions, take on the aura of truths and traditions.

5) The reification of language through its communicability (in the form of laws, customs, grammar) in turn influences the unconscious processes of image formation and help shape an individual’s world-view and physiological relationship to the word. Language therefore shapes the world as we come to ‘know’ it, because the way language is used and regulated determines what is knowable and orients our actions.

6) Critical thought and creative action are based on the ability to intervene in the unconscious process of metaphor formation. The task of the philosopher is to consciously communicate in ways other than conventional in order to change the course of socially ordered ways of life.

58 Ibid., p 41.
In light of this reconstruction, an investigation into the origin of language is therefore also a genealogical account of how particular articulations of language have come to regulate the way in which humans beings act in the world determined by the particular historically constituted beliefs, customs and laws that determine their existence. This entails more than just the conscious reshaping of language. Undermining the transparency of propositional linguistic communication depends on an understanding of language as a metaphorical phenomenon based on historically determined physiological interaction. Nietzsche's style and biographically inspired method of philosophising is based on his intuition that real creativity consists in shaping ones unconscious process of metaphor formation by learning how to use language transformatively.  

The undermining of language that Nietzsche performs is initially based on his analysis of language as a physiologically grounded metaphorical phenomenon. The more explicit historical analysis of Language in the 1880s is developed implicitly in conjunction with a naturalistic interpretation his essay ‘Truth and Lies in an Extra Moral Sense’, written in 1873 but unpublished in his lifetime. It is only after developing a physiologically inspired critique of the nature of truth that Nietzsche could develop his more far-reaching historical examination of the origins of language. It is the interaction of the physiological process of metaphor formation with social interaction that is the object of genealogical investigation. It is necessary therefore to understand what Nietzsche means by the 'extra-moral' dimension of truth in the early essay in order to make sense of the ways in which language can be used within genealogical practice.

Nietzsche begins T&E with an image from a ‘cosmic point of view’: In some remote corner of the universe, poured out and glittering in innumerable solar systems, there once was a star on which clever animals invented knowledge. That was the highest and most mendacious minute of ‘world history’—yet only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths the star grew cold, and the clever animals had to die. (T&L, § 1). Nietzsche, true to his Darwinian inspired reading of Kant, affirms the inconsequentiality of human knowledge that invents truth. This arrogant minute

59 This is expressed also through Nietzsche’s parodical and ironical style that Sander Gillman has studied closely in Nietzschean Parody: An Introduction to Reading Nietzsche (Davis Group, 2001). Gillman, however does not adequately place this style in an epistemological context. This chapter assists in that contextualisation.
does not fare well in the context of natural history, in which ‘how miserable, how shadowy and transient, how aimless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature.’ (T&L, § 1). The anthropomorphic and self-preserving nature of the intellect tricks humans into believing they have power over the earth despite the fact that ‘this intellect has no further mission that would lead beyond human life.” (T&L, § 1).

The physiologically derivative and tertiary understanding of language which underpins Nietzsche's genealogical method follows from the connection Nietzsche draws between the nature of language to the critique of knowledge. Nietzsche categorically states that to speak the truth is but to lie according to fixed convention:

‘What then is truth 'a moveable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically an rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions.' (T&L, § 1).

It is this transformation of truth back into a conscious 'and historically interpreted illusion' that is the task of genealogical philosophical practice. Whilst indebted to the Kantian framework that inspired his early forays into philosophical analysis, Nietzsche's physiological reductions of the most fundamental aspects of Kantian humanism explode the limits of that framework and lead him to search for a non-theoretical philosophy beyond understanding and non-understanding, and beyond good and evil. A philosophy that epistemologically transcends the distinction between truth and lie, and seeks to move beyond the narrow imperatives of a human, all too human culture. Nietzsche's critique of anthropomorphism recognises that the limited theoretical role afforded to philosophy is too meager to have any stimulating effect or productive influence. Nietzsche's rejection of any philosophical practice that does not involve a vigorous critical engagement with the actual world prompts him, even in strictly epistemological concerns, to

60 This is at the bottom of Nietzsche's demand to stop humanising nature which leads him to a thorough critique of all forms of anthropomorphic cosmology. This is articulated clearly in book three of GS, § 109-111.
move beyond any lingering Kantianism and embrace a more activist and tangible philosophical practice.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{61} For this reason it has become tempting, as recent thinkers have attempted, to reinterpret Nietzsche writings as a form of philosophical therapy, in the guise of a recuperation of ancient Greek philosophical practices – thus Nietzsche appears as a modern Epicurus or Diogenes and is allegedly rescued from the theoretically oriented academic form of philosophy which has become synonymous with philosophical inquiry in our society. This temptation is understandable due to the brilliance of Pierre Hadot who is arguably singlehandedly responsible for the reinterpretation of ancient philosophy as a therapeutically oriented way-of-life. Hadot’s work has now become an unsurpassable starting point for thinkers who wish to or are attempting to claim Nietzsche as an heir to this tradition. See the studies by Horst Hutter, \textit{Shaping the Future: Nietzsche’s New Regime of the Soul and Its Ascetic Practices}, (Lexington Books, 2005) and Michael Ure, \textit{Nietzsche’s Therapy: Self-Cultivation in the Middle-Works} (Lexington Books, 2008). After all, is this not what Nietzsche meant by his desire to be first and foremost a ‘physiologist of culture’? Despite the undeniable benefits of interpreting Nietzsche in this way, and the therapeutic rewards his philosophy yields, his is not a philosophy on the model of post-Socratic antiquity – a model premised on the belief in truth and the cosmologically justified possibility of objectively ascertaining and achieving the ‘good life’ here on earth. Nietzsche, who devoted his philosophical labors and spiritual practices to overcoming Socratism, reflected critically and profoundly on the problem of the truth imperative in Western culture. He recognised that in a post-Copernican and post-Darwinian world, philosophy ‘from a cosmological point of view' will only reveal the impossibility and insignificance of objective and anthropomorphic knowledge -the hallmarks the Socratic achievement’.
Chapter Two: On the Uses and Disadvantages of Philosophy for Life.

‘No, we have grown sick of this bad taste. this will to truth, to 'truth at any price’, this youthful madness in the love of truth: we are too experienced, too serious, too jovial, too burned, too deep for that . . . We no longer believe that truth remains truth when one pulls off the veil; we
have lived too much to believe this. Today we consider it a matter of decency not to wish to see everything naked, to be present everywhere, to understand and 'know' everything.'

*Gay Science, (Preface, § 4)*

This chapter is a study in the way in which Nietzsche practices philosophy as a psychological unmasking of truthfulness. This unmasking attempts to implicate Nietzsche’s readers in an ethical practice of self-critique in order to transform their belief in the value of truth and the aims of knowledge. In this way the text is a first early example of Nietzsche's genealogical practice.

Nietzsche's writings are an inexhaustible resource for examining the ways in which philosophy intersects with and damages physiology; how thought damages life. He recognises that an individual’s relationship to truth and knowledge effects them in profound ways in all aspects of their lives. Insofar as modern society is founded upon scientific rationalism, technological development, and bureaucracy, this would imply that to be modern implies amongst other things to have embodied in one’s life an language some form of relationship to knowledge and truth whether one is aware of this or not. In other words, for Nietzsche, each and every one of us has a philosophical unconscious – we are all slaves to knowledge and pay for our ignorance of this fact with our bodies and our lives. The answer to the question at the head of this section: what can Nietzsche tell us about the uses and disadvantages of philosophy for life?, is that each and every one of us has to learn how to overcome our enslavement to ingrained habits determined by our philosophical unconscious – determined by our belief in the virtue of truth and determining in turn, our health, forms of life and relations to others and the world around us. In short, Nietzsche asks of all of us not to embrace philosophy with more vigour and dedication but to let it go, to kill it off, to fight it to the death – in short, to overcome in ourselves whatever has been inherited and cultivated in the name of philosophy. But this is not possible without, and perhaps can only be done through participating in an attempt to overcome the social relations and institutions that insist that nonetheless we are rational and truthful beings.

As discussed in Chapter One, the aim behind Nietzsche’s critique of teleology was to discredit any progressive theories of history. Exposing the anthropomorphic basis of scientific knowledge,
he rejects any purposive interpretations of nature in general and human nature in particular. Nietzsche's early philosophical studies therefore led him to formulate a critical analysis of the role that truth plays in intellectual and cultural practices. He realises that hiding within the notion of truth, lay a disparate set of conceptual and moral errors. These errors, whilst arising contingently from within different historical cultures, have come to form a unified cluster of ideas known as 'truth'.

Through the analysis of language carried out in ‘On Truth and Lie in an Extra Moral Sense’ Nietzsche takes the truth to be 'a moveable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions.' (T&L, § 1).

What else could this 'long usage', that leads to canonical binding illusions, be than the way in which human history is recorded and transmitted? Nietzsche's critiques presented in the first chapter realise themselves more fully when articulated as a critique of the forms of historical consciousness dominating the ways in which the past is explained, transmitted and repeated in the form of customs, cultural identities, myths and forms of human self-understanding.

For this reason Nietzsche thought it necessary to attack the prevailing forms of historical consciousness in his, and arguably our, time. He does this in the Second Essay of his collection of *Untimely Meditations* titled *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*. Nietzsche identifies three major forms of historical consciousness, which are distinguished by their respective relationship to the notion of truth. It is the connection between the type of belief in truth and the form of historical consciousness that allows Nietzsche to develop a critical typology of intellectual and interpretive practices in his study, which aims ‘to serve history only to the extent that history serves life.’ (UT II, Forward).62

62 The way in which Nietzsche thinks historical consciousness informs character is evident in the discussion of the 'plastic power' of human beings later in this chapter. The way in which Nietzsche's philosophy could be practiced on cultural groups and societies as a whole could be explicated in relation to the work of Jan Assmann, who analyses the way in which different notions of truth determine different forms of cultural memory, and hence forms of spiritual practices. Such an analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis but is alluded to by Assmann himself, who relied on Nietzsche in his work. See Jan Assmann, *Of Gods and Gods – Egypt, Israel and the Rise of Monotheism* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).
What Nietzsche’s essay provides through the critical examination of history is an alternative framework for a critical practice to be taken up by individuals who seek to transform their lives in order to break away forms of self-understanding and action dependent on the notion of truth inherited from the Socratic tradition. Formulating guiding principles for the art of interpretation, Nietzsche claims that ‘Ultimately nobody can get more out of things, including books, than he already knows. For what one lacks access to from experience one will have no ear.’ (EH, § 1). In the mediation on historical consciousness under discussion in this chapter, that which determines 'what people get out of things' is their already established relationship to truth. In Nietzsche's work, the critique of our relation to truth goes hand in hand with the critique of our own personal history for ‘this precisely is the proposition the reader is invited to meditate upon: the unhistorical and the historical are necessary in equal measure for the health of an individual, of a people and of a culture.’ (UM II, § 1).

Despite the prevalence of psychological discourses in contemporary society and the assimilation of psychological truisms in everyday life, business administration and literary analysis to the point of rendering them banal, philosophical practice itself would seem to be exempt from similar treatment. Not that scholars or philosophers do not seek psychological treatment themselves (there is no reason to presume that there is any major discrepancy here then amongst other modern professions), but rather that scholarly practice itself not the target of psychological analysis. What this chapter provides then is such an analysis through demonstration of the critical potential of Nietzsche’s thought as a diagnostic of philosophical pathologies. It does so, not through a discussion of Nietzsche's more explicitly psychological texts but rather through a discussion of one of his essays that has not been read through a psychological lens.63 This proves the power of his analysis, which remains effective even when implicit.

One of the many criticisms Nietzsche had of modern culture was that it subordinated the extra-rational demands of life to the rational demands of science. It thus seeks to turn the life affirming potential of historical inquiry into a scientific endeavor and therefore into a spectacle beholden to the ideology of progress: ‘Now the demands of life no longer reign and exercise constraint on knowledge of the past: now all the frontiers have been torn down and all that has ever been rushes upon mankind. All perspectives have been shifted back to the beginning of all becoming, back into infinity. Such an immense spectacle as the science of universal becoming, history, now displays has never before been seen by any generation; though it displays it, to be sure, with the perilous daring of its motto: fiat veritas, pereat vita (let truth prevail though life perish).’ (UM II, § 4).

The scientifically minded equation of historical study with a study of truth is what defines modern historical consciousness as the consciousness of infinite progress. This ideology renders the present as only a passing moment within an infinite progression towards an imagined future and uses up the past as nothing but a reservoir of epochs, random examples and dead cultures that can be freely adopted and abandoned at will based on their usefulness or entertainment value. Nietzsche observes the curious paradox that our culture, one of the most unhistorical and nihilistic cultures in human history, is curiously the one most obsessed with the question of history. It is this understanding of time as progression that gives rise to our particular obsession with history and that paradoxically produces a form of nostalgia as one of its dominant characteristics. As a consequence, Nietzsche wants to critically examine the different attitudes people take up when they think about history because he wagers that a lot more can be understood about a person by understanding the nature of their historical consciousness than just an intellectual affinity. It is Nietzsche's contention that the different strategies adopted by intellectuals to come to terms with the past are symptomatic of and generative of psychological motivations and personality types.\textsuperscript{64} This makes it possible to reconstruct a set of ideal

\textsuperscript{64} It is important to remember that outside its importance for Psychoanalysis, Nietzsche's philosophy was one of the major sources of the growth of vitalist social psychology in Germany and his influence on such important writers from Freud, Simell and Klages is well documented. This may allow us to read his psychological observations in more broadly cultural terms. As Lebovic shows ‘the immediate period after the end of the first world war saw the growing emphasis on social and political psychology, to a large extent due to the growing relevance of life philosophy, depth psychology, and mass psychology, in Nitzan Lebovic, \textit{The Philosophy of Life and Death: Ludwig Klages and the Rise of a Nazi Biopolitics} (Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 111. Lebovic explains that ‘once historicised, it is clear that German psychology should be regarded in relation to politics, in fact as early as the 1920’s dispute about mass psychology’ Ibid., p,113.Whether Nietzsche's work should be developed in a Freudian or anti Freudian
personality types that go hand in hand with each historical approach. Resulting from this critique is the insight that the way in which scholars develop historical consciousness is symptomatic of a broader and underlying commitment they have made to knowledge as such.

Nietzsche's interest in the relationship between historical consciousness and individual psychology develops in the context of German academic debates about the orientation of the university and the aims of pedagogy. For this reason Nietzsche looks to scholars in particular as exemplars of different attempts to come to terms with the crisis of historicism that emerges in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this light we can read Nietzsche's most explicit meditation on this topic the second essay published as part of UM titled *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* as part of his wider project of a critique of scholarly reason as a whole.

Nietzsche identifies three dominant types of historians, each defined by a particular historical consciousness:

The first is the Monumental-historian, ‘*who's goal, however, is happiness*’ (UM II, § 2) which selects from the past those events and people who can serve to enhance and strengthen the present – heroes, martyrs, foundational myths Conservative at heart, for it is only a selective past that is of any worth, they loudly proclaim: There is not enough truth!, and so they invent a new one but conceal this fact and wish for their invention to be known as truth once and for all. These monumentalisations serve as pedagogical models worthy of emulation or events worthy of commemoration – etc. for the invigoration of society and its glorification. For Nietzsche, on a cultural level this leads to history as ideology and mystification that more often than not serves to perpetuate and justify an existing social order and forbids any critical or rational insight into events as they occurred by sacralising them. On a personal level, rather than enhancement, this attitude can paradoxically lead to a narrow personality that is reduced to fanatical egotistical adulation for imagined role-models which drive one to take ones ideals and life far too seriously. Paradoxically, so seriously that they are willing to sacrifice their actual existence in the name of

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way, or as part of a growing movement of non-clinical philosophical therapy is beyond the scope of our study and in need of further elaboration in the form of thorough engagement with Nietzsche's psychological method in light of current social and political concerns.
their ideal. This also results in and depends on a nihilistic belief structure for rather than sacrifice in the name of overcoming truthfulness and overcome themselves they would rather die trying to live up to their borrowed ideals than to give them up – they would rather will nothing than not will at all. The monumentalist is afraid of mundane everydayness because they experience it as banal. They proclaim that, except for the exceptional, ‘everything else that lives cries: No! The monumental shall not come into existence.’ (UT II, § 2) and will only engage in projects that they believe to be of great historical, social or ethical significance. Otherwise they feel their life is in vain. Likewise, they judge others on the basis of not living up to some alleged myth or hero or not dedicating their life to some high or noble cause. Everyone and everything therefore appears to them as always already a disappointment.

A second historical approach becomes available in modernity: the antiquarian approach. The approach of the person who is unable to forget, unable to have done away with anything, and thus unable to really act because their historical consciousness has become a burdensome weight. The Antiquarian proclaims: ‘there is only one truth and only the right delicate method, the knowledge of which I profess to have mastered, will reveal it’. It is ‘with this piety he as it were gives thanks for his existence.’ (UM II, § 3). Antiquarianism is evident in people who are collectors of artifacts, obsessed with archival accumulation and admire historical life and the past simply due to its having already occurred. They are obsessed with one particular historical period and dedicate their lives to its study. The antiquarian thus lives in permanent exile from the present, drawing their sustenance from a distant and ever receding pale representation which they busily and obsessively contemplate and attempt to enhance by accumulating more artifacts or digging even deeper into the particular aspects of this or that period, this or that place, this or that person. Thus the antiquarian historian is the historian of kitsch insofar as for them, the past is admired simply on the basis of its having already been. For Nietzsche, this attitude leads to a cultural environment of mummification and museumification of culture on a social level and on an individual to a neurotic and obsessive sentimental incapacity to move on in one’s life. One is always living in the past if one is unable to have done away with anything. To let it go, forget, forgive, re-assess, move forward or even better, move out of the way. The antiquarian attitude also ends up in relativism due to the inability to evaluate the past qualitatively, for everything must be remembered and thus any event is of equal importance. For ‘the antiquarian sense of a
man, a community, a whole people, always possesses an extremely restricted field of vision; most of what exists it does not perceive at all, and the little it does see it sees much too close up and isolated; it cannot relate what it sees to anything else and it therefore accords everything equal importance and therefore to each individual thing to great importance.’ (UM II, § 3). The fixation with the past blocks the possibility to be flexible in evaluating and appreciating other people and recognising them through their transformations rather than through their fidelity to a nostalgic fantasy – who they were once, who they are supposed to be and who they really allegedly are. One treats others unjustly if the other is only seen through an already established image or framework, which ignores the possibility for total change.

The Third approach is what Nietzsche calls the critical approach to history. The critical historian proclaims: ‘there is not one truth but many, but we cannot and should not decide between them!’ Not acknowledging their commitment to the ideal of truth, they profess a fear of partiality. Their task is to dispense with a single truth in order that they are able to affirm anything at all. Their peculiar piety is one that 'tramples over every kind of piety.' (UM II, § 3).

Having a critical attitude does not mean being negative but having a rationally grounded discriminatory and selective attitude that seeks to evaluate based on the perceived needs of the present age or the person in question. The critical historian uncovers forgotten histories, revises well known ones, carefully selects and refashions, judges and criticizes, in order to be able to better evaluate their own time. They are, or like to perceive themselves as contemporary, with the times. For Nietzsche this is problematic because it is ultimately a form of intellectual relativism that is grounded in a nihilistic pessimism. Relativism is possible only based on the belief in the perishability of all things due to their contingency and he equates Critical historical attitudes with the Pessimism of the ancient Greek satyr Silenus who proclaimed ‘for all that exists is worthy of perishing. So it would be better if nothing existed.’ (UM II, § 3). This attitude is based upon, and leads to, a deepening of a generalised cultural relativism governed by quick fashions, lack of comprehensive cultural style and the absence of overreaching cultural horizons on a social level.65 On a personal level, Nietzsche diagnoses the critical historian as being a person of

65 Nietzsche devotes an entire essay to an exemplar of the critical attitude, the 'philistine' David Friedrich Strauss in the first essay of the Untimely Meditations, David Strauss the Confessor and Writer.
permanent negativity, indecisiveness, and an inability to be satisfied with any fixed relationship to the world. This of course also determines their relationship to others. The critical person is usually opportunistic, cynical and indiscriminate in their associations. For them, there is no truth, only opinion and everyone and everything is equally interesting; hence nothing is that interesting anyway.

Nietzsche’s typology establishes a correlation between one’s relationship to truth and forms of historical consciousness. Each of these historical attitudes are ideal types and never exist in reality in pure form. For Nietzsche, the appropriate attitude to adopt is one that combines all three of these perspectives selectively with the aim of developing a historical consciousness not beholden to the triumph of a particular truth over life. An attitude that knows how to select, revere, preserve and reject when necessary, for the sake of enhancing one’s strength and rejuvenating culture by preventing its deterioration. As Nietzsche puts it:

‘Each of the three species of history which exist belongs to a certain soil and a certain climate and only to that: in any other it grows into a devastating weed. If the man who wants to do something great has need of the past at all, he appropriates it by means of monumental history; he, on the other hand, who likes to persist in the familiar and the revered of old, tends the past as an antiquarian historian; and only he who is oppressed by a present need, and who wants to throw off this burden at any cost, has need of critical history, that is to say a history that judges and condemns. Much mischief is caused through the thoughtless transplantation of these plants: the critic without need, the antiquary without piety, the man who recognizes greatness but cannot himself do great things, are such plants, estranged from their mother soil and degenerated into weeds.’ (UM II, § 2).

The power that allows the human being to consciously shape their relation to history is what Nietzsche defines in this essay as the plastic power of selection: ‘To determine this degree, and therewith the boundary at which the past has to be forgotten if it is not become the gravedigger of the present, one would have to know exactly how the great plastic power of a man, a people, a culture is: I mean by plastic power the capacity to develop out of oneself in one’s own way, to
trans., form and incorporate into oneself what is past and foreign, to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, to recreate broken moulds.’ (UM II, § 1).

We recognise immediately that this plastic creativity serves as an anti-teleological principle to orient historical consciousness. The vitalistic emphasis on the ability to incorporate, replace, select, transform and develop all these out of oneself in the service of regeneration is opposed to the rationalistically understood logic of historical development that dominates the forms of historical consciousness Nietzsche exposes. Nietzsche designates two ways in which this plastic power can serve to overcome the ‘malady of history’: The unhistorical and the suprahistorical. Both these arts are can be employed consciously by those who wish to exit the spectacle of scientific historical consciousness. The unhistorical, an art of forgetting and radical finitude is defined as ‘the art and power of forgetting and of enclosing oneself within a bounded horizon’. The suprahistorical, and art of beatification and eternity, gathers ‘the powers which lead the eye away from becoming towards that which bestows upon existence the character of the eternal and stable, toward art and religion. The adoption of these strategies is not an end in itself but a means or cure towards a ‘hygiene of life’ through which an individual ‘must organize the chaos within him by thinking back to his real needs’ (with the aim of generating a culture as ‘a new and improved physis, without inner and outer, without dissimulation and convention, culture as the unanimity of life, thought, appearance and will.’ (UM II, § 10).

Following on from the critique elaborated in this essay we can see that Nietzsche's philosophy can be seen, just like the discourse and practice of psychology inspired by Lebensphilosophie that it helped bring into being in the 1920's, to have 'created an opportunity for both psychology and politics simultaneously: a new vocabulary that declared war on all narratives of progression, offered a serious alternative to opponents of Freud (even within the psychoanalytical movement), provided a method of character study that starts its analysis not from the subject but from its factual 'appearance' or 'expression', and refused all presumptions about self-development by identifying a certain inherent quality in individuals that binds them their illusive 'development‘. What Nietzsche demonstrates through a meditation on the relationship between an individual's understanding of history and their intellectual practice, is that the inherent quality that binds them to their illusive development is none other than their idea of truth. Rather than a biologically determined or nationally identifiable trait, this inherent quality and its various
manifestations is a socially and institutionally produced relationship between an individual and their explicit or implicit ideas concerning history.

If we transpose the diagnosis Nietzsche makes of historical consciousness into a diagnosis of his own philosophy we can ask, ‘what are the uses and disadvantages of philosophy for life?’ It is illuminating in this context to answer this by clarifying how best to approach Nietzsche's work from within the framework he develops himself. Following the synthesis of historical attitudes that Nietzsche called for he moves to reject all philosophical forms of thought dependent on the virtue of truth, in the name of overcoming philosophical culture, hitherto understood. It is precisely this that Nietzsche attempts in the Prefaces of 1886 that serve as a practical application of the critical practices generated in his mediation on historical consciousness. This is the focus of the next chapter, which seeks to illuminate Nietzsche's own use of philosophy in the service of his own life.
Chapter Three: The Overcoming of History; Nietzsche’s Prefaces.

Only a Fool!, Only a Poet!

Talking only gaudy nonsense,

gaudy nonsense from a fool's mask,

climbing around on deceitful word-bridges,

on mirage rainbows,

between false skies,

hovering, creeping -

only a fool! only a poet!...

Dithyrambs of Dionysus, p23.

Having cleared the ground in the previous chapters, this chapter presents the results of the historical investigation and the investigation of history by discussing how Nietzsche reads his own work. Adopting the principles he lays out in his early studies, Nietzsche applies those lessons to himself in his experiments of self-overcoming. These experiments are presented through the prefaces that he attaches to some of his books upon their re-publication in 1886.

Nietzsche is a thinker in conflict with the pretensions of language to adequately represent reality. His writings are presented in such a manner as to show this impossibility. This is the paradox and challenge of his writings: If Nietzsche is only read he will not be understood. Interpretation of
his texts is secondary to experimenting with one’s life through them.\footnote{\textup{66} Lou Salome, one of Nietzsche’s closest confidants and astute interpreters along with being the only woman he ever loved, understood this when she argued that the value of Nietzsche’s work is not the writing itself but the life they document, the way in which Nietzsche lived his philosophy in relation to those he philosophised with - his friends. It is not surprising therefore that Salome’s own book on Nietzsche is one of the best, and intimate intellectual and personal portrayals of him, as it is written by a person who knew him and thought with and through him. Her biography seeks to ‘deal exclusively with the main trends of Nietzsche's unique intellectuality, from which alone his philosophy and its development could be understood.’ In reading Nietzsche, one should not over emphasize either the theoretical or biographical elements for ‘the value of his thoughts does not lie in their originality of theory, nor does it lie in that which can be established or refuted dialectically.’ The value of Nietzsche's philosophy, according to Salome is neither in the quality of his observation on life and his recommendations, for these are sometimes hardly original and cannot be understood without reference to the way in which Nietzsche came to think of them and believe in them, nor is the value to be found in Nietzsche’s own life as he lived it if this life is evaluated without reference to his own process of self-experimentation and transformation. For in attempting to understand the inner life through reflecting on the outer one would at best ‘hold only an empty shell from which the spirit has escaped’ and not in his particular style of writing or expression. Rather, for her, ‘what is of value is the intimate force which speaks through one personality to another personality’. Nietzsche's experiences were so profound, personal and deep that Salome thinks his philosophy could only have been understood when manifested in conversation ‘person to person’. Salome summaries her approach in her book as an attempt to paint a picture of ‘the meaning of the thought-experience in Nietzsche's mental constitution – the confessions of his philosophy. That is to say, one can only understand Nietzsche's philosophy if one understands the way that Nietzsche himself experienced the process of philosophizing and how he communicated these experiences to himself and to others -through words and actions. See Lou Salome, \textit{Nietzsche}, trans., Siegfried Mandel, (University of Illinois Press, 2001).} Curiously, despite this, Nietzsche has never stopped to be written about. The scholarship about him is larger than any single individual can master, and there is no end to this proliferation of interpretations in sight. Rather than an indication of increasing understanding and exactitude in interpretation, the vast amount of scholarship seems to be an indication of the difficulty of approaching Nietzsche's work through textual analysis. The imbalance and unease that Nietzsche creates in his readers cannot be interpreted away by attempting to locate the problem solely on the level of language.\footnote{\textup{67} This problem is evident in a recent influential study of Nietzsche: Alexander Nehemas' \textit{Nietzsche: Life as Literature} (Harvard University Press, 1995), a book whose title already betrays its insufficiencies. In this book Nehemas grounds his interpretation on what he understands to be Nietzsche's perspectivism and develops his reading of Nietzsche by correlating Nietzsche's style of writing with his views on the world: ‘Nietzsche, I argue, looks at the world in general as if it were a sort of artwork; in particular, he looks at it as if it were a literary text. And he arrives at many of his views of the world and the things within it, including his views of human beings, by generalizing to them ideas and principles that apply almost intuitively to the literary situation, to the creation and interpretation’, Nehemas, Ibid., Introduction, 3. According to this perspective, writing about Nietzsche is essentially an exercise in literary criticism. This would seem to miss the mark, as it privileges Nietzsche's philosophy insofar as it is written, and privileges the critic insofar as they themselves continue writing instead of experimenting.}

At a textual level this points towards a terminological problem in interpreting Nietzsche insofar as he does not always mean what he says because he cannot find the appropriate language for what he is doing. This is due to the possible lack of correspondence between experiences and the
accepted way of understanding them and explaining them at any given time. Nietzsche often will attempt to describe what he is thinking doing or saying whilst using unsuitable terms or relying on anachronistic traditions. As Nietzsche himself comments in the 1886 ‘Attempt at Self Criticism’ which serves as the preface to The Birth Of Tragedy and in his retrospective evaluation of the book in Ecce Homo, the real meaning of that book was distorted due to its reliance on the philosophical language of German Idealism – the legacy of Kant and Schopenhauer. Likewise, Nietzsche remarks that perhaps it had been better if he had expressed the ideas of the book through poetry rather than a scholarly treatise. This points to the fact that the problems of life are often distorted due to their being addressed through the wrong framework – the content often does not suit the form through which it is addressed. This is crucial to understand in evaluating Nietzsche’s thought for we will always have to wonder whether the language he is using, and the philosophical traditions he seems to rely on are indeed suitable for the problems he is addressing and the experiences he is trying to articulate through language.

This explains why the philosophy that Nietzsche practices and calls for is both experimentation and temptation: ‘These philosophers of the future might have the right (and perhaps also the wrong) to be described as those who attempt. Ultimately, this name is itself only an attempt, and, if you will, a temptation.’ (BGE, § 42). As mentioned in the Preface to this thesis, the indeterminacy of Nietzsche's writings, their susceptibility to, simultaneously, intense identification and ever multiplying interpretations can be read as a sign that the instincts they are expressing are nascent, not clearly established and hence lacking a final form which can be expressed through doctrine. Thus to remain faithful to Nietzsche does not necessarily mean adopting a fixed position or interpretation of the world but remaining vigilant in face of any ossification of our thoughts and practices. It means listening carefully and watching closely throughout one’s life to realise when certain practices and habits relations have become

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68 Daniel Conway claims that this practice is ‘carefully designed reclamation project’ in which he attempts to rescue his own work from his own interpretations! This is correct if by reclamation we understand a process of opening up new questions that the text can address and not fixing it in a final and ultimately truer or implicit meaning. For Conway's treatment of the Prefaces see Daniel Conway, ‘The Prefaces of 1886’ in Nietzsche's Futures, ed., John Lippitt (Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).
anachronistic, unsuitable, or lost the basis upon which they were formed and to have the courage to abandon them. This requires additional courage to create new, both personal and social, habits and relations. It also means paying attention to new, often barely articulated, thoughts and desires which overcome us and which we cannot at first comprehend or name.

Despite the existential pathos underlying Nietzsche's texts, there is however a certain truth to the insight⁶⁹ that Nietzsche himself practiced philosophy as a form of literary criticism. His critical relationship to his own life is often expressed through his written work. In 1886 Nietzsche writes new Prefaces for four of his previously published books – *The Birth of Tragedy, Human, all too Human, The Dawn* and *The Gay Science*. The Prefaces of 1886 serve as a laboratory for studying Nietzsche’s philosophical practice, insofar as it is expressed in writing. He retrospectively re-interprets his own ideas based on the experiences his life afforded him in the years that passed since they were written. His re-interpretations then are guided not through a literary practice that allows him to better understand the meaning behind the words, but because his own life showed him the meaning in a new light. The problems he faced in 1886 were not the ones of 1870. In the prefaces, by criticizing himself in light of a new set of problems, Nietzsche is able to overcome the problematic that led him to write those books in the first place; but he had to get rid of himself as the author of those books in order to get rid of the books themselves.

It is through the Prefaces that Nietzsche attached to some his books upon re-publication years later that his philosophical practice is expressed most dramatically. The two examples this chapter discusses, the Prefaces to *Daybreak* and *The Gay Science*, show this in striking fashion through their subversion and manipulation of the prior meanings that the books they introduce once had. In these texts, the philosophical principles Nietzsche acquired in his early studies, as discussed in the first chapter, come to life as practical existential directives. The deconstruction of Anthropomorphism is expressed through the way Nietzsche displaces himself from the center of the text and re-interprets his own experiences as examples for much broader philosophical questions. In addition, Nietzsche's critique of teleology is applied to his own experiences, when,

⁶⁹ Nehemas, op.cit.
flying in the face of any fixed or unidirectional version of subjectivity he retrospectively refashions his life and writings over and over again according to different imperatives. Finally, Nietzsche's philosophy of language allows him to subvert any interpretation of his texts as containing a fixed and final truth or moral judgment. Understood from this vantage point the Prefaces appear to us as Nietzsche's most eloquent written testimony to the practice of transformation and self-overcoming; for ‘this art of transfiguration just is philosophy.’ (GS, Preface, § 3).

On the Metamorphosis of the Spirit into a Camel; Nietzsche's Task.

To the spirit there is much that is heavy; to the strong, carrying
spirit imbued with reverence. Its strength demands what is heavy and heaviest.

What is heavy? thus asks the carrying spirit. It kneels down like a camel and wants to be well loaded.

What is heaviest, you heroes? thus asks the carrying spirit, so that I might take it upon myself and rejoice in my strength.

Is it not this: lowering oneself in order to hurt one's pride? Letting one's foolishness glow in order to mock one's wisdom?

Or is it this: abandoning our cause when it celebrates victory? Climbing high mountains in order to tempt the tempter?

Or is it this: feeding on the acorns and grass of knowledge and for the sake of truth suffering hunger in one's soul?

Or is it this: being ill and sending the comforters home and making friends with the deaf who never hear what you want?

Or is it this: wading into dirty water when it is the water of truth, and not shrinking away from cold frogs and hot toads?

Or is it this: loving those who despise us, and extending a hand to the ghost when it wants to frighten us?

All of these heaviest things the carrying spirit takes upon itself, like
In a passage from 1888 Nietzsche celebrates the immense happiness and the great spiritual benefits that life holds in store for those who live through it with the Pessimism of Strength. Warding off any suspicion of Romanticism or defeatism, Nietzsche writes:

‘The most spiritual men, as the strongest, find their happiness where others would find their destruction: in the labyrinth, in hardness against themselves and others, in experiments. Their joy is self-conquest: asceticism becomes in them nature, need, and instinct. Difficult tasks are a privilege to them; to play with burdens that crush others, a recreation. Knowledge-a form of asceticism. They are the most venerable kind of man: that does not preclude their being the most cheerful and the kindliest.’ (AC, § 57).

The passage reveals that the primary philosophical challenge in life is to transform suffering and difficulty into an experiment for the sake of knowledge. Nietzsche does not invite suffering upon himself as a form of prostration or ascetic punishment. The value of suffering is not due to the allure of self-satisfied victimhood, or the greater worth of the happiness that is promised as reward, but as means of self-enrichment. The point is to make suffering into an opportunity for richer knowledge. There is no correlation here between knowledge and virtue. Nietzsche does not share the Socratic pretense that more knowledge will lead to more happiness. Indeed, ignorance may be bliss, and under certain conditions, the unexamined life may, in the end, be a happier one.

As opposed to the absolute virtue of the pursuit of knowledge, Nietzsche proposes the honesty involved in genealogical inquiry. Genealogy does not aim at transparent self-knowledge. Transparency is impossible for Nietzsche because there is no separation, for him, between knowledge and the knower. There is no subject of truth to be discovered but rather, various interpretations, habits and affects that together have congealed into a personality or way of acting.
Given that we cannot take for granted that motivations are benevolent, it would not be wise to assume that we are virtuous in our desire to uncover so called truths. An attempt to valorise one interpretation over another and to freeze the dynamism of becoming into a fixed being would entail reifying a contingent perspective into a necessary and universal truth. This is the conceit of self-satisfaction. At best we should be honest in our lack of self-satisfaction and endeavour to remain alert to the various forces that shape us. Nietzsche's celebrated 'pathos of distance', which could easily be understood as an elitist individualist mark of distinction, is from this perspective actually a stance of modesty as a recognition of the gap between reality and interpretation. The pathos of distance is but the recognition of the necessity to remain vigilant in the genealogical practice so as never to rest comfortably on any laurel. Far from an anti-social condemnation of mass society, the pathos of distance is an ethical stance of responsibility in face of ourselves and others we are addressing to ensure that the gap is never closed for good.

Nietzsche proposes a different equation between suffering and knowledge. Knowledge, due to the self-destructions it provokes in those who seek after it and the unpleasant and non-moral truths its reveals, is the insight born of suffering. Nietzsche transforms Philosophy from a love-of-knowledge to a love for the pain and struggle of overcoming oneself, that knowledge is but a result of. A Pessimism of Strength is based on the idea that the value of life consists in seeing in it an opportunity for self-overcoming by testing oneself through struggle, come what may. It is

70 As formulated in Section 257 of BGE under the heading ‘What is Noble?’ Nietzsche presents an aristocratic historical definition: ‘Without the pathos of distance, the sort which grows out of the deeply rooted difference between the social classes, out of the constant gazing outward and downward of the ruling caste on the subjects and work implements, and out of their equally sustained practice of obedience and command, holding down and holding at a distance, that other more mysterious pathos would have no chance of growing at all, that longing for an ever new widening of distances inside the soul itself, the development of ever higher, rarer, more distant, more expansive, more comprehensive states, in short, simply the enhancement in the type ‘man,’ the constant ‘self-conquest of man,’ to cite a moral formula in a supra-moral sense.’ Despite not featuring directly in the Prefaces under discussion the ‘pathos of distance’ is shown in its true light through these texts as a principle of distinction for the contemporary world. Rather than establishing a political hierarchy, the 'pathos of distance' is a mark of spiritual distinction and separation from those trapped in the Socratic tradition, as a result of the work of the individual who undergoes self-overcoming as exemplified through the Prefaces.

71 This practice is more in the manner of the spiritual practices of Hellenic philosophers. As Horst Hutter explains ‘Ascetic practices, in their original meaning at least, did not have the aspect of masochistic self-punishment that they later acquired with the transformation of philosophy into Christianity. Rather, they were seen as means to attain freedom from the manifold possibilities of enslavement arising from the human propensity to excess in emotions.
only by learning how to transform absolute distress into new knowledge that any insight is to be gained.

In a letter to Overbeck in 1883 Nietzsche explicitly equates his philosophical task with the practice of self-overcoming:

To Overbeck,

Summer 1883 (Sils-Maria).

My dear friend Overbeck:

I would like to write you a few forthright words, just

as I did recently to your dear wife. I have an aim, which

compels me to go on living and for the sake of which I

Neither the body nor any of the powerful emotions it could engender were considered evil in themselves. The aim simply was not to lose one's own clarity of thought when confronted by powerful emotions, especially those of the painful variety. Thus, by accustoming oneself to painful experiences one could learn to resist the absorbing quality of such experiences.' Horst Hutter ‘Philosophy as Self-Transformation’ in Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques, Vol. 16, No. 2/3 (Summer; Fall, 1989). Nietzsche's self-overcoming is not for the sake of rational control of the emotions or greater clarity but a balance between self-dissolution and self-expansion. His aim is not edification grounded in optimism but a deepening of existence grounded in Pessimism: 'Is pessimism necessarily a sign of decline, decay, malformation, of tired and debilitated instincts [. . .]? Is there a pessimism of strength? An intellectual preference for the hard, gruesome, malevolent and problematic aspects of existence which comes from a feeling of well-being, from overflowing health, from an abundance of existence? Is there perhaps such a thing as suffering from overabundance itself? Is there a tempting bravery in the sharpest eye which demands the terrifying as its foe, as a worthy foe against which it can test its strength and from which it intends to learn the meaning of fear?' (BT, ‘Attempt at a Self-Criticism,’ § 1).
must cope with even the most painful matters. Without this aim I would take things much more lightly - that is, I would stop living. And it was not only this past winter that anyone seeing and understanding my condition from close at hand would have had the right to say: 'Make it easier for yourself? Die!'; in previous times, too, in the terrible years of physical suffering, it was the same with me. Even my Genoese years are a long, long chain of self-conquests for the sake of that aim and not to the taste of any human being that I know. So, dear friend, the 'tyrant in me', the inexorable tyrant, wills that I conquer this time too (as regards physical torments, their duration, intensity, and variety, I can count myself among the most experienced and tested of people; is it my lot that I should be equally so experienced and tested in the torments of the soul?). And to be consistent with my way of thinking and my latest philosophy, I must even have an absolute victory - that is, the transformation of
experience into gold and use of the highest order.'\textsuperscript{72}

Pierre Klossowski correctly identifies this passage as containing the essence of Nietzsche's philosophy. The letter was written following the end of the relationship between Nietzsche and Lou Salome, the greatest tragedy of Nietzsche's life. Far from a cause for suicidal despair this tragedy is for Nietzsche nonetheless the perfect opportunity to continue with his task with renewed vigor. As Klossowski explains: 'Nietzsche's intimate ordeal took on its full weight only in proportion to the aim he had prescribed for himself. What was this aim? Was it the doctrine of the Eternal Return, the revaluation - the perfect instrument through which his thought could act on posterity? Or was it something else? Was it not rather a question of Nietzsche's own metamorphosis, which would be achieved through this work, or which in any case had to be completed? 'My nature is so concentrated that whatever strikes me moves straight to my center.' Thus every event of importance, in life, since it came from the outside, put the center of his nature in question again, either threatening it or enriching it. Nietzsche loved himself only for his aim; he hated himself as a victim of the traps of life, and the adventure with Lou, given its consequences, was the worst he had ever known.'\textsuperscript{73} The process of Nietzsche's own metamorphosis, in the course of his own life, is at the center of his work and not the development of doctrines for the sake of propriety or notoriety.

Due to the unrelenting aspect of Nietzsche's self-referential style, as shown most clearly in his Prefaces, it is easy to interpret this apparent heroism as arrogance or the self-consciousness of a never fully matured aesthete. Nonetheless, the total rejection of the concern for posterity and the lack of concern for his own survival should be understood as a form of modesty. It is necessarily modesty that drives one to not hold too fast to their ego or any fixed determination of their identity, so that they can welcome adversity as an opportunity to get on with the task of overcoming themselves.

Only a profound modesty could explain the identification Nietzsche had with the ancient Greek God Dionysus, who far from asserting his power through eternal attributes rather recognises his

\textsuperscript{72} ‘Nietzsche to Overbeck, Summer 1883’, cited in Klossowski, 193.

\textsuperscript{73} Klossowski, Ibid., 195.
strength in his insubstantiality. Nietzsche's fidelity to the Dionysian is manifested through the taking up of metamorphosis as an existential task. A radicalism that stems from profound modesty and realism rather than delusions of grandeur. This task implies that due to the insubstantiality and transformative nature of human beings, nothing about a person's identity is sacred enough not to be allowed to perish, and there is no social bond or cultural norm that cannot be questioned and if necessary, overthrown. The texts in which Nietzsche practices this Dionysian virtue and modest radicalism most clearly are his Prefaces, which we now turn to.

**The Metamorphosis of the Camel into a Lion; The Preface to *Daybreak*.**

*But in the loneliest desert the second metamorphosis occurs. Here the spirit becomes lion, it wants to hunt down its freedom and be master in its own desert.*

*Here it seeks its last master, and wants to fight him and its last god. For victory it wants to battle the great dragon.*

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74 In his study of Metamorphosis in Greek Myths, Forbes-Irving highlights the transformative powers of Dionysus. The subversive nature of the god, rather than causing him to fail, is responsible for his power and overcoming of adversity. In the myths Dionysus is always bound and undergoes transformations into different animals to evade his captors. He is the closest thing the Greek religion has to an animal-god. The shapes he appears in are often apparitions that only confound those who behold him. The combination of animalistic and magical qualities of Dionysus mark him as a genuine outsider. Dionysus is a shape-shifter God who undergoes ‘a whole series of transformations rather than just a single one’ which are self-willed as opposed to enforced. ‘Whereas the transformation of the Olympians is only a form of disguise under which the god continues to exist and behave as a god, the shape shifter completely submerges his personality in the thing he becomes’. P.M.C Forbes-Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths* (OUP, 1990) p, 171. The non-Greek origin of Dionysus (he is often portrayed as arriving from the East or from the Sea) emphasises that the rituals performed under his name are un-rooted and hence destabilising. As Nietzsche emphasised in BT, Dionysus was the God of the weak, oppressed and marginal, and thus the God who represented the overturning of established order. The rituals performed in his name featured intense intoxication, blurring of social and gender roles and orgies.
Who is the great dragon whom the spirit no longer wants to call master
and god? ‘Thou shalt’ is the name of the great dragon. But the spirit of
the lion says ‘I will. ‘Thou shalt’ stands in its way, gleaming golden, a scaly animal, and
upon every scale ‘thou shalt!’ gleams like gold.

The values of millennia gleam on these scales, and thus speaks the most
powerful of all dragons: ‘the value of all things - it gleams in me.

All value has already been created, and the value of all created things -
that am I. Indeed, there shall be no more 'I will!'' Thus speaks the
dragon. My brothers, why is the lion required by the spirit? Why does the beast
of burden, renouncing and reverent, not suffice?

To create new values - not even the lion is capable of that: but to create
freedom for itself for new creation - that is within the power of the lion.

To create freedom for oneself and also a sacred No to duty: for that,
my brothers, the lion is required.

To take the right to new values - that is the most terrible taking for
a carrying and reverent spirit. Indeed, it is preying, and the work of a
predatory animal.

Once it loved ‘thou shalt’ as its most sacred, now it must find delusion

and despotism even in what is most sacred to it, in order to wrest freedom
from its love by preying. The lion is required for this preying.

(Z, part one, ’On the Three Metamorphoses’).

Zarathustra’s Lion creates for itself freedom in order to make room for the creation of new values. But rather than a simple unburdening, Nietzsche’s 1886 Preface to *Daybreak* teaches us that before rising up in search for freedom, it is necessary to first go under in search after prejudice. The book is subtitled ‘Thoughts On the prejudices of Morality’ which shows that the daybreak in question has broken after a long period of endless night. This is why Nietzsche begins the Preface by telling us that in the book we will encounter ‘*A Subterranean man at work*’ burrowing in the dark. (D, Preface, § 1). Uncovering the prejudices of morality is a long, slow and painful process, due to the extent to which these prejudices are hardly understood to be prejudices to begin with. The work of millennia cannot be undone in one night. Yet despite having to work in the cold and in the dark, due to the uncharted and underground terrain he is attempting to navigate, with a ‘protracted deprivation of light and air’, Nietzsche is very clear that within this obscurity he finds his own redemption. Thus, after extensive burrowing, taking upon himself the subterranean burden of questioning the presumptions of morality, Nietzsche announces his successful return from the philosophical Underworld: ‘And indeed, my patient friends, I shall now tell you what I was after down there - here in this late preface which could easily have become a funeral oration: for I have returned and, believe it or not, returned safe and sound.’ (D, Preface, § 2).

Yet, in an astonishing reversal of expectations, contravening the protocols governing the discourse of travelers who are eager to recommend to pliable listeners to follow in their footsteps, Nietzsche announces to the reader that, despite the precious discoveries he has made on his quest, the quest was his alone. The things he has seen are no in need of further witnesses: ‘Do not think for a moment that I intend to invite you to the same hazardous enterprise!’ (D, Preface, § 2).

Nietzsche's strategy does not arise from a fear of disclosing his discoveries or a hesitation as to the reality of what he saw. Despite the magnitude of his discovery on his quest to ‘undermine the
foundations of morality’ (D, Preface, § 2) Nietzsche, always cavalier, but never the moralist, makes it clear that this task cannot be understood and undertaken if one merely follows his path. For there are many paths that lead away from morality; the reader is encouraged to make their own way and take the journey at their own pace and on their own terms.

The discoveries concerning the way in which morality lies under the logical and rational pursuit of knowledge, cannot be communicated through persuasion, rhetoric and dialectic inquiry. Rather one must use their own ears and eyes to avoid being swindled once again when addressing moral questions: ‘For as long as there has been speech and persuasion on earth, morality has shown itself to be the greatest of all mistresses of seduction - and, so far as we philosophers are concerned, the actual Circe of the philosophers.’ (D, Preface, § 3).

Nietzsche demands that his readers take distance from the book with the aid of the ‘late but not too late’ preface. He is cautioning and protecting the reader for fear that, unprepared, they may recoil in horror when they discover that ‘logical evaluations are not the deepest or most fundamental to which our audacious mistrust can descend: faith in reason, with which the validity of these judgments must stand or fall, is, as faith, a moral phenomenon.’ (D, Preface, § 3). Only a moralist reads morally, and the undermining of moral foundations, rather than a release from a bad dream, could be experienced like an earthquake by those who have not taken their time with their ruminations and investigations. Nietzsche, therefore, recommends that the reader try themselves, with the use of their own reason, to reach a similar conclusion. This is to be done by ‘learning to read slowly, read well, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers.’ (D, Preface, § 5).

Why read slowly? Nietzsche hopes that by reading slowly and repeatedly the reader will discover in their own way what Nietzsche demonstrated about Kant. Failing to realise that he was still

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75 In The Odyssey Homer recounts a story how members of Odysseus' crew were turned into pigs by drinking the Sorceress Circe's potion. We can conclude by analogy that Nietzsche is suggesting that mixing morality with philosophy turns philosophers into swine.
speaking from atop a firm moral foundation, Kant believed that he knew the answer to the question Nietzsche asks in the preface: ‘Why is it that from Plato onwards every philosophical architect in Europe has built in vain?’ (D, Preface, § 3). As discussed in the Chapter One of this thesis, and reinforced by Nietzsche in this Preface, Kant's answer to this question was that philosophers have failed in securing a firm foundation for reason because they neglected to establish and secure proper internal limits of reason itself, without recourse to moral foundations. Kant believed he managed to delineate these limits epistemologically by the use of reason to examine itself. The earnest and ingenious solution proposed by Kant is exposed by Nietzsche as a naive misrecognition: ‘And, come to think of it, was it not somewhat peculiar to demand of an instrument that it should criticise its own usefulness and suitability? that the intellect itself should 'know' its own value, its own capacity, and its own limitations? was it not even a little absurd?’ (D, Preface, § 3).

It is this naïveté that Nietzsche seems to perform in his endless introspection and self-reflection. But the aim is totally different. Rather than an attempt to secure a foundation for reason, the self-reflection and presentation in the prefaces is aimed at exposing the untenability of Kant's endeavour by exposing the self-deluding nature of any self-generated and sustained fiction. The reader is therefore asked to read slowly and with limits so as to recognise gradually that their own use of reason is sustained by extra rational concerns.

Rather than just delineating clearly the limits of reason in a Kantian fashion, Nietzsche, faithful to his Dionysian Materialism, exposes reason as a historical construction. Just as repetition of a word will gradually cause it to be heard in a strange manner, subsuming its semantic content in sound, Nietzsche wishes to estrange the activity of reflection by causing his readers to undergo self-reflection in the most persistent and extreme way. An instrument cannot fix itself but, slowly and surely, repeated use will ensure that the instrument breaks. Nietzsche's gesture, which we can retrospectively identify as proto-Brechtian, is to stage a split between thinking and reflexivity with the aim of de-naturalising reflexivity by exposing it as a mechanism.

In this Preface, Nietzsche dramatically stages an experiment in self-overcoming through which this de-naturalisation takes place. The reader is asked to follow Nietzsche by performing this de-naturalisation and charting their own course through and beyond their own ‘prejudice’.
The intensification of reflexivity is aimed at an eventual overcoming of the pathologies of self-consciousness: the social sanctioned identification between morality and reflexivity that makes human beings experience themselves as ‘individuals’. The aim is to learn to see the social and physiological origins of reflexivity, and thus uncover its history. Performed recklessly, it can draw the reader into an infinite and infernal spiral in the underworld of self-consciousness. Performed with care, following the warnings outlined in the Preface, and grounded in the principles Nietzsche develops in his earlier critiques of anthropomorphism, teleology and language (as discussed in Chapter One of this thesis) this estrangement effect, by de-naturalising reflexivity, exposes the workings of self-reflection as an artificial mechanism and not as a natural faculty.

Hopefully, this experiment will eventually lead the reader to question the very activity of reflection itself thereby ceasing to recognise themselves in any of their self-reflections. In this way the alienation caused opens up the possibility to overcome the history that was being reflected upon by no longer identifying with the reflecting process itself. From then on one appears to oneself as a stranger and past identifications and investments become a preface to an unknown future in which ‘In us there is accomplished - supposing you want a formula - the self-sublimation of morality.’ (D, Preface, § 4). The exposure of the performative and artificial nature of reflexivity allows the reader to decide from themselves if indeed knowledge=virtue=happiness and to determine for themselves the extent to which reflexivity can be an advantage or disadvantage for life. Following this, the can decide for themselves how many pieties they are willing to shed and how many prejudices they are willing to overcome; to what extent they can learn to cultivate ‘the delight in an X’ (GS, Preface, § 3) whilst still being adept enough to know when nonetheless, it is still useful to believe in ‘truth’. On this question, the reader, and not Nietzsche, is called on to have the last word. How to begin developing a taste for this new and

76 Nietzsche’s experiments are in this regard an attempt to free the individual from the two seemingly opposing but co-dependent poles of the nihilistic personality: permanent entrepreneurialism and depression. As demonstrated in the introduction to the thesis, the origins of this social pathology originate, according to Nietzsche from the belief in the perfectability of the world through rational conduct. See also T1 ‘On the Improvers of Mankind’. For a discussion in relation to contemporary society see Alain Ehrenberg, *The Weariness of the Self: Diagnosing the History of Depression in the Contemporary Age*, trans., David Homel (McGill-Queens University Press) Ehrenberg, in his social history of Depression diagnoses it as a ‘pathology of grandeur’ as a consequence of the generalization of the ‘values associated with autonomy’ in modern society. For an illuminating study which identifies nihilism as a pathology of modern intellectual civilization, relying on Nietzsche’s analysis but ingeniously using him a case study see Johan Goudsblom, *Nihilism and Culture* (Basil Blackwell, 1980).
strange delight, is the task Nietzsche sets for his readers and himself in the Preface to his next book *The Gay Science*. 
‘But tell me, my brothers, of what is the child capable that even the lion
is not? Why must the preying lion still become a child?
The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a wheel
rolling out of itself, a first movement, a sacred yes-saying.
Yes, for the game of creation my brothers a sacred yes-saying is required.
The spirit wants its will, the one lost to the world now wins its own world’.
(Z, part one, ‘On the Three Metamorphoses of the Spirit’).

Like many new beginnings, the one announced in *The Gay Science* may require many false
starts. The first thing we read in this Preface is that GS is a book that requires many prefaces:
‘Yet and in the end there would still be room for doubting whether someone who has not
experienced something similar could, by means of prefaces, be brought closer to the experiences
of this book’ (GS, Preface, § 1).

One Preface would not be enough to express to the reader the fundamental experience that
motivated Nietzsche to write the book: the profound transformation he experienced as he
recovered, as if from a long illness, from many years of misanthropy. Due to his prior profound
contempt for humanity, a consequence of his Romanticism, Nietzsche required years of solitude
to shield him from his object of scorn. It is this contempt that he has left behind and overcome by
exorcising his Romanticism and world-weary Pessimism, previously expressed through his
worship of Wagner and Schopenhauer.
To communicate this experience requires as many prefaces as the many transformations and overcomings that it continues to be a testament to, whether of its original author or any of the book's readers.

But who is the original author of this book of gratitude and convalescence? After all, it is a book of new beginnings, which announces an embarkment into unknown territory: *This entire book is really nothing but an amusement after long privation and powerlessness, the jubilation of returning strength, of a reawakened faith in a tomorrow and a day after tomorrow, of a sudden sense and anticipation of a future, of impending adventures, of reopened seas, of goals that are permitted and believed in again.* (GS, Preface, § 1).

For his 'amusement', Nietzsche attached a series of poems on the theme of transformation and overcoming titled *Joke, Cunning and Revenge* in which he claims to mock all poets, and declares the entire collection of poems to be a parody. And yet, after having dealt with the poets to his satisfaction, Nietzsche announces that he is searching for a new object of parody. He responds by declaring the entire book to be a parody not only of poets but of himself, as if to suggest that he is the butt of the joke, and the revenge is exacted on his own folly. And so the Preface implores and asks, *'But let us leave Mr. 'Nietzsche: what is it to us that Mr. Nietzsche has got well again?'* (GS, Preface, § 2). This demand betrays a suspicion that where we previously thought we would find 'Nietzsche's teaching' we can now leave behind like a shelter we have just abandoned.

As the preface continues Nietzsche depersonalises the parody and makes it clear that book is no longer to be read only as a testament of the author's own overcoming but as a general reflection on the relationship between philosophy and health *'for any psychologist knows few as attractive as that.'* (GS, Preface, § 2). He therefore calls for a philosophical physician who will be able to utilize the parody for the sake of his inquiry: *'I am still waiting for a philosophical physician in the exceptional sense of the term – someone who has set himself the task of pursuing the problem of the total health of a people, time, race or of humanity - to summon the courage at last to push*

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77 Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, op.cit.*
my suspicion to its limit and risk the proposition: what was at stake in all philosophizing hitherto
was not at all ‘truth’ but rather something else - let us say health, future, growth, power, life . . .’
(GS, Preface, § 2).

The type of philosopher in a physiological mode would therefore know how to experiment
wisely for the sake of proper insight into the spiritual and culturally regenerative values of
different forms of experience, without judging them according to the inherited moral categories
of good and evil or in relation to the purported sanctioned truthfulness of the knowledge these
experiments produce.78 Once again, it is this very experimental notion of transformation that is
what Nietzsche defines as the essence of his thought: ‘A philosopher who has passed through
many kinds of health, and keeps passing through them again and again, has passed through an
equal number of philosophies; he simply cannot but translate his state every time into the most
spiritual form and distance - this art of transfiguration just is philosophy.’(GS, Preface, § 3).

Seeing that this is the book in which Nietzsche announces one the ideas most associated with
him: the experiment of The Eternal Return of the Same, why would Nietzsche ask us to cease
being concerned with the ideas put forward in the book as if all we would read in them were now
a parody? Are these theories now to be understood as nothing but amusements? Is it possible that

78 Nietzsche's analysis of nihilism did not develop sufficiently before his death for him to formulate it in relation to
his broader cultural analyses of history and memory in UM,II and GM. He was therefore denied the opportunity to
develop a formalised typology of cultures. This is why his analysis remains focused on individuals. Nietzsche’s
Prefaces were a testament to the experiments he carried out and called for others to carry out in an attempt to
develop a physiology of culture, by uncovering the effects of diet, climate, medical treatments and states of mind on
intellectual and artistic productivity. Klossowski’s study shows the challenge Nietzsche mounts against the perceived
purity and sobriety of philosophy by mapping the influence of his own mental states on his thinking, see,
Klossowski op.cit. Danielle Hallet discusses Nietzsche’s dietary experiments in relation to his search for different
ways of thinking very carefully in her thesis In the Belly of the (Blond) Beast: Nietzsche’s Dietetic Critique of
Philosophy, Masters Thesis (University Of British Columbia, 2009). This approach not only challenges the belief in
the autonomy of the intellect but also seeks to liberate spiritual practices from rigid moral or epistemological
sanction. Beyond his own provisional attempts, Nietzsche’s writings have been influential for many critics of the
ways in which spiritual practices and social experiences are pathologised, either through the psychologisation and
medicalisation of sociological phenomena , the discrediting of knowledge produced through non-scientific means,
the repression of social practices not oriented towards the reproduction of Capital or the State , the power exerted by
those who command language over those who do not, or the stigmatisation and criminalisation of non-normative
behavior. For an elaboration of these critiques, the genealogical studies carried out by Michel Foucault are
exemplary. See for example, Michel Foucault, The History of Madness, ed., Jean Khalfa, trans., Jonathan Murphy
(Routledge, 2006). For fascinating and provocative contemporary study in a Nietzschean vein see Bert van den
Kieran Keohane and Anders Petersen (Ashgate, 2013).
they were only temporary experiments for the sake of testing his renewed strength? Indeed, the aphorism announcing the experiment of the Eternal Return is titled ‘The heaviest weight’. In the text it is presented as a fictional test and the scenario is deliberately staged as if to dare the reader to see if they can accomplish what the author had successfully tried himself:

‘What if some day or night a demon were to steal into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: 
'This life as you now live it and have lived it you will have to live once again and innumerable times again; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unspeakably small or great in your life must return to you, all in the same succession and sequence - even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned over again and again, and you with it, speck of dust! “Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: “You are a god, and never have I heard anything more divine.” If this thought gained power over you, as you are it would transform and possibly crush you; the question in each and every thing, “Do you want this again and innumerable times again?” would lie on your actions as the heaviest weight! Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life to long for nothing more fervently than for this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?’ (GS, § 341).

What if some day? Nietzsche asks. By the time he wrote the preface it would seem that those days had long gone and this experiment had become nothing more than a testament to the health of the author who could undergo such a thought.79 The experiment becomes a pragmatic question

79 The Eternal Return is one of the ideas most commented on in Nietzsche scholarship. The literature is vast. It is famously considered a central doctrine of Nietzsche’s entire philosophy by both Heidegger (note 1) and Klossowski (note 13). (Gilles Deleuze, despite his creative re-interpretation in Nietzsche and Philosophy, trans., Hugh Tomlinson (CUP, 1983) remains faithful to the dominant trend. Other notable interpretations are Karl Lowith, Nietzsche’s Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same, trans., J. Harvey Lomax (University of California Press, 2007) and Joan Stambaugh, Nietzsche’s Thought of Eternal Return (John Hopkins University Press, 1972). A debate is conducted in these books whether Nietzsche really believed in a cosmological justification of the idea or whether it remains as just a firm ethical maxim or thought experiment that can serve as an orienting principle his philosophical teaching. This debate is important but secondary to the question whether the Eternal Return is dogma or an experiment. The provisional place of the Eternal Return in Nietzsche’s writings and its deliberate experimental presentation suggest otherwise. Indeed, Nietzsche plays with scientific demonstrations on the idea of recurrence in his notebooks (WP, ages 544-550) but given his rejection of cosmological justifications for ethics and his understanding of science as a form of myth what use could his elaboration of the cosmological justification of this theory serve other than an ironic attempt to prove the
of the health of the experimenter who undertakes it and thus serves as part of a series of possible practices to undertake in order to test the spiritual consequences of conceiving of alternative notions of time other than Christian messianism or Secular progress.

What was once written as a book announcing the heaviest of burdens and a tragedy waiting to unfold now appears as a parodic text which proclaims a Gay Science of metamorphosis as the new art of philosophy. The camel which transformed into a lion has now changed once again and appears as a child, who, whilst eager to communicate, is yet to learn the right language appropriate for his experiences: ‘Finally, lest what is most important remain unsaid: from such abysses, from such severe illness, also from the illness of severe suspicion, one returns newborn, having shed one's skin, more ticklish and malicious, with a more delicate taste for joy, with a more tender tongue for all good things, with merrier senses, joyful with a more dangerous second innocence, more childlike, and at the same time a hundred times subtler than one had ever been before.’ (GS, Preface, § 3).

Rejecting any essentialised or teleological understanding of his own nature, Nietzsche shows through his Prefaces how we may begin to re-fashion ourselves and the world around us free from the anthropomorphic tradition that founds knowledge and language on the basis of the certainty in their own virtue and applicability to the world. Using his own personal history in the service of his own life Nietzsche offers a framework from within which to begin to construct an alternative philosophical practice that does not repeat the mistakes or adopts the postures of the ‘rationality of the reasonable man’ for whom ‘there are things he does not see which even a child sees, there are things he does not hear which even a child hears, and these things are precisely the most important things; because he does not understand these things, his

irrelevance of such a proof against those attempting such an endeavor? The next and last time Nietzsche will discuss the Eternal Return in his published work (discounting the retrospective reference in EH) is in Thus Spoke Zarathustra, the last book of which was published in 1885. Zarathustra’s prophecy is first announced in 1881 at the end book four of the Gay Science as a Tragedy. But by the time of the 1886 preface to The Gay Science, Nietzsche is clear that he thinks the tragedy should now be read as a parody: Incipit tragoedia, we read at the end of this suspiciously innocent book. Beware! Something utterly wicked and mischievous is being announced here: incipit parodia, no doubt.’ (GS, Preface, 1).
understanding is more childish that the child and more simple than simplicity – and this in spite of the many cunning folds of his parchment scroll and virtuosity of his fingers in unraveling the entangled’ (UM II, § 5).

After the rejection of the Socratic tradition of Philosophy through his exercises in self-overcoming, Nietzsche is, in his own eyes, in the place of a child. Unlike Socrates who questions his interlocutors with the aim of showing them that they do not know what they claim to know, and hence should learn to value life for the sake of more knowledge, Nietzsche aims to show us that we know all too well what we know and the task is therefore to no longer value that knowledge, but search for a form of knowledge in the service of life.

Nietzsche’s equation between philosophy and childhood subverts the Kantian association between philosophy and maturity, which is at the center of the project of Enlightenment.80 Rather than living life responsibly towards fulfillment, social purpose or universal ends, all grounded in the false certainty of rational knowledge masked as objective truth, the task Zarathustra’s children are asked to take on is to live life as a ‘problem’ for which there is no ultimate solution and in which self-overcoming becomes a permanent challenge, for ‘one emerges from such dangerous exercises in self-mastery as a different person, with a few more question marks, above all with the will henceforth to question further, more deeply, severely, harshly, evilly, and quietly than one had previously questioned. The trust in life is gone: life itself has become a problem.’ (GS, Preface, § 3).

Once the trust in ‘that’ life is gone, hopefully confusion will gradually make way for innocence and a more profound hope. Unlike a childish innocence that questions in order to learn and imitate, Nietzsche's 'more dangerous, second innocence' accommodates itself to a life without the possibility of truthful knowledge and takes on this experimental life joyously and without reservation. It is a childhood that, whilst acknowledging its parentage, is no longer able to seek guidance from tradition and is no longer in a position to transmit it, but only to transform it. This

80 In ‘An Answer to the Question What is Enlightenment?’ Kant explicitly defines the process of enlightenment as ‘man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity’. This emergence is to occur through the use of autonomous and responsible Reason befitting the tasks of enlightened and professional adulthood, which Kant calls ‘maturity’. See Kant, op.cit.
new found innocence, an innocence earned rather than bestowed, is the starting point for any philosopher who wishes to continue along the course that Nietzsche has charted and attempt to elaborate and practice a 'philosophy of the future'.
Conclusion

Due to the quality and rigor of contemporary interpretations of Nietzsche thought his philosophy is all but redeemed of the falsifications and over-zealous revisionist interpretations that prevailed in the second half of the twentieth century. Basing ourselves on recent scholarship it would be just as absurd to read Nietzsche as proto Nazi, as it would be to read him as a social democrat, humanist or exemplary bourgeois reactionary. The task is rather to know how to relate to his thought and ascribe to it meaning as a living philosophy in light of the challenges facing contemporary humanity.

Despite Nietzsche’s rejection of rationalism, along with the pieties of modern political and scientific culture, his philosophy serves as a tonic against all forms cultural despair and misplaced nostalgia. The critique of teleology, far from leaving us aimless, positioned between a meaningless present and a traumatic past, opens up the future to unimagined possibilities. Far from leading to a passive nihilism he warned against, the critique of teleology in history and nature rescues us from the enslavement to blind fate and the artificiality of essentialism just as it does from the contingency of groundless self-assertion masquerading as identity politics. Likewise a physiological and genealogically inspired investigation of truth practices liberates ethics and human action from the moralistic dichotomy of fidelity and betrayal of truth, which, although formalistically refashioned, is so prevalent in certain current philosophical and activist circles.

Nietzsche physiologically inspired critique of language, realised as a genealogical and self-critical practice, far from abandoning us to mute irrationalism, renders us more able to counter a sclerotic and moribund scholasticism that, unable to imagine or comprehend a reason that does

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81 Nietzsche's elevation to the official philosophical representative of the Third Reich culminating in Hitler's opportune visit to the Nietzsche Archives in Weimar to meet Elisabeth Forster-Nietzsche is a legacy that has been as hard to forget as the Soviet distortions of Marx's work. For a touching personal account on how the Nazi appropriation influenced future Nietzsche scholarship see Mazzino Montinari's recollection in Reading Nietzsche, trans., Greg Whitlock, (University of Illinois press, 2003).

82 For an example of this type of blackmail see, Alain Badiou, Philosophy for Militants, trans., Bruno Bosteels (Verso, 2013).
not limit itself to the increasingly bureaucratized procedures of concepts and languages, overdetermines in the name of truth, the practice of philosophy.

Nietzsche, who declared that in order to get rid of god we must first get rid of grammar, attempts, in his Prefaces, to do precisely this through his subversion of any demand for linguistic, biographical and philosophical consistency, in favor of ontological metamorphosis, which he would refer to later in his life as 'will-to-power'. Instead of taking a' linguistic turn' to replace a discredited privileging of consciousness, he 'goes-under' and attempts to undermine both consciousness and language as privileged sites of human self-understanding or action by using the traditions of philosophy against themselves.

Due to the emphasis on self-transformation as a practical existential activity it is worthwhile asking if Nietzsche’s thought holds therapeutic value for his readers in the way of ancient Hellenistic philosophical practice. In order to prove that he is reviving such an idea we would have to show that Nietzsche had figured out a consistent way of life that he was satisfied with and attempted to put into practice. It is my argument that the way of life he wished for was never clearly articulated and that what we have to gain from his work is the example of a man that shows us again and again why such an attempt is false at best and foolish at worst.

The ancient practices of therapeutic philosophy could be encapsulated in two maxims. The first is the Epicurean principle that ‘Empty is the argument of the philosopher which does not relieve any human suffering.’\(^{83}\) Alluding to the practical benefits of a rationally directed way of life according to the principles of nature. The understanding of nature this is based on is articulated elegantly by Plato who puts into the mouth of Pausanius the second maxim orienting Hellenic thought, that ‘the love of the noble mind, which is in union with the unchangeable, is everlasting’.\(^{84}\) It is nature that is unchangeable and everlasting, and the task of philosophy is to

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apprehend that which is necessary and everlasting as an orientation for their teaching and conduct. That this understanding of nature and philosophy is common to all post-Socratic philosophers, whether Stoic, Cynic, Sceptic or Epicurean, is without question. Nietzsche's tragic wisdom consisted in affirming the existence of the world despite the recognition of its ultimate hostility to human concerns and due to the lack of necessity in its coming to be, the lack of necessity in its permanence. As a consequence of the anthropomorphism that has led to the perishability of the world to become an increasingly plausible possibility, a philosophy grounded in a rejection of human all too human concerns cannot be seen to continue the Hellenistic tradition. Nietzsche is not aiming at promoting happiness or better ways of coping with suffering but accepts suffering as a necessary accompaniment to the recognition of the contingency of the world. His philosophy does not aim to heal but to intensify human reckoning with the sorry history of the self-mutilation of the species as conducted under the auspices of the metaphysical age.

It cannot be said that Nietzsche is resurrecting the ancient Greek conception of philosophy. Throughout his work, despite his admiration, he specifically targets the limitations of the various ancient schools of thought as a result of their dependence on a rationally intelligible, hence fictitious, world to ensure the plausibility of their practices and corresponding philosophical systems. Nietzsche is explicit that 'Faith in the categories of reason is the cause of nihilism. We have measured the value of the world according to categories that refer to a purely fictitious world.' (WP § 12B). Nietzsche rejects any faith in the possibility of correcting existence for good or of achieving an ultimate state of perfection or way of living that guarantees happiness or goodness. Despite a similarity in approach to ancient philosophers in this regard, his aims are completely different.

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85 There is a considerable and growing amount of literature assessing Nietzsche's place in this tradition, influenced by the pioneering studies of Pierre Hadot. For an introduction to the major themes and thinkers working within this paradigm, along with a useful bibliography, see the recent collection, Nietzsche's Therapeutic Teaching: For Individuals and Culture, co-edited by Horst Hutter and Eli Friedland (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013). It is true that Nietzsche does at times appear to be entertaining certain ancient Greek practices and doctrines (Epicurean or Stoic primarily) but for the most part he is explicitly critical, for instance BGE 'On the Prejudices of Philosophers’. In light of the arguments presented in the three chapters above, this could mean three things: 1) Nietzsche is using these ideas strategically as practical attempts to overcome very specific physical or cognitive issues he has to deal with on an individual level (diet, exercise, habits of writing) 2) Nietzsche is referring to these doctrines by way of analogy and contrast to his own practice. 3) He is occasionally inconsistent due to his experimental method.

86 Hadot, op.cit.
What Nietzsche was interested in was questioning the very need and desire to question or evaluate the world from the perspective of rationality: to question to correlation of thought to conceptual, numerical and linguistic analysis and comprehension and therefore to abandon any attempt to live according to certainties and dictates of reason. For this reason he investigates the cultural psychological and physiological conditions under which such people and movements emerge and traces the influence of philosophy through the centuries as it develops first into Christianity and then into modern secular rationalism – our culture, which he describes as decadent and nihilistic. Nietzsche writes a counter-history, or genealogy of philosophy in which he wishes to call into question the assumed virtues of its aims and practices and the virtue of its practitioners and the results are potentially very unsettling for all involved. What if it was all a big mistake? What if it is all a lie? What if, instead of feeling fortunate enough to have such a rich philosophical tradition to teach us how live better we ought to be very cautious when we approach philosophy – to always approach as if we were staring at something strange, deranged and pathological; something perhaps fundamentally unhealthy.

The fact that Nietzsche continued to write and prepare for a conception of a new and different 'gay' science should be understood not as a confusion or weakness of his otherwise anti-scientistic philosophy but rather as an indication that he understood the power and metaphorical fecundity of language and its use as a medium of self-transformation. Nietzsche recognised that any attempt to grasp the essence of the nature would result only in a more humanised nature. To avoid this he mobilised the category of 'life' as an alternative background to his thought. As the scholarship of Foucault, Esposito and Agamben reminds us the concept of life is not a scientific term but an epistemological and ethical notion which has historically served to emphatically counter rationalisation and commodification. As such the employment of physiological language and the advocacy of non-conceptual or linguistically grounded philosophical practices should not be understood as a reactionary mobilisation of counter enlightenment or the advocacy

87 Lebovic, op.cit., 76. Nitzan Lebovic mounts a successful defense of the emancipatory intent behind the use of the term ‘life’, through a historical reconstruction of lebensphilosophie, in his attempt to redeem the philosophy of Ludwig Klages from its appropriation by the Nazis. Klages was one of the foremost post-Nietzscheans in the Weimar Republic and developed a specifically anti-Freudian form of Nietzschean psychological analysis. His reputation has been tainted due to his consequent Nazification but has now began to be re-evaluated in a more historically accurate light most courageously by a Jewish Israeli Intellectual. Klages' interpretation of Nietzsche is discussed by Richard Hinton Thomas in ‘Nietzsche in Weimar Germany – and the Case of Ludwig Klages’ in *The Wiemar Dillema- Intellectuals in the Weimar Republic*, ed. Anthony Phelhan (Manchester University Press, 1985).
of pseudo-science but as a marker of the recognition that conceptual thought cannot grasp the essence of reality. Life, understood in this way is simply the indication of that fact and not a counter naturalistic explanation. Just as following directly in Nietzsche's footsteps, Ludwig Klages would use the pseudo sciences of graphology and physiognomy against the idea of science itself and only as 'support for aesthetic ideas, not enlightened scientific progress.' Nietzsche would use philosophy to philosophise against itself, in the name of the aesthetic justification of existence and not the existing justifications of aesthetics.

This explains Nietzsche's insistence on the somatic nature of philosophy and the biographical origins of philosophical systems. He does not mean, as contemporary biopics would have it, that we can explain a philosopher's ideas by reducing them to a psychological event in their childhood or an artist's creativity to their taste for red wine, but rather that all philosophy is rooted in the life of its progenitor and that 'every great philosophy up to the present has been the personal confession of its author and a form of involuntary and unperceived memoir'. (BGE, § 6). This means that behind every idea we have or action we take is a background of philosophical images, assumptions, explanations that are simultaneously generated by us but reducible both historically and biologically. For Nietzsche every human utterance and activity is in this sense potentially philosophical. His uniqueness and radicalism as a philosopher is his insistence of and commitment to the idea that philosophy, understood as self-overcoming, is possible in all aspects of our lives – public, private, professional, domestic – and that there is no stone that philosophical critique should leave unturned. Following on from this insight is the idea that very human being is a philosophical animal and hence that all human beings practice philosophy without knowing it (the universality of philosophy as a human condition is what the 'death of god' also means). But this is not because of a presumed innate will-to truth or desire

88 Lebovic, op.cit.

89 I thank my friend Bryan Cooke for this critique of biopics. See his blogpost ‘Biographies, Biopics and Jane Campion’s latest film’ at http://www.prettycolforaniconodule.wordpress.com/2010/03/12/ (Accessed 1/3/2014)

90 According to Nietzsche's companion Lou Salome this was the fundamental insight of his thought. Salome, op.cit.

91 In the introduction we explained how this understanding differs from the traditional, Aristotelian one. As far as I am aware there is only one additional scholarly recognition of this insight as central to Nietzsche's philosophy. See, Shlomit Schuster's Philosophy Practic in which she states 'if people are philosophical creatures, as Friedrich Nietzsche takes them to be, then philosophers have a concrete task of serving persons and the community-that is, facilitating the efforts of people to become what they are', Schuster, op.cit.p.28 Nietzsche here radicalises the Kantian definition of Autonomy in his essay 'What is Enlightenment' where Kant famously defines Enlightenment
for knowledge, but due to their being products of an all-too-philosophical culture. Therefore it is the task and responsibility of the Nietzschean philosopher to assist in bringing this philosophical nature of every one of us into view and assisting us to release ourselves from the tradition of philosophical practice as hitherto understood.

This central aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy problematises any specific political interpretation of his thought, whether aristocratic, fascist, socialist, or democratic. Insofar as Nietzsche believes everyone is philosophical by nature he is a radical democrat. But it is this belief that is at the bottom of his critique of democracy as a political regime. This regime makes it impossible to realise the philosophical nature of human beings due to the dependence of Modern Democracies on a scientifically authorised notion of truth with deems any critical perspective as either fundamentalism or private opinion. Nietzsche has a very specific understanding of what philosophy is and what its aims should be and therefore does not satisfy himself with adopting a lasseiz-faire, or non-evaluative attitude in relation to this tendency of democratic societies. Instead he argues strongly that only those who respond to this fact in a particular way by embarking on the adventure of self-overcoming can be considered real philosophers and 'become who they are': the philosophers of the future.

In a recent survey of the history of Philosophy, Peter Sloterdijk writes in a pedagogical vein that, due to the rupture with tradition brought about with the deepening of Modernisation, the purpose of studying the history of philosophy is that ‘we will not gain better knowledge today without participating in the adventures that await us in the revision of our own history.’

\[92\] Nietzsche's life and thought indicate to us that the history of thought need not pass only through the lives and


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\[92\] as ‘having the courage to use one's own understanding’. What Nietzsche rejects is the restriction of Enlightenment to what for him is a legalistically and technocratically understood theory of autonomy that demands a separation between private and public realms, and is dependent on the alleged professional competency of the critic in their area of expertise. This leads Kant to conclude his discussion with the compromised and conservative demand to Critique but nonetheless obey. See Immanuel Kant ‘What is Enlightenment’ in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed., Reiss and trans., Nisbet (CUP 1977).
works of philosophers or those who proclaim to know knowledge. Nietzsche's place in this history is to displace these adventures from the monopoly held over them by self-proclaimed purveyors of universal wisdom. Indeed, if the equation knowledge=virtue=happiness is the rallying cry of the history of philosophy hitherto, then to this equation also includes a notion of 'truth' regarded as objective or self-evident. Lacking any prescriptions of his own, Nietzsche’s teaching is that whichever way philosophy is to be practiced, those who practice it should cease from associating knowledge with morality, and themselves as ones who know. It should not be assumed that 'those in the know' are somehow better, stronger, or in fact, even more knowledgeable than those who choose to know otherwise. The lessons in wisdom that the past holds for us are not necessarily contained in the systems and cogitations of dialecticians, scholastics, therapeutic rationalists or mystical prophets, but also in the actions and overcomings of every and any human being; the history of ‘all and none’, to whom Nietzsche dedicated Thus Spoke Zarathustra. For concepts alone do not maketh a man or a woman, but rather men and women, through the struggles, defeats and triumphs of their lives make, and increasingly under conditions of intellectualised labor are forced to make, concepts that magically, like Marx's tables, appear to dance by themselves in front of our eyes.93 We can only hope that Nietzsche's philosophical practice can serve to break the hold of the power of institutionalised and systemic reified intellectualism over social relations.

9389 For a Marxist inspired analysis that confirms Nietzsche’s diagnosis of the process of abstraction that lords over social relations dominated by scientific measurement and commodity exchange see Alfred Sohn-Rethel, Intellectual and Manuel Labor, trans., Martin Sohn-Rethel (MacMillan Press, 1978).
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