

The End of the Will to Power: From Aesthetics to Theology

Abstract:

In a critical commentary on the final paragraph of *The Will to Power* (*Der Wille zur Macht*, ¶1067 (1885)) it is argued that Nietzsche ironically presupposes the metaphysics, and even the theology, he putatively eschews and repudiates. Nietzsche's anti-realism about aesthetics, in its broadest extension, is refuted by showing that the Apollonian is not an illusion but a fundamental presupposition of the Dionysian. *Pace* Nietzsche, Being (*Sein*) is primordial with regard to Becoming (*Werden*). We may ask: *Is there Becoming or no Becoming?* If there is no Becoming, Nietzsche's ontology is straightforwardly false. If there is (*es gibt, il y a*) Becoming, then Becoming *onto-logically* presupposes Being. It follows that Nietzsche is a metaphysician and a theologian *malgre lui*. Some of his claims about art and the aesthetic may therefore be understood to unintentionally express profound truths.

Keywords:

Nietzsche, will to power, aesthetics, metaphysics, being, becoming, theology, beauty, realism, anti-realism, deconstruction, existence

Doit-on lire Nietzsche, avec Heidegger, comme le dernier des grands métaphysiciens? Doit-on au contraire entendre la question de la vérité de l'être comme le dernier sursaut ensommeillé de l'homme supérieur?

— Derrida, *Les fins de l'homme*¹

The Nietzsche of *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* and after, considers the highest art, paradigmatically fifth-century Attic tragedy, the joint product of the Apollonian and the Dionysian.² In *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im Aussermoralischen Sinn*, Nietzsche claims that *any* human being operates “als künstlerisch schaffendes Subjekt” (as an artistically creating subject),³ so, in Nietzsche’s broad sense, we are all artists because we all make life tolerable by projecting the Apollonian onto the Dionysian. In *Der Wille zur Macht* (1885–1886) Nietzsche speaks of “Die Welt als ein sich selbst gebärendes Kunstwerk - -” (The world as a work of art that gives rise to itself - -) so in the *Nachlass* the totality of what is, is both artist and artwork.⁴

1) Derrida, “Les Fins de l’homme,” 163–64. Translation of the epigraph: “Do we have to read Nietzsche, with Heidegger, as the last of the great metaphysicians? Should we, on the contrary, understand the question of the truth of Being as the final drowsy start of the superior man?”

2) As Daniel Came puts it:

Attic tragedy is said to depict the necessity of cruelty, suffering, catastrophe, and death – its Dionysian content – over which it casts a veil of Apollonian beauty, primarily in the form of beautiful speeches and the artistry of the production. The Apollonian elements of the drama offset and dilute the impact of the painful subject-matter, making it tolerable to humans. In tragedy, suffering and beauty coexist, and suffering is redeemed by the beauty of its representation, thereby “seducing” the spectator to affirm life. The justificatory effect of tragedy, then, consists, first, in its revealing to us the inherent pain of life and, second, in its capacity to compensate for this pain by casting over it a layer of transfiguring Apollonian beauty. (Came, “The Aesthetic Justification of Existence,” 48–49)

3) Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke* (1999), 883; *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im Aussermoralischen Sinn*, 1.

4) Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht*, ¶796. All references to *Der Wille zur Macht* are to the numbered paragraphs of Volume X of Nietzsche’s *Werke* (1906). Although translations are my own, the paragraphs of this edition are usefully mapped by the translation of *Der Wille zur Macht* by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. In square brackets below the translation, I place alternative translations of some expressions because translating entails choosing, and thereby closing off some interpretations and opening up others. Translators present us with very different Nietzsches depending on how they render “Kraft,” “Glück,” “Raum,” and so forth. Also, I mainly follow Heidegger in using “Nietzsche” to refer to the man’s work not the man.

Although Nietzsche's concept of art gains dramatically in extension in this way, which we could call a transition from *cultural aesthetics*, through *humanist aesthetics* to *cosmic aesthetics*; I am not concerned to trace with tracing the history of this idea here. Rather, I disprove Nietzsche's anti-realism about aesthetics in its broadest extension by showing that the Apollonian is not an illusion but a fundamental presupposition of the Dionysian. Beauty is not invented but discovered, not projected but discerned.

By the last page of *Der Wille zur Macht* – the end of his writing but the beginning of his metaphysics, in an inversion of the Platonic worlds of *doxa* and *episteme*, flux and form, the changing and the unchanging – Nietzsche consigns the now unmentioned but still present Apollonian to *Vedantic* and Schopenhauerian *maya* and upholds the Dionysian as reality. Nietzsche is to Schopenhauer as Buddhism is to Hinduism (and Schopenhauer is to Kant as Hinduism is to *Vedanta*). In disavowed but apposite Kantian terms, the Apollonian is the *Erscheinung*, the categorized and schematized *phenomenon*; the Dionysian the *Ding-an-sich*, where this “Ding” can no more refer to a thing than it can in Kant's critiques because the Apollonian provides the Schopenhauerian *principium individuationis* which the Dionysian at once makes redundant and subverts.

Can this world of Dionysian “Becoming” be understood? In implicitly ascribing quasi-Parmenidean, and even theological, properties to the Dionysian, or the Heraclitean, Nietzsche unconsciously relies upon that metaphysics he seeks to repudiate. On at least three levels: logical, semantic, and ontological, a Platonic and even Judeo-Christian ontology is an unacknowledged transcendental presupposition of his philosophy; so, Nietzsche is a metaphysician and a theologian *malgre lui*. Thinking the possibility of Nietzsche's aesthetics uncovers the hidden metaphysical ground. The Dionysian presupposes the Apollonian, the Nietzschean the divine. I show this in Section I by a commentary on the final section of *Der Wille zur Macht*. Once the Apollonian presuppositions of the Dionysian are made explicit, I argue in Section II that Nietzsche's aesthetic anti-realism is false but some of his claims about art and the aesthetic may nevertheless be ironically understood to express profound truths.

[1] *The End of the Will to Power: A Commentary on 1067: The Final Section of Der Wille zur Macht.*

- (1.1) “Und wißt ihr auch, was mir ‘die Welt’ ist?”
(And do you also know, what ‘the world’ is to me?)

Nietzsche’s question presupposes a logical commitment to being, predication, presence, essence, unity, self and other, knowledge and truth.

The use of “ist” is predicative, so not only is a distinction between a subject of predication and its predicates presupposed, but so too is an existential commitment to the world, here in the metaphysical sense of the totality of what is whatever is. “Ist” is present tense but presence is presupposed not only in the empirically temporal (but ultimately a-temporal) sense of “now” but also in the quasi-spatial sense of “presence to” because there is, allegedly, something the world is to Nietzsche.

In “the world” not only “world” but the use of the definite article implies a unity, the unity of the whole out of its parts and the unity that makes that unity possible; the primordial *un-it-y* which is a *one-ness* which does not even in principle admit of division: the atom, not the bundle. This *one-ness* which does not even in principle admit of plurality is a metaphysical property of what is, whatever is, because any putative duplication the world could only be a part or extension of the world.

Despite his intermittent repudiation of a realist ontology of the self, and his endorsement of a Humean introspected flux, Nietzsche is unable to dispense with “to me,” “mir.” Not only is the existence of the self entailed, but, as his dative implies, it is an object of presentation: The world is something (even if not some-thing) *to me*. Solipsism is assumed to be false because you (“ihr”) or the reader, purportedly exist because addressed. It follows that there is not only a self/not-self distinction, a distinction between the portion of what is with which one is identical and the remainder with which one is not, but also a self/other distinction, a distinction between oneself, whatever one is, and at least one qualitatively similar being who one is not. The metaphysical distinction between “self” and “other” has not been “overcome.”

By asking “what” the world is, Nietzsche is committed to essences because if there is something that something is then there is at least one essence, in the minimal sense of the set of properties which distinguish something from what it is not, even if

not overtly in the sense of the Platonic realism it ultimately requires. Nietzsche tends to present a caricature of Plato's philosophy to his readers but Plato has no more interest than Nietzsche in groundless ontological extravagance. Plato thinks much harder than Nietzsche about his own presuppositions, including the existence of *types*: what it is for sorts or kinds to exist as opposed to what it consists in for particular things to exist.

Finally, if one can "know" what the world is to Nietzsche then there is knowledge as opposed to, say: belief, opinion, conjecture, or perspective. Knowledge is truth entailing so if there is knowledge there is truth. Nietzsche, in any case, presupposes truth at every turn. If there are only perspectives it is true that there are only perspectives. If the self does not exist it is true that the self does not exist. If the Apollonian is an illusion it is true that the Apollonian is an illusion, and so on. Truth, like other metaphysical concepts, is not an extravagant postulate but a presupposition; it is terribly difficult to extirpate.

It is not open to Nietzsche to reply with any plausibility, in quasi-Wittgensteinian or Kantian fashion, that in identifying his metaphysical assumptions I am being misled by grammar, because shorn of the ontological implications I have identified, Nietzsche's claims are shorn of content: by asking "[d]o you know what 'the world' means to me?" he is not then asking the reader what the world means to him. Nietzsche is doing metaphysics or he is doing nothing.

(1.2) "Soll ich sie euch in meinem Spiegel zeigen?"
(Shall I show it to you in my mirror?)

Nietzsche's use of "mirror" commits him to the existence of representations and the onus is on the Nietzschean to show that he is not logically committed to a quasi-Lockean representational theory of perception *malgré lui*. Even if not all representations are re-presentations, for example if, despite their construction, there is an *ur* presentation, an original presence, Nietzsche's mirror contains re-presentation because *ex hypothesi* Nietzsche perceives the world, a presentation, and he shows the world "to us" in his mirror. He presupposes at the very least: a re-presentation of a re-presentation of that presentation. The "original" presentation is of "the world" as it is "to" Nietzsche, not as it is to another but, in a way presupposed by the possibility of communication, as it

could in principle be for another. This play of the constant and the variable is Kantian: categorically *a priori* but intuitively *a posteriori*. Here we could insert the differences between Locke and Wittgenstein or between Husserl and Derrida. To avoid the representational theory of perception, Derrida's "there has never been any perception" would provide just one sufficient condition.⁵ Nietzsche's mirror would not thereby be shattered (because the shards of a mirror are mirrors). There would be no mirror.

(1.3) "Diese Welt:"
(This world:)

Aside from the commitment to the totality of what is whatever is, in "Welt" the use of the demonstrative "this," "diese," commits Nietzsche to a grammar of indexicals with ontological presuppositions; a covert metaphysics of actuality. Although a pure logic of indexicals provides truth conditions for indexical sentences in a token reflexive way, this "this" at once presupposes the presence or possible presence of the demonstrated, the world, and the tacit subject(s) this is a presence or possible presence to. This metaphysics of presence although not avowed by him, is a condition for Nietzsche's thought. If we push thinking further than Nietzsche, the attempt to think the essence of presence points to theology.

In a way through logic, and in a way through connotation, there is an implicit ontology of possible worlds in "this world." The use of "this" not "the" suggests at least the logical possibility of numerically distinct worlds. Despite the exclusive sense of "world," derived from the logical impossibility of there being anything that there is except what there is, whatever there is, conceptual room remains for ways the world could have been or could be: possible worlds in a literal sense of "world," ways *everything* could have been. To explain the possibility of possible worlds (which would be to explain the possibility of possibility) would require at least: exemplifications of transcendental types, creations, and pure Being which excludes the Nothingness it might be thought to dialectically imply.

5) In the discussion following the reading of "Structure, Sign and Play in the Human Sciences" at John Hopkins University in October 1966, Derrida says "Now I don't know what perception is and I don't believe that anything like perception exists." (Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play," 272)

If we reject realism about possible worlds, we leave unanswered the ontological question of what it is for there to be possibilities, here, what it is for there to be certain possibilities which Nietzsche seeks to repudiate. The metaphysics of actuality stands in need of explanation. For example; if (as David Lewis thought) to say this world is actual is to say that we are amongst its members, Nietzsche is committed to an ontology of possible worlds one of which is “our” world. As Derrida might ask: “Who are we?”⁶

- (1.4) “ein Ungeheurer von Kraft”
(A monster of power)
[“Kraft”: (energy), (force)]

In the absence of argument in philosophy we might as well believe the opposite. Why not the opposite of a monster? Why not a benevolent, pantheistic God or, if a clean distinction can be drawn between what happens and the source of what happens, the transcendental God of Judeo-Christian theism? Then the world is a perpetual fountain of presence: both creator and creation. Nietzsche has said the world is a monster. Although “Ungeheurer” is deployed by Nietzsche as a noun, and is very naturally translated “monster,” the word has an adjectival use to mean “mighty” and an adverbial use to mean “mightily”; predicates which the Judeo-Christians use to ascribe an essential property to God.

We need not translate “Kraft” as energy as Kaufmann and Hollingdale have done but could choose any of: “strength,” “power,” “force,” “vigor,” “efficacy,” or “validity.” Suppose “Kraft” does mean “energy” here. *Pace* the claims of modern physics, we have next to no idea what energy is. “Energy” is a metaphysical concept.

- (1.5) “ohne Anfang”
(without beginning)

Suppose the world is without a beginning if and only if

$$\exists x x t^1 \rightarrow \exists y [y t^2 \ \& \ (t^2 < t^1)].$$

6) See Derrida “Les Fins de l’homme,” 147. Derrida entitles this subsection of “Les fins de l’homme” “Nous lisant,” which could be translated “reading us” or “we reading.”

That what is did not begin to be, or what becomes did not begin to become, is a metaphysical claim and, in the absence of argument, we might as well believe the opposite. The world has a beginning:

$$\exists x x t^1 \rightarrow \neg \exists y [y t^2 \ \& \ (t^2 < t^1)].$$

Nietzsche's preference is inconsistent both with Jewish and Christian scripture and with the Kantian thesis that the claim that there was a first event is neither true nor false. (I do not read Kant as only pointing to an epistemological *aporia* but as a metaphysical anti-realist: metaphysical sentences are not truth-valued.) Nietzsche's view is consistent with the Aristotelian and Thomist thesis that the beginning of the world cannot be proven. Although whether what happens began to happen is currently thought to be an unsolved philosophical problem or, less plausibly, an empirical problem, there are reasons for believing that there was a first event. For example:

$$\exists x x t^1 \rightarrow \exists y [y t^2 \ \& \ (t^2 < t^1)] \rightarrow \neg \exists x t \text{ where } t = 0 \quad (1.5.1)$$

$$\exists x t \text{ where } t = 0 \quad (1.5.2)$$

$$\neg \{ \exists x x t^1 \rightarrow \exists y [y t^2 \ \& \ (t^2 < t^1)] \} \quad (1.5.3)$$

Nietzsche's "ohne Anfang" identifies one of the properties necessary for anything's being God. If we read "world" as "the totality of what is, whatever is" then Nietzsche is committed to the thesis that what is possesses one of the properties of God.

(1.6) "ohne Ende"
(without end)

Suppose the world is without end if and only if

$$\exists x x t^1 \rightarrow \exists y [y t^2 \ \& \ (t^2 > t^1)].$$

Again, Nietzsche presents a metaphysical thesis without argument so we might as well believe the opposite. The world is not without end:

$$\exists x x t^1 \rightarrow \neg \exists y [y t^2 \ \& \ (t^2 > t^1)].$$

His preference is inconsistent with Christian scripture's eschatological entailments. However, there seems no *a priori* proof of the end of the world. No contradiction seems entailed by the supposition that each event has a successor event, nor by its logical consequence that each event therefore has an infinite number of successor events. That the world *will* end remains an article of faith for Christians. That the world *will not* end remains an article of faith for Nietzsche.

Nietzsche's "ohne Ende" identifies one of the properties ascribed by theists to God so if the world is the totality of what is, then Nietzsche and the theists agree that there is world without end.

- (1.7) "eine fest, eiserne Größe von Kraft"
(a firm, iron quantity of power)
["Größe von Kraft": (magnitude of force), (quantity of energy)]

Read one way, this is an impressionistic statement of the Third Law of Thermodynamics which entails that the overall quantity of energy in the universe does not vary. Although an axiom of science, this neo-Newtonian doctrine might have to be given up to make sense of mental causation. We cannot give up mental causation or we give up making sense.

Read another way, Nietzsche unknowingly ascribes to the world a property of God: God remains constant, "fest": firm, solid, hard, compact, strong, stout, tight, fast, stable, fixed immovable, rigid, constant, permanent, enduring. "[F]ester Boden" is "firm ground." "festen Fuß fassen" is "to gain a (firm) footing." "[E]herne" is brazen, brass, bronze. (Not "iron," as Kaufmann and Hollingdale have it.) There is the unchanging. Theists who know that they are theists call the unchanging "God" (or some synonym).

- (1.8) "welche nicht größer, nicht kleiner wird"
(that does not become bigger, nor smaller)

Suppose the world does not grow bigger or smaller if and only if

$$\exists!w [\neg(w t^1 < w t^2) \ \& \ \neg(w t^1 > w t^2) \ \& \ t^1 < t^2].$$

We could read Nietzsche's claim as an expression of the Third Law of Thermodynamics. If the quantity of energy (force, power, "Kraft") is constant ("fest") then it does not vary. Nietzsche has introduced *the permanent* into his world of flux.

This temporal logic is inapplicable to God, because God has no temporal properties. Nevertheless, God does not even in principle grow bigger or smaller, because God has no temporal properties.

(1.9) "die sich nicht verbraucht"
(that does not expend itself)

Suppose w expends itself if and only if:

w at $t_1 > w$ at t_2 , and w at $t_2 > w$ at t_3 , ...

then w does not expend itself if and only if it is not the case that

w at $t_1 > w$ at t_2 , and w at $t_2 > w$ at t_3 , ...

but if it is not the case that

w at $t_1 > w$ at t_2 , and w at $t_2 > w$ at t_3 , ...

then

w at $t_1 = w$ at t_2 & w at $t_3 = w$ at t_2

or

w at $t_1 < w$ at t_2 , and w at $t_2 < w$ at t_3 , ...

and the world is the cause of its own not doing that. We need this clause to capture the subject "Diese Welt," and Nietzsche's reflexive "sich." The world thereby has one of the characteristics of God because according to traditional theism, God's power is in no way *expended* by the act of creation. This is just one of the meanings of "creation *ex nihilo*."

- (1.10) “sondern nur verwandelt”
(but only transforms itself)

Suppose w transforms itself if and only if w causes itself to gain and lose properties (including the property of having certain members):

$$w \text{ is } F \text{ at } t, \ \& \ w \text{ is } \neg F \text{ at } t1, \ \& \ w \text{ is } G \text{ at } t3, \ \dots$$

and w causes itself to gain and lose such properties. What has such power? What does the totality of what there is have to be like in order for the Nietzschean picture to be accurate? Even though the reflexivity of (1.9) carries over to (1.10), it is a presupposition of “transforms” (verwandelt) that what is admits of a distinction between transformer and transformed, or changer and changed, or agent and acted upon. This distinction within what is cannot be thought of on the model of causal interaction between physical objects (because it pertains to the Dionysian). Nietzsche is at this moment thereby committed *malgre lui* to a bifurcation between transformer and transformed, or as the theist would put it, creator and created, God and creation.

- (1.11) “als Ganzes”
(as a whole)

The *un-it-y* which is presupposed by the unity of parts is not of the nature of a thing. *Un-it-y* is *no-thing-ness*. This *no-thing-ness* is not nothing but, if not everything either, makes everything possible. The whole in the sense of “the totality” is only possible if there is a whole in this transcendent sense. (See the treatment of (1.1) above.)

- (1.12) “unverwänderlich groß”
(of unalterable size)

I take it that this claim is logically equivalent to (1.8):

$$\exists!w [\neg(w t^1 < w t^2) \ \& \ \neg(w t^1 > w t^2) \ \& \ t^1 < t^2],$$

and that (1.13) and (1.14) are a metaphorical re-iteration of (1.8) and (1.12).

- (1.13) “ein Haushalt ohne Ausgaben und Einbußen”
(a household without expenses or losses)
- (1.14) “aber ebenso ohne Zuwachs, ohne Einnahmen”
(but just the same without increase, without income)
- (1.15) “vom ‘Nichts’ umschlossen als von seiner Grenze”
(enclosed by ‘Nothingness’ as by its frontier)
[“Nichts”: (nothing)]
[“seiner Grenze”: (its boundary)]

In Presocratic terms, Nietzsche repudiates Being, endorses Becoming, and endorses Nothing or Nothingness. As a heuristic (I make no biographical claim) we may read Nietzsche as adding to a range of possibilities opened by Heraclitus and Parmenides:

- (a) Heraclitus: Being and Nothingness do not exist. There is only Becoming.
(b) Parmenides: Becoming and Nothingness do not exist. There is only Being.
(c) Nietzsche: Being does not exist. There is only Becoming and Nothingness.

Nietzsche provides no argument for his endorsement of a philosophy of Becoming and Nothingness rather than a Heraclitean or Parmenidean ontology, or Hegel’s recognition of a synthesis of Being (*Sein*) and Nothingness (*Nichts*) in Becoming (*Werden*) in the opening paragraphs of his dialectic. Nietzsche has no refutation of Hegel’s view that Being and Nothingness, as opposites, are mutually dependent on levels we could identify as phenomenological, psychological, semantic, and ontological so that, *a fortiori*, there cannot be Nothingness or Becoming without Being. Nor does Nietzsche have any reply to the Parmenidean suggestion that it is contradictory to say that there is Nothingness, because that would be to ascribe existence to the non-existent.

There cannot be Becoming but no Being. To see this, consider the difference between, on the one hand, Becoming and, on the other hand, absolutely nothing whatsoever. It is right to characterize this difference as follows. In the first case there is Becoming. In the second case there is no Becoming. In the first case Becoming exists.

In the second case it is not the case that Becoming exists. If there is Becoming then there is Being but the reverse does not follow. *Pace* Nietzsche, Being (*Sein*) is primordial with regard to Becoming (*Werden*). We may ask: *Is there Becoming or no Becoming?* If there is no Becoming, Nietzsche's ontology is straightforwardly false. If there is (*eg gibt, il y a*) becoming, then becoming *onto-logically* presupposes Being.

Does the world have a limit, a threshold? Does Becoming have a limit, a frontier, boundary, limit, border, edge, end, term, extreme point, or limitation? If there is Becoming, as Nietzsche supposes, then arguably there is Nothingness because if Becoming is the transition from Being to Nothingness, or from Nothingness to Being, or both, then there is Nothingness. There is also thereby Being, a conclusion Nietzsche would wish to resist but one he is forced to.

If we push Nietzsche's metaphysical presuppositions still further and ask "What is Being?" the only plausible answer is that Being is immaterial, infinite, and that which is ultimately necessary for beings. Being has the properties of the being of God. Being is the being of God.

(1.16) "nichts Verschwimmendes, Verschwendetes"
(not something blurry, or wasted)

Suppose x is blurry if and only if x is describable only by fuzzy logic. Then the world is not blurry if and only if it has a determinate character reportable in propositions with truth values which do not admit of degree. There is no incoherence in this, but Nietzsche has missed an opportunity to argue for his view that truth is not simple or straightforward if an ontology of Becoming may only be characterized by fuzzy logic. If x is F but also becoming not- F then the proposition Fx might (for example) be rightly allocated the truth value 0.4 and the proposition that x is not- F allocated the truth value 0.6, and so on. These allocations could be indexed to times so that:

$$\exists x (Fx 0.9 \text{ at } t1, \& Fx 0.8 \text{ } t2, \& Fx 0.7 \text{ } t3, \dots)$$

and so

$$\exists x (\neg Fx 0.1 \text{ at } t1, \& \neg Fx 0.2 \text{ } t2, \& Fx 0.7 \text{ } t3, \dots).$$

Although this logic does not model the transitions themselves, in the sense that we still do not know what the change from being *F* to being not-*F* consists in, it presents necessary and sufficient conditions for transitions, and so, in a sense, Becoming. On the other hand, the world *qua* totality of what is, for example Becoming, is arguably not “blurry” (or “hazy”) because it is determinately that, and not in the process of becoming anything it is not. This rejection of the indeterminate, however, again implicates Nietzsche in a philosophy of Being rather than Becoming: the Being of the totality of what is.

(1.17) “nichts Unendlich-Ausgedehntes”
(not endlessly-extended)

Suppose *w* is endlessly extended if and only if for any stretch of *w* there exists another stretch of *w*. So, the world is not endlessly extended if and only if it is not the case that: for any stretch of *w* there exists another stretch of *w*.

However we read this, Nietzsche cannot plausibly mean that the world is not endlessly extended *in time*. He has clearly stated that the world is infinitely extended in both past and future time (in (1.5) and (1.6) above) and it is a logical consequence of the doctrine of eternal return that this is so. Suppose Nietzsche means that the world is not infinitely spatially extended. Again, he provides no argument and *prima facie* the negation of his view might be right. In the Antinomies chapter of the first *Critique* Kant regards the issue as irresolvable and Nietzsche has said nothing to rule that out either.

(1.18) “sondern als bestimmte Kraft”
(but as a definite power)
[(but as definite force)]

If what is, is a definite force then there are individuals, and therefore individuation, so *pace* Nietzsche, the Schopenhauerian *principium individuationis* operates at the Dionysian level. Nietzsche presupposes a distinction between power, that which exerts power, and the effects of power within the world, in the sense of the totality of what is, so unwittingly presupposes a distinction between creator, creative act,

and creation. This tripartite cosmic taxonomy is a necessary condition for the world being “a definite force.” In Judeo-Christian terms, the world, the whole of what is, divides into creator, creation, and the creative relation. Again, Nietzsche is committed to theology *malgre lui*.

(1.19) “einem bestimmten Raum eingelegt”

(set in a definite space)

[“Raum”: (room, place, area, expanse, capacity, volume, accommodation)]

What is the difference between a definite space and an indefinite space? In a sense, Newtonian space is “definite” because locations within it obtain in the presence or absence of physical objects. In a sense, Leibnizian space is “indefinite” because locations within it shift with the movement of physical objects. Again, Nietzsche introduces the permanent, the absolute, the metaphysical, into his world of flux, in this case eschewing the Leibnizian anticipations of relativity theory. If Newton’s arguments that absolute space and time are the “sensoria of God” are sound, then Nietzsche has unknowingly admitted the imminence of God to the universe.

(1.20) “und nicht einem Raume, der irgendwo ‘leer’ wäre”

(and not a space that might be ‘empty’ somewhere)

[(and not a sphere that might be ‘empty’ here or there)]

Kaufmann and Hollingdale translate “Raume” as “sphere” rather than “space.” Perhaps unconsciously, they thereby express Nietzsche’s Heraclitean disavowal of a fundamental ontology which is Parmenidean. Parmenides’ *sphairon* is implicitly repudiated, or at least hidden and suppressed, by flux even though it is an entailment of Parmenides’ poem that the *sphairon* cannot be “empty” anywhere: there is no non-being, no Nothingness. Nietzsche offers us no reason for arbitrating between Heraclitus and Parmenides in Heraclitus’s favor. If the argument about (1.15) above is sound, the Heraclitean presupposes the Parmenidean, the Dionysian the Apollonian.

Reading “Raum” uncontroversially as “space,” Nietzsche is claiming that there is no empty space. Again, he provides no argument so we might as well believe the opposite.

- (1.21) “vielmehr als Kraft überall”
(rather as power everywhere)
[(but rather as force throughout)]

Power is a disposition but it is less clear that a disposition can be everywhere unless this is equivalent to the quasi-functional claim: for any x , x has some power.

- (1.22) “als Spiel von Kräften und Kräftenwellen”
(as play of powers and power waves)
[(as a play of forces and waves of forces)]

When Derrida says that “Le jeu est toujours jeu d’absence et de présence” (Play is always the play of absence and of presence) we could translate this “toujours” as “still,” allowing it the force of “nevertheless.”⁷ Then Nietzsche’s substitution of “Spiel”

7) Derrida, *L’écriture et la différence*, 426. Although Derrida cites “la critique nietzschéenne de la métaphysique, des concepts d’être et de vérité auxquels sont substitués les concepts de jeu, d’interprétation et de signe” (the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics, in which for the concepts of being and truth the concepts of play, interpretation and sign are substituted) (Derrida, *ibid.*, 412), alongside the Freudian critique of self-presence and Heidegger’s “Destruction” of metaphysics, like Kant he recognizes the difficulty of formulating any “critique” of metaphysics without thereby presupposing metaphysics:

Or, tous ces discours destructeurs et tous leurs analogues sont pris dans une sorte de cercle. Ce cercle est unique et il décrit la forme du rapport entre l’histoire de la Métaphysique et la destruction de l’histoire de la métaphysique: *il n’y a aucun sens* à se passer des concepts de la métaphysique pour ébranler la métaphysique; nous ne disposons d’aucun langage – d’aucune syntaxe et d’aucune lexique – qui soit étranger à cette histoire; nous ne pouvons énoncer aucune proposition destructrice qui n’ait déjà du se glisser dans la forme, dans la logique et les postulations implicites de cela même qu’elle voudrait contester. (Derrida, *L’écriture et la différence*, 412, Derrida’s italics)

(Now, all these deconstructive discourses and all their analogues are caught in a sort of circle. This circle is unique and it describes the form of relationship between the history of metaphysics and the destruction of the history of metaphysics: *there is no sense* in going beyond the concepts of metaphysics in order to free oneself from metaphysics; we do not have any language at our disposal – no syntax and no vocabulary – which might be foreign to this history; we are not able to enunciate any destructive proposition which might have not already had to slide into the form, into the logic and the implicit postulations of that which it would like to contest.)

Derrida has diagnosed Nietzsche’s illness. Although Derrida is right about the language, we can go much further. It is the *truth* of metaphysics that is presupposed by the putative eschewal of metaphysics. Kantian metaphysical anti-realism (in the Antinomies chapter of the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*) presupposes metaphysical realism. To take just one example, if there neither was nor was not a first event then there are no events. This very strong conclusion: *nothing happens*, is inconsistent with Kant’s own empirical

for “Sein” is still implicated in the metaphysics it putatively repudiates. In this metaphysics of presence, presence is the presence of Being and Being is the being of presence. There is a difference between presence, and either no presence or absence. This is a difference between Being and Nothingness. (For example, if there is a play of forces and waves there is a play of forces and waves rather than nothing whatsoever.) There is a difference between Being and Nothingness and this, at least in so far as it is an intelligible difference, is a difference between presence, on the one hand, and either no presence or absence on the other.

Once we probe further, once we ask: What is presence? or Does presence have an essence? How is presence possible? Why is it now now? Why is it always now? We ask questions which only admit of theological answers. The eternal now (as opposed to its Dionysian contents) has all and only the properties of God. Presence is the presence of God.

(1.23) “zugleich Eins und Vieles”
(at the same time one and many)

What is, is in a sense the one, and in a sense the many. The world can only be “one” in the sense that does not in principle admit of being many because what is, whatever is, is essentially one because any putatively distinct addition would only ever be part of what is. In Judeo-Christian theology, being the one is an essential property of God and being the many is a contingent property of creation. If we consider Nietzsche’s *Welt*, the totality, it contains both the one and the many, both God and creation. Both Nietzsche and Plotinus are Neo-Platonist theologians, or proto-theologians,

realism. Although Deleuze is right, in *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, to see in Nietzsche the implementation of an essentially Kantian project: “Que Kant n’a pas mené la vraie critique, parce qu’il n’a pas su en poser le problème en termes de valeurs, tel est même un des mobiles principaux de l’œuvre de Nietzsche” (Kant did not conduct the true critique, because he did not know how to pose the problem in terms of values, such is one of the principal motivations of Nietzsche’s work) (Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, 1), Deleuze misses a Nietzschean reading of *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* Book II which construes “Postulaten” as not truth entailing, a reading which might have appalled Kant, but one more consistent with the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* than the one he perhaps intends. Despite his anti-Kantian protestations, Nietzsche’s philosophy does not exceed the anti-metaphysics of the Transcendental Dialectic. It is implicated in the same metaphysical, even theological, presuppositions.

the difference between them being that Plotinus makes his fundamental assumptions explicit.

- (1.24) “hier sich häufend und zugleich dort sich mindernd”
(increasing here and at the same time decreasing there)

We know from (1.7), (1.8) and (1.12) that the world does not increase or decrease *qua* totality: the totality of what is, whatever is, remains that despite what comes and goes. Nietzsche means that some components of the world increase or decrease locally, some occupants of “hier” and “dort.” This is an uncontroversial claim which might be confirmed empirically.

- (1.25) “ein Meer in sich selber stürmender und flutender Kräfte”
(a sea of forces flowing and rushing together)

If “Meer” (sea), here has only the literal force of “set” then the claim has no strong theological connotation. If the whole, in a sense, exceeds the parts then, in at least a pantheistic sense, if the forces are creation then God is the sea. If there is a stronger distinction between sea and forces, for example if the sea as a whole is an *agent* which causes the events within it, or if flowing and rushing is something *done by* the sea, then there obtains a cleaner distinction between God and Creation which the Judeo-Christian could endorse. The sea is necessary for the flowing and rushing as God is necessary for the events in creation. The sea is omnipresent. (In the metaphor, there are no waves that are not in the sea.) The sea therefore has yet further properties of God.

- (1.26) “ewig sich wandelnd”
(eternally changing)
[(eternally changing itself)]

This quasi Heraclitean thesis is true if and only if:

- (1.26.1) For any time, t , w changes at t .
(1.26.2) w did not begin to change.

(1.26.3) *w* will not cease to change.

Nietzsche has no argument for these claims even though they are not self-evident. It is empirically and psychologically compelling that at any time at least some portion of the world is changing, and it follows that the world is changing, but anyone believing the premise needs to refute the conclusions of Parmenides and Zeno who hold the opposite view. As we saw in the cases of (1.5) and (1.6) above, it is not clear that change never began or that change will never cease.

(1.27) “ewig zurücklaufend”
(eternally flooding back)

The doctrine of eternal return entails that for any event and any time there is a qualitatively similar event at a later time, so the world has no end:

$$\exists x x t^1 \rightarrow \exists y [y t^2 \ \& \ (t^2 > t^1)]$$

As a mythological test of the *Übermensch* there is no need for the reality of the eternal return to be proven, only its consistency. Here, however, Nietzsche is explicitly asserting the eternal return as an ontological doctrine, not just as a myth.

In the absence of any proof that there was a first event or there will be a last event, Nietzsche is right to suppose that the eternal return is possible. There is no contradiction in the supposition that every life of mine has an infinite number of qualitatively identical predecessors and successors. From a logical positivist point of view, the supposition is senseless because unverifiable. Although it is right that I would not be able to tell which life I am in (and because they are all qualitatively identical, I cannot change my behavior in the light of the “test”; for example, there is no *first one* to set the pattern for the remainder) the positivists unjustifiably assimilate ontology to epistemology. From the fact that we cannot tell whether a claim is true or false it does not follow that it is neither true nor false. The logico-epistemic status of Nietzsche’s doctrine of eternal return is synthetic *a priori*. Nevertheless, in his doctrine of eternal return, Nietzsche breaks out of his conservative acquiescence in the Kantian orthodoxy and engages in that subversive activity prohibited by modernity: metaphysics. Kant’s prohibition is on any metaphysical synthetic *a priori*.

Nietzsche says the eternally flooding back is:

- (1.28) “mit unheuren Jahren der Wiederkehr”
(with tremendous years of recurrence)

and

- (1.29) “mit einer Ebbe und Flut seiner Gestaltungen”
(with an ebb and a flood of its forms)

So, there are forms. If there are forms then one form is distinct from another and the *principium individuationis* has not been expunged from the Dionysian. The ebb and flow is:

- (1.30) “aus den einfachsten in die vielfältigsten hinaustreibend”
(out of the simplest forms striving toward the most complex)

So, even at the Dionysian level, there is a distinction between the simple and the complex:

simple (*def.*) x is simple if and only if x has no parts.

and

complex (*def.*) x is complex if and only if x has parts.

The Dionysian is therefore not wholly indeterminate but presupposes Apollonian distinctness.

We do not know that a thoroughgoing entropy is not true, one which would preclude the emergence of the complex out of the simple but only allow the reverse. Nietzsche suggests that the motor of change is contradiction:

- (1.31) “aus dem Stillsten, Starrsten, Kältesten hinaus in das Glühendste, Wildeste, Sich-selber-Widersprechendste”
(out of the stillest, most rigid, coldest forms toward the hottest, most turbulent, most self-contradictory)

Is change self-contradictory? *Prima facie*, there is a coherent account of change:

change (*def.*) x changes if and only if x is F at t_1 & x is not F at t_2 .

But arguably this fails to capture change itself and only models the situation before and after the change but we need to know what is happening at the time of change. Change is contradictory if this holds:

x changes if and only if Fx and not Fx at t ,

But that does not look plausible as an account of change. It is the claim that something both possesses and lacks a property at a time. It does not capture the requisite notion of *gaining* or *shedding* properties. Zeno thinks that moving is both being in a place and being in a distinct place at a time:

moves (*def.*) x moves if and only if x is at P at t , x is at P_1 at t .

Zeno concludes that there is no motion. Why do we not follow him? It is usually thought fatal to the existence of any putative phenomenon to identify a contradiction in the entailments of its description. (Ghosts and time travel are often ruled out as being “contradictory to describe.”) We do not think this in the case of motion because the reality of motion is so psychologically compelling. The lesson is this: a contradiction in a theory is only sufficient to refute *that theory*, and there remains open the possibility of a consistent theory of any subject matter.

(1.32) “und dann wieder aus dem Fülle heimkehrend zum Einfachen”
(and then again returning home to the simple out of this abundance)

Nietzsche allows the opposite possibility to (1.30): the most complex forms degenerating into the most simple.

(1.33) “aus dem Spiel der Widersprüche zurück bis zur Lust des Einklangs”
(out of the play of contradictions back to the joy of concord)

Nietzsche allows the opposite of (1.31): concord or consistency, the dance of Siva.

- (1.34) “sich selber bejahendnoch in dieser Gleichheit seiner Bahnen und Jahre”
(still affirming itself in this uniformity of its courses and its years)

This “uniformity” is change itself.

- (1.35) “sich selber segend als das, was ewig wiederkommen muß”
(blessing itself as that which must return eternally)

What is this “segnen,” “to bless,” “to give benediction to,” “to make the sign of the cross over,” “to consecrate”? If what is *blesses itself* then what is divides into *the blesser* and *the blessed*. In Judeo-Christian terms, the true or ultimate source of blessing is called “God” and the blessed “creation.” Nietzsche overtly draws a theological distinction which the theist is happy to endorse.

- (1.36) “als ein Werden, das kein Sattwerden, keinen Überdruß, keine Müdigkeit kennt”
(as a Becoming that knows no satiety, no disgust, no weariness)

An analysis of Becoming (*Werden*) which is not false but nevertheless inadequate is

$$\exists x (Fx t^1 \ \& \ \neg Fx t^2 \vee \neg Fx t^1 \ \& \ Fx t^2) \ \& \ t^1 < t^2.$$

It is not false because it entails that something either becomes *F* or becomes not *F*, and that is necessary and sufficient for its “becoming” in the sense of gaining or shedding properties. Becoming is then a kind of change, a change in what is true of some subject of change. The analysis is inadequate because Becoming itself is left unanalyzed. Although it is reasonably clear what it consists in for *x* to be *F* at t^1 and to not be *F* at t^2 , it is not clear what the transition is between t^1 and t^2 entailed by “gaining” a property, “shedding” a property, “changing,” or “Becoming.” Intuitively, the analysis depicts the situation before the Becoming and depicts the situation after the Becoming but fails to depict the Becoming. Suppose we allow for degrees of property acquisition or loss over time:

$$\exists x (Fx^n t^1 \ \& \ Fx^{n^1} t^2 \vee \neg Fx^n t^1 \ \& \ Fx^n t^2) \ \& \ t^1 < t^2,$$

where the superscript “*n*” stands for “to some degree,” for example: “to degree *n*,” “to degree *n*1.”

This analysis is also inadequate, but not just because the transition itself is still omitted. The further inadequacy is the one Socrates perceives in reporting Heraclitus’s doctrine of change in the *Theaetetus*:

ἐκ δὲ δὴ φορᾶς τε καὶ κινήσεως καὶ κράσεως πρὸς ἄλληλα γίγνεται πάντα
ἃ δὴ φαμεν εἶναι, οὐκ ὀρθῶς προσαγορεύοντες: ἔστι μὲν γὰρ οὐδέ ποτ’
οὐδέν, ἀεὶ δὲ γίγνεται.⁸

The fact is that, as a result of movement, change and mixture with one another, all the things which we say are – which is not the right way to speak of them – are coming to be; because nothing ever is, but things are always coming to be.⁹

Becoming is so thoroughgoing that it not only does not entail a subject of change but logically precludes any. Nietzsche chooses the gerundive “a becoming” (*ein Werden*) rather than the continuous “becoming” (*Werden*) to signal the self-sufficiency of Becoming; its independence of anything which does become. Because the world in the sense of the totality of what is is Becoming, it is at least false, and arguably makes little sense, to say that there is a subject of that change or totality of changes. Apart from Becoming there is nothing (*Nichts*), *a fortiori*, there is no subject of Becoming.

It follows that the quasi-Aristotelian analysis of change is inadequate to Nietzschean Becoming. Heraclitus escapes Aristotle. Nevertheless, “a” becoming presupposes individuation: one process or episode of becoming which is numerically distinct from what it is not so, again, the Dionysian presuppose the Schopenhauerian *principium individuationis*, the Apollonian, so ultimately, the Platonic.

8) Plato, *Platonis Opera*, 152 d–e.

9) Plato, *Theaetetus*, p. 17 152 d–e.

- (1.37) “diese meine dionysische Welt des Ewig-sich-selber-Schaffens”
(this, my Dionysian world of the eternally-self-creating)

Nietzsche recognizes the eternally self-creating. In Judeo-Christian theology, being the eternally self-creating is a property of God. God is *causa sui*. This self-creation of God by God is eternal, not in the sense of being extended over infinite time, but in the sense of never ceasing to take place in the eternal present. There is a distinction between two kinds of presence; on the one hand, the presence which is transient, that which is present, the Heraclitean event, and on the other hand, the presence which it consists in for the time to always be now: the Now. The first is the presence of creation, the second the presence of God. Nietzsche recognizes both eternity and self-creation so, again, introduces theological properties *malgré lui*.

- (1.38) “des Ewig sich-selber-Zerstörens”
(the eternally self-destroying)

If there is the eternally self-destroying then there is eternity. Although God’s acts are eternal or timeless, a theist might readily agree with Nietzsche that the empirical world is a mass of processes which are beginning and ending. Although God is necessarily not self-destroying, what is self-destroying in so far as God’s creation has an end, the end of the world. God is part of what is and that end is brought about by God.

- (1.39) “diese Geheimnis-Welt der doppelte Wollüste”
(this mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight)

There is creation and destruction. There is God and the devil. As Nietzsche says, there is mystery.

- (1.40) “diese, mein ‘Jenseits von Gut und Böse’”
(this, my ‘beyond good and evil’)

The theist may readily agree that there is a “beyond” good and evil because God is beyond *human concepts of* good and evil. God is the creator of values which exceed any human understanding of values.

- (1.41) “ohne Ziel, wenn nicht im Glück des Kreises ein Ziel liegt”
(without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal)
[“Ziel”: (point)]
[“Glück”: (luck/happiness)]
[“wenn nicht”: (if not)]

There is a clear sense in which the world, what is as a whole, cannot have any point, any goal, outside itself: there is not any goal or point outside what is because there is not anything outside what is. Nietzsche qualifies “ohne Ziel” (without goal), with “wenn nicht” (if ... not). A theist could happily agree with Nietzsche that there is a circle of creation and destruction, of emanating from and returning to God. The joy (happiness, luck) of this circle, creation by God and coming back to God, is the goal, is the point. For all his protests against Plato, Nietzsche is a Neo-Platonist *malgré lui*. Economically, God is the point of God.

- (1.42) “ohne Willen, wenn nicht ein Ring zu sich selber guten Willen hat”
(without will, unless a ring has good will toward itself)

For the theist, everything is brought about by the will of God, or at least permitted by the will of God, but God does not have to *exert* any will because that would suggest a limit on his power. The theist could therefore accept Nietzsche’s “ohne Willen” as meaning not “without will,” but “without will-power.”

- (1.43) “wollte ihr einen Namen für diese Welt?”
(do you want a name for this world?)

It might be inappropriate to try to name reality because reality might be ineffable, a conclusion endorsed in interestingly different ways at least by Aquinas near the end of his life, by Kant in his attitude to the *Ding-an-sich*, by the early Wittgenstein, and by Zen Buddhists. Is “God” the name of God?

- (1.44) “Einer Lösung für alle ihre Rätsel?”
(A solution for all its riddles?)

Nietzsche mentions riddles, in the plural, but speaks of a single solution. A theist can readily accept that the world is a mystery or a riddle. If there is a solution to the

riddle, or all the riddles, of the world then a solution of this magnitude is appropriately named “God.”

(1.45) “Ein Licht für euch, ihr Verborgesten, Stärksten, Unerschrockensten, Mitternächlisten?”

(A light for you, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly ones?)

Nietzsche tends to flatter his reader in a conspiratorial way; as though the reader were somehow radical or risqué (rather than a neo-Kantian metaphysical conservative). In Christian scripture, God says: “I am the light,” so both Nietzsche and the Christian can accept that there is a light to be found, an ultimate explanation of the world. The light of the world common to Nietzsche and the Christians is *presence*. Apollo is the god of light, which partly anticipates the intuition; Presence is the presence of God.

(1.46) “Diese Welt ist der Wille zur Macht – und nichts außerdem!”

(This world is the will to power – and nothing besides!)

If the world, in the sense of the totality, is *will* then it has one of the properties of God. It is part of the definition of “God” to have or be will. If this will is “will to power” then there is something it is exercised over. Whatever is brought about by ultimate will, the will that makes everything actual, has the essential property of being creation: being that which is created by act of will. Not in his psychology, not in his politics, but in his cosmology, Nietzsche has unknowingly stumbled upon the will of God: the will to power is the will of God.

If we ask the question *Why does anything happen?* the answer is the fundamental ground of change which Nietzsche describes as *Der Wille zur Macht*. Will is an *intelligent* and *personal* will because willing presupposes the discrimination of items to be willed and the ability to choose between them. These are intelligent and personal capacities, so Nietzsche’s God, if not the God he adheres to then at least the God which adheres to him, is an intelligent and a personal God. There could be either a cause or (*vel*) a reason why anything happens. If the *will* is the ultimate ground of change, then there is a *reason why* everything happens, not just a cause of everything that happens. What happens is willed to happen that way.

Nietzsche's "and nothing besides" implies that if there were no will to power there would not be anything. It is precisely the Judeo-Christian claim that without the will of God there would be nothing. Although Nietzsche, like most moderns, has been taught that the existence of God is an extravagant postulate, an other-worldly object of belief without evidence, this is a crude misunderstanding of theism. Theists have no more interest than Nietzsche in believing ridiculous things for no reason. God is the ultimate presupposition, a presupposition which, as we see in the case of Nietzsche, is impossible to eliminate.

(1.47) "Und auch ihr selber seid dieser Wille zur Macht – und nichts außerdem!"
(And you yourselves are also this will to power – and nothing besides!)
["außerdem": (else)]

The universe is the macrocosm. The individual is the microcosm. As the totality of *what is* is not determined by anything outside itself, so human individuals are not ultimately caused to act by anything outside themselves but are self-determining. This entails the Judeo-Christian view that human individuals have free will. We are at least amongst the causes of their own actions, and could refrain from doing what we do. Despite intermittent and strong disavowals, Nietzsche has ascribed to us human beings the Platonic, Cartesian, and Christian property of having free will.

If "you yourselves are also this will to power" and "this world is the will to power" then you partake of the nature of the will to power. If the will to power is the will of God then you partake of the nature of God. As the Christians say: you are made in the image of God.

The last page of *The Will to Power* is an "end" of Nietzsche's philosophy in different senses. Despite Nietzsche's overt disavowals of metaphysics it entails a Heraclitean ontology of flux which, despite or (*vel*) because of its insistence on Being as Becoming, is a kind of metaphysics. It provides a teleology and a transcendental presupposition for Nietzsche's thought on ethics and aesthetics which are putatively eschewed. The aesthetic presupposes the metaphysical and the metaphysical presupposes the theological, so Nietzsche's aesthetic philosophy presupposes the theology it would repudiate.

Metaphysics is not what we have been led to believe. Metaphysics is not an extravagant postulate but an ineliminable presupposition. In *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches: Ein Buch für freie Geister*, Nietzsche remarks at 153:

(1.48) “Wie stark das metaphysische Bedürfnis ist”¹⁰
(How strong the metaphysical need is)

Nietzsche only understands this “Bedürfnis” as a need, a want, or even a lack. He never realizes this “Bedürfnis” is a necessity, a requirement.

The metaphysical properties, which Nietzsche with unconscious but inescapable logic ascribes to the Dionysian world, are sufficient for the existence of God: being without beginning or end, permanence, will, intelligence, presence, immanence, Being. Whose will is the will to power? The will to power is the will of God. What is the artwork? The artwork is creation. Who is the artist? God is the artist.¹¹

[2] FROM AESTHETICS TO THEOLOGY

Because the Dionysian presupposes the Apollonian, Nietzsche’s anti-realism about beauty is false. For example, he is wrong to claim in *Der Wille zur Macht* at ¶804 that:

(2.1) “Das Schöne existiert so wenig als das Gute, das Wahre.”¹²
(The beautiful exists as little as the good, or the true.)

(I take it that, in the idiom, if x exists as little as y then neither x nor y exists, because y does not exist. I leave aside any interpretation premised on degrees of existence.) He is right in his view that the beautiful involves both the Apollonian and the Dionysian but wrong that the beautiful is an illusory projection of the Apollonian on the Dionysian. The Apollonian shines through the Dionysian. The Apollonian pervades the Dionysian. By “pervades” I mean:

a pervades b if and only if a is at least where b is but not ($a = b$).

The Apollonian is present through the Dionysian and the aesthetic is that disclosure. The beautiful, like the good and the true, is not an extravagant postulate but a deep

10) Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, 153.

11) See footnote 7.

12) Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht*, 804, (1887). Hereafter cited parenthetically as WZM.

presupposition. Beauty is really there. Metaphysics is not a set of extravagant postulates but a set of ineliminable presuppositions which, as we have seen, Nietzsche is no more able to dispense with than anyone else.

Nietzsche simply assumes without argument that realism about beauty is false, for example when he claims that:

(2.2) “Ein Ding als schön empfinden heist: es notwendig falsch empfinden.” (WZM, 804, (1887))

(To experience something as beautiful means: necessarily to experience it wrongly.)

In the absence of argument, he might as well preface each of his claims with “It is not the case that.” The judgement that an object is beautiful is *prima facie* neutral with regard to the truth value of either “Beauty is invented” or “Beauty is discovered.” Nevertheless, arguments could be mounted for aesthetic anti-realism on Nietzsche’s behalf. For example:

- (1) Aesthetic properties depend upon secondary qualities.
- (2) Secondary qualities are mind dependent.
- (3) If anything depends upon anything mind-dependent then it is mind-dependent.
- (4) Aesthetic properties are mind-dependent.
- (5) Realism about aesthetic properties is false.

This argument is valid but not sound. Premises (2) and (3) are true (leaving aside the strict Lockean view on which secondary qualities are powers really in the object, possessed because of its primary qualities). However, premise (1) is false; (1) *seems* true because when we talk of the rhythm or pitch of music or the vividness of color we do ascribe aesthetic properties to phenomenological sounds and hues, and those are secondary qualities (leaving aside the strict Lockean view on which they are ideas of secondary qualities). However, the rhythm of the music or the vividness of the color are only aesthetic qualities because the transcendent pervades them. Without the presence of beauty, which is ultimately the presence of the divine, the rhythm would only be rhythm, the vividness only vividness. It is the transcendent in the immanent

which lends to aesthetic qualities their aesthetic nature. Without the transcendent in the immanent, aesthetic facts would not be aesthetic.

The discovery of beauty is not a straightforward *empirical* discovery, like the discovery that an object is a certain color or shape. The beauty of an object is metaphysically analogous to the *existence* of the object or the *presence* of the object or the object's being *just the one it is*. The apprehension of beauty is the apprehension of the infinite in the finite. It takes an aesthetic sensibility to detect it. Not Nietzsche, not Nietzsche's Dionysius but Pseudo-Dionysius, or Dionysius the Areopagite, does possess this sensibility:

Supersubstantiale vero pulchrum pulchritude quidem dicitur propter traditam ab ipso omnibus existentibus iuxta proprietatem uniuscuiusque pulchritudinem; et sicut universorum consonantiae et claritatis causa, ad similitudinem luminis cum fulgore immitens universes pulchrificas fontani radii ipsius traditiones, et sicut omnia ad seipsum vocans, unde et cællos, dicitur, et sicut tota in totis congregans.

(That, beautiful beyond being, is said to be Beauty – for it gives beauty from itself in a manner appropriate to each, it causes the consonance and splendor of all, it flashes forth upon all, after the manner of light, the beauty producing gifts of its flowing ray, it calls all to itself, when it is called beauty).¹³

Pseudo-Dionysius is a real Dionysius and Nietzsche's Dionysius is a pseudo-Dionysius.

At 1048 Nietzsche speaks of

(2.3) “Eine antimetaphysische Weltbetrachtung – ja, aber eine artistische.” (WZM, 1048, (1885–1886))

(An anti-metaphysical world-view – yes, but an artistic one.)

13) Eco, *Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, 24; and Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, IV, 7.

But this is an impossibility. Because the aesthetic is a beginning of the revelation of the divine, and the aesthetic is essential to the artistic, a view is *anti*-artistic to the extent to which it is anti-metaphysical. Indeed, the suppression of metaphysics leads to the suppression of art or the production of the arbitrary and aesthetically worthless under the title “art,” as many twentieth century offerings showed. Indeed, Nietzsche’s extension of the artistic from the *cultural* to the *humanist* and from the humanist to the *cosmic* anticipates the dogma that anything can be art, and so the essential failure of twentieth-century art as an aesthetic (no matter how *conceptually* interesting). Nietzsche’s famous or infamous claim:

- (2.4) “Die Kunst macht den Anblick des Lebens erträglich, dadurch daß sie den Flordes unreinen Denkens über dasselbe legt,”¹⁴
(Art makes the sight of life bearable by laying the veil of unclear thinking over it),
[“unreinen”: (impure), (unclean), (dirty), (foul), (smutty), (obscene), or (out of tune)]

if not overtly logically inconsistent with this claim, two sections later:

- (2.5) “Die Kunst macht dem Denker das Herz schwer,”¹⁵
(Art makes the thinker’s heart heavy,)

is at least in tension with it. Can the thinker’s heart be made heavy by art and his life made bearable by art at the same time? Perhaps. There can be mixed emotions. The thinker’s condition is both exacerbated and ameliorated by art. This is not impossible but it does stand in need of explanation, explanation Nietzsche does not provide. The answer is to recognize, not a distinction between the beautiful and the artistic, because if there were no beauty there would be no art, but that a particular work of art can be a great work of art without being beautiful, for example, Picasso’s *Guernica*.

Nietzsche’s claim in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* that the artist has “remained childlike” (ein Kind oder ein Jüngling geblieben)¹⁶ and art is the “child-

14) Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, 151.

15) Ibid., 153.

16) Ibid., 147.

ishness of reason" (Kinderei der Vernunft)¹⁷ are reminiscent of Christ's saying that to enter the Kingdom of Heaven we must become as little children. Because the aesthetic is a part dis-closure of the spiritual, and the apprehension of the spiritual requires de-conditioning, the artist or the person capable of aesthetic appreciation, must be free of preconception; like a child.

Nietzsche's claim that art

(2.6) "beschwichtigen und hielten nur vorläufig, nur für den Augenblick; sie halten sogar die Menschen ab, an einer wirklichen Verbesserung ihrer Zustände zu arbeiten,"¹⁸

(heals and smooths only temporarily, and holds man back from working toward a genuine betterment of his condition,)

holds in a society in which art is compartmentalized, provides a temporary relief from drudgery; a society in which art is closeted in galleries because the architecture, the statuary, the street furniture, the public art, is so soullessly utilitarian. On the other hand, in a synthesis of the functional and the aesthetic, for example in some architecture or engineering, precisely the opposite of Nietzsche's claim holds: there is an incentive to empirical betterment. The aesthetic is revelatory of the divine, so is a route to the genuine betterment of the human condition. Art *per se* has little to do with thought, cloudy or clear. Art makes translucent the veil of the empirical and discloses the metaphysical through it.

Nietzsche says that

(2.7) "Der Künstler [...] glaubt an Götter und Dämonen, durch-seelt die Natur, haßt die Wissenschaft"¹⁹

(The artist [...] believes in gods and demons, ensouls nature and hates science)

17) Ibid., 162.

18) Ibid., 148.

19) Ibid., 159. My ellipses.

Nietzsche assumes that all this is undesirable. He bears some of the ideological responsibility for the contemporary worship of science, even or especially by those with little or no scientific training. Science is not fundamental. Science presupposes metaphysics, metaphysics it cannot explain.

Nietzsche speaks of

(2.8)

Unsere langsamen Zeiten. – So empfinden alle Künstler und Menschen der “Werke,” die mütterliche Art Mensch: immer glauben sie, bei jedem Abschnitte ihres Lebens – den ein Werk jedesmal abschneidet –, schon am Ziele selbst zu sein, immer wurden sie den Tod geduldig entgegennehmen, mit dem Gefühl: “dazu sind wir reif.” Dies ist nicht der Ausdruck der Ermüdung – vielmehr der einer gewissen herbstlichen Sonnigkeit und Milde, welche jedesmal das Werk selbst, das Reifgewordensein eines Werks, bei seinem Urheber hinterläßt. Da verlangsamt sich das *tempo* des Lebens und wird dick und honig-flüssig – bis zu langen Fermaten, bis zum Glauben an *die* lange Fermate.²⁰

(*Our Slow Periods.* – It is thus that artists feel, and all men of “works,” the maternal species of men: they always believe at every chapter of their life – a work always makes a chapter –, that they have now reached the goal itself, they would always patiently accept death with the feeling: “we are ripe for it.” This is not the expression of exhaustion – but rather that of a certain autumnal sunniness and mildness, which the work itself, the maturing of the work, always leaves behind in its originator. Then the *tempo* of life slows down turns thick and flows with honey into long pauses, into the belief in *the* long pause.)

The insight in this passage stands in need of theological explanation. The reason why the artist who has finished the artwork feels ready for death is that true art is a spiritual strengthening. As Nietzsche says, this preparedness for death should not

20) Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 376.

be confused with exhaustion, nor is it just a feeling of accomplishment. The “slowness” that Nietzsche identifies is conducive to the revelatory of absolute stillness, the infinite, the permanent, the indestructible present. The artist who partakes of this, knowingly or not, has insight into eternity.

As an empirical or historical claim, it is false that:

- (2.9) “Die Kunst erhebt ihr Haupt, wo die Religionen nachlassen.”²¹
(Art raises its head where religions abate.)
[“nachlassen”: (relax their hold), (recede), (let go)]

On the contrary, the increase in secularism in the twentieth century was at least correlated with and, arguably, caused a degeneration in what counts as art to the point that anything can be art, which is to say, nothing is art. The highest art is expressive of spirituality: the Gothic cathedrals of Western Christendom in the high Middle Ages; the intricate carvings of Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic architecture and statuary; the choral music of Bach, Handel, and Mozart; the painting and sculpture of the Renaissance which, although a revival of classical forms, is overwhelmingly spiritual in subject matter. Here the criteria for “highest” are aesthetic: the complexity, the detail, the balance, the emotional impact, the absorption of interest, the genius of execution, and consequent difficulty of replication, all accompanied by not just the bearing of repeated exposure but the invitation to and the reward of repeated scrutiny.

When Nietzsche speaks of “The world as a work of art that gives rise to itself” (*Die Welt als ein sich selbst gebärendes Kunstwerk*) (WZM, 796, (1885–1886)), he is right in his insight that the world is a work of art but fails to realize that this logically presupposes a metaphysical distinction within what is, between artist and artwork, because the concept of something that gives rise to itself is not coherent:

- (1) If x gives rise to y then x predates y .
- (2) If x gives rise to x then x predates x . (from (1) by substitution)
- (3) If x predates x then there is a time at which x both exists and does not exist. (from (1))

21) Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, 150.

- (4) It is false that there is any time at which x both exists and does not exist.
- (5) x does not predate x . (from (4) by *modus tollens*)
- (6) x does not give rise to x .

(1) is true if causes which “give rise” to their effects predate them. (4) is true because

$$\exists t (\exists x t \ \& \ \neg \exists x t)$$

is contradictory. Coherence may be lent to Nietzsche’s words if they mean something equivalent to: “What is, whatever is, changes itself artistically, or with a result which is art.” However, this is metaphysically possible only if what is, whatever is, is (to use an archaic terminology) both agent and patient, or admits of a distinction between whole *qua* cause and whole *qua* effect. This is precisely what theists mean by “God” and “creation.” God and creation jointly exhaust what is. What is *qua* creator is called “God.” What is *qua* created is called “creation” or, as Nietzsche puts it, “a work of art.” Nietzsche only has the first half of this picture:

- (1) Beings, and their becoming, are a work of art.
- (2) Being, as the being of God, is their artist.

One might accept Nietzsche’s claim that:

(2.8) “die “Berschönerung” ist eine Folge der erhöhten Kraft” (WZM, 800, (March–June 1888))

(Beautification is a consequence of increased power)

[(becoming more beautiful is a consequence of enhanced strength)]

so long as this strength is a *spiritual* strength; the strength to shed conditioning despite opprobrium, despite the weight of scientific and pseudo-scientific ideology, the strength to argue for the true not just the pragmatic, the expedient, the profitable. This is the strength of the monk, the saint, the intellectual who writes and thinks against the grain.

The claim that

- (2.9) “wer nicht geben kann, empfängt auch Nichts” (WZM, 801, (1887; rev. 1888))
(who cannot give, also receives nothing)

is not only consistent with the Christian doctrine “As you sow, so shall you reap” and Buddhist teachings about karma, but arguably entailed by them. When he says that the sober, the weary, the exhausted, the dried up can receive nothing from art, a distinction needs to be drawn between the kind of receiving which is a reward, and the kind which fulfils a need. Nietzsche assimilates these, so fails to appreciate that the spiritual need of “the weary, the exhausted, the dried up” can in some measure be met by art.

Despite his evangelical atheism, Nietzsche comes close to spiritual insight when he says:

- (2.10) “‘Schönheit’ ist deshalb für den Künstler etwas außer aller Rangordnung, weil in der Schönheit Gegensätze gebändigt sind.” (WZM, 803, (1883–1888))
(‘Beauty’ is for the artist something outside all orders of rank and in beauty opposites are tamed.)

In many religions, “God” is the name either of the unity of opposites or the ineffable ground which makes that unity possible. God has or is “power over opposites” and “God” is the “highest sign of power.” The tension which is absent or released is the dialectical dependence between opposites which generates change and difference. This delights the earthly and the divine artists’ will to power because it is beyond the dualisms of the empirical world including, as understood ordinarily and by Nietzsche “beyond good and evil.” Here Nietzsche unconsciously concedes the dependence of the Dionysian on the Apollonian in his aesthetics. Beauty is “outside all orders of rank” and “in beauty opposites are tamed” so, because Becoming depends upon opposites, Beauty is beyond becoming. Beauty is beyond the Dionysian. Beauty is Apollonian.

Although very widely believed as a fragment of pseudo-scientific ideology, it is almost wholly false that the beautiful has only a biological value or function (WZM, 804, (1887)). The correlations between the beautiful and the life-preserving, and the ugly and the life-threatening are not close. The beautiful might be life threat-

ening, not just because a particularly beautiful face might belong to a dangerous person, or a beautiful waterfall possess a treacherous bank, or a beautiful berry be poisonous, but because the whole preoccupation with beauty is a distraction from the urgent pragmatics of evasion or combat. The ugly might be life sustaining not just because the aggressive sergeant major's advice might save your life in action, or the uninspiringly prepared cabbage nourish you, or the boring logarithms sharpen your wits, but because there is such a thing as fascination with the ugly, which allows an evaluation of the unusual as a benefit, a threat, or neither. If we construe "beautiful" in a very broad and popular sense, to include whatever we find pleasurable, then Nietzsche's biological reductionism is at least as implausible. Wine, rich dinners, and smoking, although pleasures, are not in the biological sense "life-enhancing."

Nietzsche asks:

- (2.11) "Wurde irgend ein Ring in der Ganzen Kette von Kunst und Wissenschaft ehlen, wenn da Weib, wenn das Werk des Weibes darin fehlte?" (WZM, 817, (1887, rev. 1888))
(Would any link be missing from the whole chain of art and science if woman, if the work of woman, were missing from it?)

The mystical is essentially passive, receptive. The artistic is essentially mystical in this respect, so the artistic is essentially passive, receptive. Therefore, everything would be missing. Many of the world's greatest mystics have been women; Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avalon, Katherine Hilderburg. Where would we be if we neglected their insights and did philosophy with a hammer? We would be *where we are now*.

One might endorse Nietzsche's claim that

- (2.12) "Man ist um den Preis Künstler, das man Das, was alle Nichtkünstler 'Form' nennen, als Inhalt, als 'die Sache selbst' empfindet." (WZM, 818, (1887–1888))
(One is an artist at the price of experiencing that which all non-artists call 'form' as content, as 'the thing itself'.)

The artist reverses form and content and so, in a sense, turns the world upside down. However, the topsy-turvy world is the world of metaphysics which is not a different

world but what is, understood in a metaphysical not only an empirical way. The key to the aesthetic is the apprehension of the infinite in the finite.

Nietzsche thinks the artistic is the projection of perfection, the “perfection of existence” (*Daseins-Vollendung*), the “deification of existence” (*Vergöttlichung des Daseins*) (WZM, 821, (1888)). If we reverse Nietzsche’s anti-realism but retain his theological vocabulary, we obtain a truth. Art is the *disclosure* of the divine through the exposure of some limits of the empirical. It is *revelation* of perfection. A pessimistic art is indeed impossible, as Nietzsche says, but for a completely different reason. Art is the disclosure of the Good. The aesthetic is a portal to the divine. In aesthetic experience, one begins to see things as they are: infused by the glow of the divine.

That Nietzsche simply assumes anti-realism about beauty is characteristic of someone who has never truly apprehended beauty. Perceiving a beautiful object is not sufficient for perceiving the beauty of that object. I can perceive *that* an object is beautiful. I can perceive the beauty of the object. But the apprehension of its beauty is not another sense perception of it. The beauty of the object is not an extra empirical quality of it that could be sensed. Nonetheless, there is experience of beauty. It follows that aesthetic experience is not sense experience, even if sense experience is necessary for aesthetic experience. What is aesthetic experience?

In the experience of an object as beautiful, the aesthetic *pervades* sense experience. Experiencing something as an object of aesthetic appreciation entails sensing not just its “suchness,” its detail, and its givenness in a way that is to some degree shorn of pre-conception, but its pervasion by spirituality. Aesthetic experience belongs to unconditioned experience. Means to end thinking and thinking in generalities are obstacles to aesthetic experience. They are *an-aesthetics*. An-aesthetics are obstacles to an aesthetics.

Nevertheless, there can be the beauty of the exquisite appropriateness of an object to its function. Even the function of an object can be beautiful if it is apprehended in its own right. In ordinary day to day experience, we hardly perceive objects aesthetically because we sense only as much as is necessary for our practical purposes. There is no *a priori* obstacle to the apprehension of non-physical objects as beautiful. A logical proof might exhibit elegance, economy, and pleasing precision and be a source of aesthetic delight. A number, for example the infinite number Aleph Zero, might have an awesomely beautiful role in the number system. Someone might have a beau-

tiful thought as opposed to the thought of some beautiful thing, a thought perhaps beautiful in its intricacy and connotation.

Although aesthetic judgement involves the intellect, and although the Greek etymology of “aesthetic,” “pertaining to the senses,” suggests that the aesthetic is empirical rather than rational, aesthetic apprehension transcends the distinction between rationalism and empiricism. Indeed, the failure of philosophical aesthetics is due to an oscillation between rationalist and empiricist solutions. Aesthetic apprehension is unconditioned. It is a disclosure of presence, presence presupposed by both thought and experience as ordinarily conceived. It is partly revelatory of the work of God. In short, aesthetics belongs to revealed theology. This explains at once the objectivity of beauty, the fact that there are degrees of beauty, the fact that we can be right or wrong in our aesthetic judgments and the fact that the aesthetic is not part of the commonplace. There is no serious projectivist aesthetics because projectivists are far from realizing beauty’s dependence on the divine. Nietzsche’s famous remark in *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, shorn of its reductivist “nur” (only), is ironically insightful:

(2.13) “[...] nur als *ästhetisches Phänomen* ist das Dasein und die Welt ewig gerechtfertigt.”²²
([...] existence and the world are only eternally *justified* as an *aesthetic phenomenon*.)

We can bear the world as an aesthetic phenomenon because that is a glimpse of the infinite through the finite, a glimpse of the world as divine creation.

22) Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, 5. My ellipses.

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