

NIETZSCHE AND MULTIPLICITY

“Philosophy, as I have so far understood and lived it, means living voluntarily among ice and high mountains—seeking out everything strange and questionable in existence, everything so far placed under a ban by morality. Long experience, acquired in the course of such wanderings *in what is forbidden*, taught me to regard the causes that so far have prompted moralizing and idealizing in a very different light from what may seem desirable: the *hidden* history of the philosophers, the psychology of the great names, came to light for me.” (Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, Preface, # 3, Kaufmann’s translation)

Nietzsche, 1862, age 18, simple, playful, with an overdose of Guizot and Mundt, writes, in *Fatum und Geschichte. Gedanken*,¹ about monstrous spheres that grow larger around everyone: one’s history, history of people, history of society, history of humanity, etc. Each one of these histories determines various conditions and circumstances that are shared by other histories, and where the innermost spheres are englobed by outermost spheres. The particular histories introduced by the young Nietzsche (*Volker, Gesellschaft, und Menschheitgeschichte*) englobe each other and are englobed by larger spheres that may extend infinitely to encompass the history of the world, of the universe—which are impossible to conceive by human beings.² The singularity or difference at the level of the innermost sphere where are located the histories of particular human beings is called “individuality” by Nietzsche, but even this sphere—like the others—cannot be circumscribed for it includes hereditary characteristics that can be traced back to parents, grandparents, ancestors, peoples, etc. As early as 1862, Nietzsche had embarked, without knowing it, on the task of reinterpreting the world from the perspective of multiplicity.

SINGULAR INDIVIDUALS, HISTORY, AND POLITICS

Nietzsche focuses his attention on the “singular individual” (*der Einzelne*) in the late 1860s.³ In a few notes dating back to Autumn 1867-Spring 1868, Nietzsche distinguishes between a “history of ideas” (*Geschichte des Denkens*) and a “history of drives” (*Geschichte der Triebe*) and limits the role of the “singular individual” to producing “great thoughts” and to influencing the multitude:

Only the singular individual can produce a great thought... On the other hand, the drives of the multitude are much more powerful than those of the individual.⁴

[...] history is nothing but the history of the multitude, a history on which the singular personality (*die einzeln<e> Persönlichkeit*) has no influence except in as much as it acts upon the multitude...⁵

[...] Thus the task of the historian is to basically recognize needs (*Bedürfnisse*), those of the multitude: these needs may sometimes be those brought about by strong minds. The value of singular personalities lies in just that: some of them exhibit the needs of the multitude, while a few of them create new needs.⁶

Nietzsche considered that “great ideas” either contribute towards the control of the masses or towards embellishing the sea of history. Politics is specifically about the needs of the masses, about “leading people through certain drives towards the accomplishment of an idea.”⁷ Since history is but the drives and needs of the masses, only drives and needs can affect it: “one has to extirpate need with need” and that is why religion, which is based on intuitions “that are produced by drives, which means by needs [...],” can be a more effective historical force.⁸ On the other hand, philosophy, the natural sciences, and other such occupations are mainly useful in “keeping human beings from experimenting with other human beings, with social reforms, or the like.”⁹ Philosophy and science are not expected then to intervene in politics that alone sets norms and traditions to lead the masses. Politics is the predominant force that, through certain drives and needs of the masses, controls the masses and leads them towards a specific goal associated with the accomplishment of an idea. Mere conceptions or ideas, however great they may be, cannot have any effects on history unless they are couched in needs. Thus any “new” creations can have little effect on politics, unless they can create strong drives built on the needs of the masses that can oppose the stabilizing forces at work—forces that control the masses and that set goals for them along with the institutions that make the attainment of such goals the predominant way of living.

To make the point clearer, let me quote Nietzsche’s definition of history—declared in a language close to the proclamation of the will to power: “What is history other than the struggle of infinitely diverse and innumerable interests for their own existence?”¹⁰ Such “diverse and innumerable interests” are not very different from “forces” at the basis of the world as later described by Nietzsche. This definition of history sheds a light on the relation of the singular

individual to culture; the singular individual represents a force within culture, a force that may have different degrees of effectiveness in shaping or transforming the dominant forces associated with politics. But at this stage of his life, Nietzsche doubted the extent to which singular individuals can actually affect the predominant culture, and that is partially why he was so interested in the Pre-Platonic philosophers. What would become a struggle between “culture” and “philosophy” was nonexistent in the healthy culture of the Hellenes before Plato, according to Nietzsche.¹¹ Even if one can reduce the whole issue of a “healthy” culture to wishful thinking, there is something to be said about what Nietzsche construed as “healthy.” The “unity of style” of a healthy culture, as imagined by Nietzsche, is related to an aesthetic valuation, and it was the creative effects of singular individuals contributing towards “embellishing” the world that interested him the most throughout this period extending from about 1865 to 1875. The following is the passage in which Nietzsche describes the possible effects of “great ideas,” where he highlights the aesthetic effect and includes the effect on politics:

The great “ideas,” in which some believe they can take control (*aufzufassen*) of this struggle, are the weakened reflexes of great or small geniuses swimming on the surface of a troubled sea. They do not dominate the sea, but they sometimes embellish the waves in the eyes of the spectator. But whether the light comes from the moon, the sun, or from lamps, it is indifferent: at the most the wave itself is somewhat more or less lit.

The problem is to make out of the light a fire that consummates the waves; that is to transform in will the great visions. Which may also be madness...¹²

This paragraph exemplifies the difference between a political effect and an aesthetic one. The “fire that consummates the waves” indicates a transformative force that can change the course of history, a “great vision” that can be realized in “will” and thus have political implications, becoming a force that can lead the masses. Such a transformation is not only rare, it is also described as “madness,” a madness that will haunt Nietzsche throughout the next periods of his life when an ethics associated with this kind of political transformation would drive him.

ON THE WAY TO MULTIPLICITY: NIETZSCHE CONTRA THE POLITICS OF THE REAL

“The infinite,” writes Nietzsche in 1873, “is the primordial fact: the only thing to explain would be the origin of the finite”¹³ and that is the task that Nietzsche will embark on. While the

infinite is located in nature, the finite is attributed to humans.¹⁴ Nietzsche sees “anthropomorphism” everywhere, from the Greeks to Kant:

The human being discovers only very gradually how infinitely complicated the world is. At first he conceives it to be wholly simple, that is, as superficial as he himself is. [...] the human being is acquainted with the world to the extent that he is acquainted with himself: that is, its profundity is disclosed to him to the extent that he is amazed at himself and his own complexity.¹⁵

But this anthropomorphism is not opposed to a “truth” by Nietzsche; it is but a means to exemplifying the relationality and interconnectedness between humans and the world, between how humans relate to themselves and how they interpret the world. Humans project their own limits onto the world, and it is only through exploring and discovering one’s complexity that one can relate to the complexity of the world. The “finite” at the basis of human beings has been constructed through a history of errors that Nietzsche attempts to untangle. The more humans are reduced and limited, the more the world is reduced and limited. It is precisely this doubled reduction—at the basis of which lies the distinction between finite and infinite, definite and indefinite, eternal and ephemeral—in which religion, morality, and metaphysics have been engaged. If religion contributed towards the division of interior and exterior, between an inner and outer world, it must have contributed towards the projection of “form” onto nature: “there is no *form* in nature, because there is no distinction between inner and outer.”¹⁶ Similarly, morality must have participated, through its imposition of limiting valuations and its separation between good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable, in the coming about of making of “all knowledge [...] by means of separation, delimitation, restriction.”¹⁷ It is particularly “words” that are the most misleading since in most cases, “the unity of the word does not guarantee at all the unity of the thing”¹⁸ and it is metaphysics that led, through the belief in “absolute substances” and in “identical things,” to the affirmation of a world where things are “isolated” and “unconditioned.”¹⁹

Nietzsche is not separating what is here called “religion,” “morality,” and “metaphysics” from their historical development. These are forces that became dominant through an inevitable

process, and what Nietzsche wants to achieve by attacking them is to undermine their effects and to try to replace them with drives that he considers to be more concordant with the drive for life. The main problem he confronts is the separation of the drive for knowledge from the drive for life through the imposition of truth as value, undermining any value to life through the development of what he calls “ascetic ideals” enforced by religions such as Christianity and a reactive “slave morality” associated with the mentality of the herd.²⁰ Philosophy, according to Nietzsche, can no longer restrain “the unleashed drive for knowledge, which increasingly *judges* according to the degree of certainty and seeks ever smaller objects.”²¹ The drive for knowledge has unleashed reductive processes that have been targeting the multiplicity and flux at the basis of life. In addressing the historical development of such a state, Nietzsche highlights the “organic” development of humans, but he believes that it is only through this development that one can arrive at seeing complexity and multiplicity.²² In a way, he is ascribing to *fatum* the possibility of unveiling the complexity that is hidden and forbidden.

Fatum designates the conditions pertaining to one’s individual *fatum* and to the conditioning circumstances within which one flourishes. The individual *fatum* is the stratification and the permeation of conditions that make one’s conditioning and that include psycho-physiological and inherited conditions as well as the particular experiences and means of evaluation and interpretation acquired by the innermost sphere of personal history via the englobing spheres of various histories.²³ The conditioning circumstances are the outermost spheres that englobe the innermost ones and that include but are not limited to the dominant forces that provide common means of evaluating and interpreting experiences and of relating to the world. The innocence of becoming as it applies to one’s individual *fatum* is associated with a “becoming *fatum*” whereby one is actively engaged in reassessing and transforming acquired means of evaluation and interpretation while accepting one’s *fatum* as a “becoming what one is.” Becoming what one is entails liberating one’s personal history from the chains of common opinion and dominant traditions and relating to the multiplicity at the basis of the universe through an approach that

accentuates flux and change but that is rooted in one's conditioning—an approach from different “perspectives.” The innocence of becoming as it applies to the conditioning circumstances is associated with a “destruction” applied to the dominant conditions that have historically been able to set a value outside the realm of becoming and that provided means of interpreting and evaluating the world based on a foundational being built on an illusory (or rather transposed) immutability, distinctness, and identity at the basis of the universe. Such dominant conditions associated with various human institutions (such as religion, morality, metaphysics) controlled by a drive for knowledge can be reassessed in such a way to reveal an “infinite horizon” of values and interpretations that were hidden and forbidden, and to privilege a drive for life that can better serve humans in a universe at the basis of which a multiplicity of forces is constantly transforming it, making it become what it is. But in order to reassess these conditioning circumstances, one needs to reassess one's own conditioning, and that is why it is impossible to separate a liberation of oneself in relation to the chain of common opinions (becoming a multiple self) from the attack on the dominant values in an attempt to transform them by introducing new values as new needs. In order to start seeing one's complexity and project it onto the world, it is essential to open up the horizon of what has been hidden and forbidden and to allow for that “innocence of becoming.”

It is in the name of an “unspeakable complexity” that Nietzsche embarks on attacking a knowledge that is “falsification of all that is polymorphous and undecipherable, by reducing it to the identical, analogous, and decipherable.”²⁴ He attacks metaphysical concepts and grammatical constructs in the name of a multiplicity that is always “chosen and assembled” through a reductive interpretation claiming to be explanation.²⁵ It is the “multiplicity of perspectives”²⁶ that led him to declare a perspectivism²⁷ opposed to a causality founded on teleology,²⁸ opposed to an ontology based on unity and permanence—a transposition of human organization,²⁹ opposed to an epistemology only made possible through a belief in “being” and in a “science” that seduces by “number and logic.”³⁰ He embarks on a “critique of big words”³¹ and links language and

communication to consciousness and to the role of morality and religion in setting “ideals” and imposing values that forbid certain experiences—in the same way that he describes metaphysics as hiding various perspectives and interpretations of the world. Nietzsche’s “ethics of destruction” is a path towards a hidden and forbidden multiplicity. It is a path of liberation from ideals inspired by moral and religious values whose aim is forbidding certain ways of living. It is also a reassessment of an ontology and an epistemology inspired by a metaphysics whose sole purpose is simplifying the complex and hiding different ways of relating to the world.

Religion and morals instill fear in human beings and require blind obedience to the authority of tradition, and wherever there is a community, there must be morality, according to Nietzsche. It is to this “community” that one must turn in order to understand the origin of moral and religious valuations.³² Nietzsche continuously claims that “consciousness” (or self-consciousness) is but a communal tool developed through communication, a superficial tool that undermines the multiplicity at the basis of the singular experiences of humans.³³ From *On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense*, written in 1873, to some fragments written in the Spring of 1888, he constantly went back to analyzing language, signs, symbols, gestures, sounds, concepts, categories, and whatever relates to communication. In all of these analyses, Nietzsche highlights the “chaos” that is at work in ourselves, a chaos he didn’t know whether he should attribute to thought, to feeling, or to will. He eventually opts for using “thought” as well as “feelings,” where thought is as “involuntary” as passions, feelings, emotions, and impulses, and he attributes chaos to each and every one of those, as well as to many other forces and drives that take place “unconsciously” but constantly within us and as us.³⁴ Communication plays a reductive role, fixing and logicizing the world in ways that serve communal organization, Nietzsche argues, and it is that “political” need, the need for stability and organization that is at the basis of the reduction of the plurality of life—to representations of the intellect, to reason, and to logic.³⁵

ETHICS AGAINST POLITICS:
FROM “CONSCIOUSNESS” TO “MULTIPLE SELF”

Consciousness is described as an “organ of control” and it is precisely what escapes consciousness, what is not hidden by it, that is the most “personal” and “individual.” I will focus in the following analyses on *Gay Science* #354 and will draw on the fifth book of *Gay Science*, written in 1887, and on other texts written by Nietzsche around the same time to show the importance accorded to “multiplicity” as value. Community is the site of the “other” and the locus of the imposition of dominant values, ethical and political. It is through the “need for communication” that “consciousness” developed, that same consciousness that supposedly defines the “individual” in society.³⁶ Nietzsche’s path towards multiplicity entails creating one’s own “proper path” that takes one away from society—always described as “dirty” and thus not “proper” enough for anyone trying to attain the “solitude” that distinguishes a “proper path.”³⁷ Consciousness is acquired through a history of need, that of communicating with “others” in precarious situations such as the ones human beings had to experience throughout their early history. Knowledge, including knowledge of oneself, evolved in proportion to such need and it is based on the belief in a “consciousness” that is individual; but Nietzsche claims that such knowledge is limited to what is “familiar” or what is concordant with a shared experience with “others.”³⁸ Thoughts, feelings, and any experiences that are essentially “individual” (incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely singular) are reduced through communication (language, mien, pressure, etc.) to “signs from the perspective of the herd.”³⁹ As soon as we translate multifarious personal experiences into “consciousness” they “no longer seem to be” and become “shallow, thin, relatively stupid, general, sign, mark of the herd.”⁴⁰

Nietzsche is concerned with how “all becoming conscious implies a great and thorough corruption, falsification, superficialization, and generalization.”⁴¹ It is not merely the oppositions between subject and object, between thing-in-itself and appearance that concern him here—such a concern with grammar, the “metaphysics of the people,” he leaves to the epistemologists.⁴²

What concerns him is the inherent reduction and simplification of a multiplicity at the basis of one's unique experiences that cannot be limited to what is called "consciousness" and "unconsciousness." This multiplicity is described over and over as a *continuum* of incessant sensations, feelings, ideas, images, signs, etc., that can only be designated through words such as "feeling," "emotions," "sensations," "will," "ideas," "movements," etc.⁴³ Rather than distinguishing between an "I" (equated with "consciousness") and "others" (equated with society and external impressions and valuations), Nietzsche wants to proclaim a "multiple self" as a singularity immersed in a multiplicity he calls "life." The time has come to "squander" the reductive capacity of communication,⁴⁴ especially its functions of ex-communication. For throughout history, "the merely average and *common* experiences" have been set as the measure by which human beings who were more similar and ordinary have had an advantage over those "more select, subtle, strange, and difficult to understand"—who ended up succumbing to accidents, being isolated, and rarely propagating.⁴⁵ It is thus in the name of everything "ex-communicated" (not humans *per se*, but the singular experiences that are either hidden or forbidden) that Nietzsche wants to reassess "communication" by undermining "consciousness" as the measure of creative or productive experiences. The "directing" forces associated with dominant politics—that entail linear causality, teleology, and purposefulness—need to be reassessed to privilege the "driving" forces associated with a "quantum of excess energy that is waiting to be used up somehow" and, specifically, anyhow—rather than "in a particular way, in a particular direction, with a particular goal."⁴⁶ In order to reveal what was hidden and forbidden and to allow for the world to become "infinite,"⁴⁷ it is imperative for Nietzsche to "squander" the hold of consciousness and to reassess communication. Stating that "the desire for destruction, change and becoming can be an expression of an overflow of energy," Nietzsche is not talking about abolishing "communication" but of making it possible for the overflow of energy associated with "noble spirits" to choose and select an audience, even when that means "erecting barriers against others."⁴⁸ Nietzsche explains what it is that he wants to accomplish in reassessing

communication by describing how a few “incomprehensible ones” (a projection of himself) are constantly transforming themselves in order to relate to the world in multiple and complex ways—quite different from the limited, categorized, and generalized ways imposed through the dominant politics:

We incomprehensible ones.—Have we ever complained because we are misunderstood, misjudged, misidentified, slandered, misheard, and not heard? Precisely this is our fate—oh, for a long time yet! ... Let us say, to be modest, until 1901—it is also our distinction; we should not honor ourselves sufficiently if we wished that it were otherwise. We are misidentified—because we ourselves keep growing, keep changing, we shed our old bark, we shed our skins every spring, we keep becoming younger, fuller of future, taller, stronger, we push our roots ever more powerfully into the depths—into evil—while at the same time we embrace the heavens ever more lovingly, more broadly, by imbibing their light ever more thirstily with all our twigs and leaves. Like trees we grow—this is hard to understand, as is all of life—not in one place only but everywhere, not in one direction but equally upward and inward and downward; our energy is at work simultaneously in the trunk, branches, and roots; we are no longer free to do one particular thing, to *be* only one particular thing.⁴⁹

Such multiple ways of relating to the world necessitate a way of approaching communication that would allow for the complexity at the basis of human experiences by reconsidering (without necessarily reinstating) what is hidden and forbidden. To this end, Nietzsche presents in his writings, from the fifth book of *Gay Science* to his last fragments of 1889, bits and pieces of a project of reassessment of “communication” from the perspective of multiplicity, describing it in terms of varying “levels and degrees”—thus proclaiming multiplicity as the measure or value of forces in flux that can only be assessed according to a non-linear “hierarchy” of momentary dominance.

Thus, the finality of communication is important for determining its complexity or simplicity. Nietzsche repeatedly affirms that communication and consciousness have always been associated with utility, that of the “social being” or the “genius of the species,” because they always involve reduction and simplification. He does not reject communication altogether, nor does he dream of a return to “animal consciousness” or to nature; he attempts to proliferate rather than simplify and this strategy brings multiplicity to the forefront since he is not proclaiming an impossibility of communication but calls for the hidden and forbidden possibilities of such an impossibility. It would be inconceivable to establish multiplicity as the actuality that communication needs to

concord with; rather than falling into the metaphysical trap of everything or nothing, jumping from an extreme to another, Nietzsche brings “levels and degrees” into play. He does not opt for limited and constrained categories of understanding but for the free play of levels and degrees where different ways of understanding can be offered (perspectivism). He displaces “communion” from “community” (with others, with God, with the world, with nothing, or with oneself) and implants it in a “multiplicity” that can be assessed in terms of “levels and degrees.” What he describes as the basis of such “communion” is not commonality but singularity, the multiplicity of singular experiences or happenings at the raw level that surpasses consciousness and that he associates with a “multiple self”—for which a “great liberation” from the chain of common opinion, the chains of the communion imposed through the dominant morality and religion, is necessary.⁵⁰

The great liberation is an attempt at transforming how one relates to oneself: the question of “self” is no longer understood metaphysically, as an opposition between subject and object for example, but is lived and experienced as the site of the multiplicity of happenings (feelings, sensations, ideas, images, etc.) that make up a “multiple self.”⁵¹ Through practices of de-conditioning that include changing personalities and wearing masks, the “self” is approached as a continual appropriation and expropriation of masks and *personae* (that are drawn from the multiplicity at the basis of one’s individual *fatum*).⁵² There would be no “self” proper but a self that is continually appropriated, re-appropriated, and expropriated. The great liberation leads away from the unicity of the self towards a multiple self but it is still part of one’s conditioning and of one’s *fatum*, for it is the “ladder upon which one has been climbing”⁵³—that same ladder referred to in *Schopenhauer Educator* as the measure of assessing who one is and is becoming, which in turn is the same as the “individual *fatum*” referred to in the “*Fatum* and History” and “Freedom of the Will and *Fatum*” of 1862. Freedom seems to be about that path towards what one is becoming; and in the case of the “free spirit,” it is about becoming a “multiple self” that can relate to the levels and degrees and that can feel the injustice of the “for” and the “against:”

You must become master of yourself and master of your own virtues as well. Previously, they were your masters; but they should simply be tools among your other tools. You must acquire power over your For and Against and learn how to take them out and hang them back up according to your higher aim. You must learn how to grasp the perspectival element in every valuation—the displacement, distortion, and seeming teleology of horizons and everything else that pertains to perspectivism; and also how much stupidity there is in opposed values and the whole intellectual loss that must be paid for every For, every Against, injustice as inseparable from life, life itself as *conditioned* by perspective and its injustice. Above all, you must see with your own eyes where injustice is always the greatest: namely, where life has developed in the smallest, narrowest, neediest, most preliminary ways and yet still cannot avoid taking *itself* as the purpose and measure of things and, out of love for its own preservation, secretly and meanly and ceaselessly crumbling away and putting into question all that is higher, greater, richer...⁵⁴

This “self mastery” is a reiteration of the “self-determination of one’s individual *fatum*” but from a perspectival approach and with multiplicity set as the measure of valuation. The great liberation is a liberation from all the old valuations and interpretations imposed through one’s conditioning on how one lives and relates to the world. The “free spirit” is liberated from the old system of evaluation based on oppositions—on affirmation and negation, on “For” and “Against,” etc.—and has now climbed high enough (“height” for Nietzsche is always the measure of distance and difference) the ladder to be able to see the “problem of hierarchy” and the levels and degrees inherent in a “life” that is “innocence of becoming”—and not a “small, narrow, needy” life inseparable from “injustice.”⁵⁵ Justice itself is set in relation to multiplicity, for it is multiplicity that is revealed through the “problem of hierarchy” and through the perspectival approach to life.⁵⁶ And as one is climbing the ladder, becoming what one is, following the “proper path” towards multiplicity, a “mission” has been “coming into the world” and is “being embodied.” This “mission” presents itself to the liberated spirit, after a “long” and “unconscious pregnancy,” as “what he *can* do, what he now for the first time *is permitted* to do.”⁵⁷ The multiple self has acquired, through the great liberation, a “desire for destruction, change, and becoming” as well as a way of relating to the world from the perspective of “levels and degrees” where multiplicity is set as value. While these were applied on one’s own conditioning, it is time to apply them to the conditioning circumstances: the force and energy accumulated throughout a long tortuous path are ready to “consummate the waves” of history and the child of a long “unconscious pregnancy” is a “fire” forceful enough to become a *fatum* that can break the history

of the humanity in two halves!

THE POLITICS OF MADNESS VERSUS THE POLITICS OF THE REAL:
“FIRE THAT CONSUMMATES THE WAVES”

The “riddle of the great liberation” reveals itself to be a “mission.”⁵⁸ A mission that Nietzsche himself undertakes right after the 1882-1884 period and that he follows through with his publications and writings from 1886 to 1889.⁵⁹ References to this “mission” (or “great task”) start around 1882, in a project for a letter to his friend Malwida von Meysenburg written in June;⁶⁰ but the references become more intensified in 1887 and reach their highest level in *Ecce Homo*. To Peter Gast, Nietzsche writes on April 18, 1887: “I feel that I have reached a stage in my life where the great mission that is mine is totally in front of me! In front of me and, even more, upon me!”⁶¹ To Malwida, he writes on May 12, 1887: “What living still means for me, a serious and unusual mission.”⁶² In a letter to Reinhart von Seydlitz, written on February 12, 1888, he describes his mission as: “my unrelenting and underground struggle against everything humans have honored and loved until now (—for which my formula is “revaluating all values”).”⁶³ In *Ecce Homo* where he looks backwards on his life and reassesses his works, he claims that he started his “war against morality” with *Daybreak* and with it his mission of “revaluating all values, a liberation from all moral values.”⁶⁴ The same thing is said of *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Genealogy of Morals*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and *the Case Wagner*: they all are linked directly to the “revaluation of all values,”⁶⁵ Nietzsche’s “mission,” starting with the reassessment of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* which is equated with a “work of destruction:”

My mission [or task] for the years to come was pretty much set in advance. Once the “saying yes” part of this mission was accomplished, the “saying no” and “doing no” part was here: the revaluation of all previously existing values, the great war.⁶⁶

Nietzsche’s mission consists of “revaluating all values” and that necessitates a “destruction” since “he who want to be a creator, in good and in evil, must first be a destroyer and break values [into pieces].”⁶⁷ So he embarks on this mission and he wages a “war” on old values; he actually wages many wars, on many fronts, including wars against morality, against religion, and against

metaphysics. *Beyond Good and Evil* represents a condensed plan of action, for it contains attacks on metaphysics, religious values, moral values, and political values.⁶⁸ While *Genealogy of Morals* focuses more on a war against moral values and ascetic ideals linked to Judaeo-Christian values, and while *The Anti-Christ* concentrates its battles against religious values, Nietzsche's posthumous fragments of the period reveal how intertwined all these battlefields are. Nietzsche's "destruction" inspired a systematic critique, a war, or a *skepsis*,⁶⁹ that applied itself to "dissect" and "strip" the old dominant values and traditional beliefs.

Why is he analyzing "great politics," culture, and history in the last few months of 1888 and the first month of 1889 (just before he collapses in Torino)?⁷⁰ While the "great liberation" transforms one's own "conditioning," Nietzsche's "mission" specifically deals with the "conditioning circumstances"—that is with the dominant circumstances within which everyone is immersed. The great liberation could be related to an "ethics," what could be called an "ethics of destruction." The mission of reevaluating all values, involving a *skepsis* applied to metaphysics, morality, and religion, can only be attributed to an attempt at a "political transformation"—a transformation of the politics of the real!

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NOTES

¹ All references to Nietzsche's writings will be drawn from the Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari edition of *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe (KGW)*, except when specified. References to the posthumous fragments and to the posthumous notes will only list dates of the fragments or notes, as per the *KGW* division, as well as fragment or note numbers. Similarly, references to the letters of Nietzsche will be drawn from the Colli and Montinari edition of *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe (KSB)*, except when specified, and only letter numbers and dates will be listed throughout. This will make it easier to refer to any Colli and Montinari edition of Nietzsche's complete works. Since only a few volumes of the English edition have been published so far (Stanford University Press), I have had to translate texts that are not yet available in English. I have also revised English translations of available texts whenever I deemed them unsatisfactory.

² *Posthumous Notes Autumn 1858-Autumn 1862*, 13[6], *Fatum und Geschichte. Gedanken*. David B. Allison kindly pointed out to me that Richard Perkins translated into English the two pieces in question here as "Fate and History" and "Fate and Free Will." A French translation by Max Marcuzzi can be found in *Philosophie*, N. 32, automne 1991, Paris: Editions Minuit, pp. 3-10 (reproduced in Nietzsche, *Ecrits Autobiographiques 1856-1869*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994, pp. 189-197).

³ These notes as well as other writings of the 1860s, including those used in what follows, have been largely influenced by Nietzsche's readings in his earliest period. I reluctantly separate this early period of Nietzsche, extending from 1858 to 1865, from the period following his encounter with Schopenhauer's texts (although it would be silly to claim that there is a definite clean cut between any one of Nietzsche's period and the other). During this early period, Nietzsche read Goethe, Hölderlin, Byron, Classical Greek and Latin writers, and the Presocratics. The most relevant readings to the following section dealing with singular individuals, personalities, history, and culture are Goethe, Guizot, and Mundt amongst others as supported by Nietzsche's notebooks of 1862 on the history of the British Revolution and on the history of culture. Cf., in particular, *Posthumous Notes [Nachgelassene Aufzeichnungen] Autumn 1858-Autumn 1862*, 12A[4] *Guizot, Sebentes Buch*, 12A[5], and 12A[6] *Geschichte der Gesellschaft von Theodor Mundt*. It should also be noted that, around the same time, Nietzsche was also reading Emerson.

⁴ *Posthumous Notes [Nachgelassene Aufzeichnungen] Autumn 1864-Spring 1868*, 56[2].

⁵ *Posthumous Notes Autumn 1864-Spring 1868*, 56[4].

⁶ *Posthumous Notes Autumn 1864-Spring 1868*, 56[5].

⁷ *Posthumous Notes Autumn 1864-Spring 1868*, 56[2].

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 56[7]: „Was ist Geschichte anders als der Kampf unendlich verschiedner und zahlloser Interessen für ihre Existenz?“

¹¹ Cf. Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. In his lectures on the Pre-Platonic philosophers possibly presented first in the winter semester of 1869-1870 (and surely presented later in the summer of 1872, winter of 1875-76, and summer of 1876), Nietzsche focuses on what may be described as a genealogy of ontology and epistemology and attempts to link these to ethics and politics. In the abridged text of these lectures, collected first by Nietzsche in 1873 and revised in 1879—but only published posthumously as *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*—Nietzsche's goal is to show that it was the *ethos* of the philosophers that led them to create an ontology and an epistemology concordant with the social and political conditions of their times. At the same time, Nietzsche does not hide his preference for the theories that privileged the indeterminate and multiple over the systematic and limited. It is precisely these two points, namely the priority of ethics over ontology and epistemology and the privileging of multiplicity, that Nietzsche will carry on and elaborate upon throughout his life. While the full text of these lectures along with extensive notes and comments are reproduced in the *Lecture Notes (Vorlesungsaufzeichnungen) WS 1871/72-WS 1874/75 (KGW II₄*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995, pp. 207-362),

only the portions selected and edited by Nietzsche in 1873 and 1879 have been established as the final text for the lectures as reproduced in the KGW edition of *Posthumous Writings [Nachgelassene Schriften] 1870-73* and as translated by Marianne Cowan into English as *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 1987 (1962) and by Michel Haar and Marc B. de Launay into French as *La philosophie à l'époque tragique des Grecs*, Paris: Gallimard, 1975. A new edition and translation in English by Greg Whitlock, relying more on the complete lecture notes, was published recently by Illinois University Press under the title: *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers*.

¹² *Posthumous Notes Autumn 1864-Spring 1868*, 56[7].

¹³ *Posthumous Fragments Summer 1872-Winter 1873-1874*, 19[139].

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 19[133].

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19[118], translated by Richard T. Gray, in *The Complete Works of Nietzsche, Unpublished Writings from the period of Unfashionable Observations*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995, pp. 40-41. References to “anthropomorphism” abound in Nietzsche’s writings of the period (cf., for example, *Ibid.*, 19[37], 19[116] and 19[125]).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19[144]. Also cf. *The Anti-Christ* and *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part Three.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 19[141]. Also cf. *Genealogy of Morals* and *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part Five.

¹⁸ Cf. *Human, All Too Human* I, #14 and *Posthumous Fragments Summer 1872-Winter 1873-1874*, 30[30].

¹⁹ Cf. *Human, All Too Human* I, #16 and #18. Also cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part One, and *Twilight of the Idols*, “Reason in Philosophy” and “The Four Great Errors.”

²⁰ Cf. *Genealogy of Morals* and *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part Five and Part Nine #260.

²¹ *Posthumous Fragments Summer 1872-Winter 1873-1874*, 19[37].

²² Cf., for example, *Human All Too Human* I, #18; *Human All Too Human* II, “The Traveler and His Shadow,” #11 and #67; and *Posthumous Fragments 1876-1878*, 23[26].

²³ Cf. *Posthumous Notes Autumn 1858-Autumn 1862*, 13 [6], “*Fatum und Geschichte. Gedanken*“ and 13 [7], “*Willensfreiheit und Fatum*.” See note #2 above.

²⁴ Cf. *Posthumous Fragments Autumn 1884-Autumn 1885*, 34[252] as well as 34[46] and 34[249].

²⁵ Cf. *Posthumous Fragments Autumn 1884-Autumn 1885*, 38[14], 40[20], 40[23], 40[38], 40[39], *Posthumous Fragments Autumn 1885-Autumn 1887*, 1[115], and 2[82] and 2[86].

²⁶ Cf. *Posthumous Fragments Autumn 1885-Autumn 1887*, 1[128].

²⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 1[115], 1[120], and 7[60]. Also cf. *Posthumous Fragments Autumn 1884-Autumn 1885*, 40[39].

²⁸ *Posthumous Fragments Autumn 1885-Autumn 1887*, 2[83].

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2[87].

³⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 2[91], 5[10], 5[12], and 5[14].

³¹ Cf., for example, 11[135], 11[136] and 11[143]: “Critique of big words: Truth, Justice, Love, Peace, Virtue, Freedom, Goodness, Honesty, Genius, Wisdom.”

³² *Daybreak*, Book I, #9, and *Posthumous Fragments Summer 1882-Spring 1884*, 8[26] and 24[16].

³³ Cf., for example, *Posthumous Fragments Summer 1882-Spring 1884*, 7[126], 24[16]; *Posthumous Fragments Spring-Autumn 1884*, 25[168], 25[327], 25[336], 25[359], 25[365], 25[369], 25[405], 26[49], and 26[52].

³⁴ Cf., especially, *Posthumous Fragments Summer 1881-Summer 1882*, 11[121]; *Posthumous Fragments Spring-Autumn 1884*, 26[92]; *Gay Science*, #354; *Beyond Good and Evil*, #268; *Posthumous*

Fragments Autumn 1887-March 1888, 9[105] and 11[145].

³⁵ *Posthumous Fragments Autumn 1887-March 1888*, 11[145].

³⁶ *Gay Science*, #354.

³⁷ Cf. *Posthumous Fragments Autumn 1885-Autumn 1886*, 2[186], and *Beyond Good and Evil*, #284.

³⁸ Cf. *Gay Science*, #354 and #355.

³⁹ *Gay Science*, #354.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Beyond Good and Evil*, #268. Kaufmann's translation in *Beyond Good and Evil*, NY: Vintage, 1989 (1966), pp.216-217.

⁴⁶ *Gay Science*, #360. Kaufmann's translation in *The Gay Science*, NY: Vintage, 1974, pp.315-316.

⁴⁷ *Gay Science*, #374.

⁴⁸ *Gay Science*, #370 and #381.

⁴⁹ *Gay Science*, #371. Kaufmann's translation, op. cit., pp.331-332.

⁵⁰ On the "Great Liberation" (*der große Loslösung*), refer to: *Human All Too Human I*, Preface 3-7; *Posthumous Fragments Autumn 1884-Autumn 1885*, 41[9]; and my "Nietzsche et la grande liberation," *International Studies in Philosophy* XXX:2 (1998), pp. 37-54.

⁵¹ On the "multiple self," refer to the following: *Daybreak*, #115; *Human, All Too Human, II*, "the traveler and his shadow," #67 and #171; *Posthumous Fragments Beginning 1880-Spring 1881*, 6[349]; *Posthumous Fragments Summer 1881-Summer 1882*, 11[121], 11[156], 11[268], and 12[35]; *Posthumous Fragments Spring-Autumn 1884*, 25[21], 26[47], and 26[73]; *Beyond Good and Evil*, #2, #12, #17, #24, #40, #292; *Posthumous Fragments Autumn 1887-March 1888*, 9[119], 9[140], 10[19], 11[48], and 11[226]1; *Posthumous Fragments Beginning 1888-Beginning January 1889*, 14[64], 14[157], and 15[117]. References to the individual or the self being a multiplicity or a plurality start to become particularly abundant in 1883 and 1884 (for example, 25[508], 34[123], 40[8], 40[37], 40[39], 43[2], etc.), as in 7[273]: "The individual as multiplicity" (*Das Individuum als Vielheit*) and 27[8]: "The human being as multiplicity (*Vielheit*): physiology only shows the wonderful intercourse between this multiplicity and the arrangement of parts within and as a whole. But it would be false to necessarily ascribe an absolute monarch to a state (the unity of the subject). (*die Einheit des Subjekts*)." But this is related to an intensification of Nietzsche's attempts to reassess "life" from the perspective of multiplicity (as supported in an early fragment from *Posthumous Fragments Spring-Autumn 1884*, 24[14] that states: "We call "life" ("*Leben*") a multiplicity of forces (*eine Vielheit von Kräften*)..."). The enormous task of tracing and fleshing out the numerous references to "multiplicity" (*Vielheit*) in the works of Nietzsche and of providing ample support to justify its primordial importance to Nietzsche's philosophy is the subject of a manuscript I am currently working on (tentatively titled "Nietzsche and Multiplicity"). Cf. note 59 below.

⁵² Cf., in particular, to *Posthumous Fragments Beginning 1888-Beginning January 1889*, 15[117] and some of the references cited in note #51 above, as well as *Posthumous Fragments Fall 1884-Fall 1885*, 36[17].

⁵³ *Human, All Too Human, I*, Preface, 7.

⁵⁴ *Human, All Too Human, I*, Preface, 6. Gary Handwerk's translation in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Volume III, Human, All Too Human I*, Stanford University Press, 1995.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ References to “Justice” as multiplicity can be found all over the Nietzschean *corpus*. Cf., for example, *Posthumous Fragments Beginning 1880-Spring 1881*, 6 [239].

⁵⁷ *Human All Too Human, I*, Preface, 6 and 7. Also refer to the notes to the preface in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Volume Three, Human, All Too Human I*, pp. 312-313.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Preface 7.

⁵⁹ The argument that the period of 1882-1884 may have been decisive in the privileging of “multiplicity” (*Veilheit*) as value and in setting the tone and orientation for the 1886 prefaces and the works of 1886-1889 can be supported by the proliferation of direct and indirect references to it (especially after finalizing the third book of Zarathustra in January 1884). While various references can be found before 1882, and even more after 1884 (especially 1885-1886), the 1882-1884 period offers fragments that appear to systematically analyze and privilege “multiplicity” at the levels of psychology, epistemology, and ontology: cf., for example, 4[61], 4[80], 4[83], 4[189], 7[57], 7[212], 21[5], 24[14], 25[21], 25[96], 25[113], 25[158], 25[185], 25[245], 25[336], 25[363], 26[73], 26[92], 26[127], 26[157], 27[8], 27[26], 27[27], and 27[59]. But this does not mean that one couldn’t find support for an even earlier period that may have “set the tone” for 1882-1884. As a matter of fact, Nietzsche had started asking the same questions he developed in 1882-1884 during the time he was writing *Daybreak* and after, especially from the Autumn of 1880 until the Spring of 1881. Cf., especially, *Posthumous Fragments Beginning 1880-Spring 1881*, 6[119], 6[120], 6[144], 6[149], 6[150], 6[151], 6[152], 6[239], 6[349], 6[350], 6[412], 6[418], 6[429], 6[433], 10[E93], etc. We can actually find in 1880-1882 Nietzsche’s basic critique of morality, religion, and metaphysics as well as the roots of his perspectivism. The same argument can be made for even earlier periods, *ad infinitum*, since what we are attempting to describe is nothing but the individual *fatum* of Nietzsche himself and his “proper path” towards becoming what he is. The 1882-1884 period is not a “turning” in Nietzsche’s life but rather a mark for an intensification of particular issues, thus the personal “crisis” of Nietzsche only helped in increasing the “levels and degrees” of certain forces associated with what I call “ethics of destruction.”

⁶⁰ Cf. *Oeuvres Philosophiques Complètes* (Gallimard), *Tome V*, Dates et évènements, pp. 591-592, note 2.

⁶¹ Letter to Heinrich Koselitz, April 18, 1887, #834.

⁶² Letter to Malwida von Meysenburg, May 12, 1887, #845.

⁶³ Letter to Reinhart von Seydlitz, February 12, 1888, #989.

⁶⁴ *Ecce Homo*, “Daybreak,” 1.

⁶⁵ *Ecce Homo*, “Beyond Good and Evil,” 1; “Genealogy of Morals;” “Twilight of the Idols,” 3; “The Case Wagner,” 4.

⁶⁶ *Ecce Homo*, “Beyond Good and Evil,” 1.

⁶⁷ *Ecce Homo*, “Why I am destiny,” 2.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*: “On the Prejudices of Philosophers,” “The Free Spirit,” “What is Religious,” “Natural History of Morals,” “Peoples and Fatherlands,” and “What is Noble.”

⁶⁹ *Skepsis* is described by Nietzsche in 1867-1868 as a method of doubting that has not fixed any limits and that eliminates all traces of dogmatism, undermining thus the fragile foundation of tradition. Cf. *Posthumous Notes Autumn 1864-Spring 1868*, 61[3]. *Skepsis* offered Nietzsche a breath of freedom since it allowed him to move beyond the boundaries of his philological profession and to apply his dissecting skills to the philosophical domains opened up to him through the reading of Schopenhauer. In a letter to his friend Erwin Rhode (December 15, 1870, #113), Nietzsche mentions that academic life was suffocating him and that he was looking for a breath of fresh air. His initially traditional approach to philology gave way to critical and non-traditional methods, exemplified in *Wir Philologen*, as a *skepsis*, and where philosophy is highlighted as a privileged field of study. His *Birth of Tragedy* was for him a means of

legitimizing himself as a philosopher (Letter to Erwin Rhode, March 29, 1871, #130) and the last breath of philological air—resulting in harsh criticism from traditional philologists such as Wilamowitz-Möllendorff—as he embarked afterwards on his critical *Unfashionable Observations*. On April 1, 1874, he wrote to Carl von Gersdorff (#356): “From now on, I am only looking for a little bit of freedom, a little bit of breathable air, and I am defending myself, I am rebelling against all the chains, the unspeakable quantity of chains, that are crushing me.” He found comfort in “swimming against the current” (Letter to Elisabeth Nietzsche, July 30, 1874, #383) and felt that “there is unquestionably something liberating about brutally telling people what one suffers from being around them” (Letter to Erwin Rhode, June 1, 1874, #368).

⁷⁰ Cf. *Posthumous Fragments Beginning 1888-Beginning January 1889*, 19[10], 19[11], 23[1], and especially 25[1], 25[5], 25[6], 25[15], and 25[19].