

Death, Wonder, and Language in Nietzsche

by

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*For Johanna*

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## Abbreviations of Nietzsche's Works

### Nietzsche's Early Period (1871-1879)

- BT** *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) Trans. Ronald Speirs. Cambridge: New York, 2008.
- TL** "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense" (1873) Trans. Ronald Speirs. Cambridge: New York, 2008.
- UM** *Untimely Meditations* (1873-76) Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: New York, 2008.

### Middle Period (1880-1882)

- HH** *Human, All Too Human* (1878) Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: New York, 2007.
- WS** *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (1879) Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: New York, 2007.
- GS** *The Gay Science* (1882) Trans. Josefine Naukhoff. Cambridge: New York, 2009.

### Late Period (1883-1889)

- Z** *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1885) Trans. Adrian Del Caro. Cambridge: New York, 2008.
- BGE** *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) Trans. Walter Kaufmann. Random House: New York, 2000.
- GM** *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887) Trans. Carol Diethe. Cambridge: New York, 2008.
- TI** *Twilight of the Idols* (1888) Trans. Judith Norman. Cambridge: New York, 2009.
- AC** *The Anti-Christ* (1888) Trans. Judith Norman. Cambridge: New York, 2009.
- EH** *Ecce Homo* (1888) Trans. Judith Norman. Cambridge: New York, 2009.

## Introduction

This thesis sets out to analyze Friedrich Nietzsche's ontology of language. Nietzsche is at once a philosopher and an artist. His writing is polemical, severe, analytical, and playful. In one text, Nietzsche is scientist; in another, he is a poet. Above all, Nietzsche's writing is rigorous: "Anyone who knows how to breathe the air of my writings will know that it is the air of high places, a *strong* air. You need to be made for it or you will catch a cold."<sup>1</sup> The difficulties of this thesis to write, and to read, are numerous: how to analysis Nietzsche's theory of language conveyed in his own poetic yet philosophical prose? How to interpret his concepts that are already intended as interpretations? How does one read Nietzsche? How does one *interpret* Nietzsche? Over the course of this thesis, the fruit of Nietzsche's thinking began to ripen and drop from the text to the ground, as it were, and each carried multiple seeds for planting; these seeds were possible interpretations within one fruit or idea. Some germinated in hearty lines of interpretation, while others were already rotten or soon withered. Thus, this thesis—and any study of Nietzsche—is an assemblage of overlapping, crisscrossing, twisting, and occasionally exhausted lines of interpretation. Some of the patterns these lines form might be poetic, while others might appear

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<sup>1</sup> *EH*, p. 72.

as overly rigid or insufficiently analytic. The moment one turns toward Nietzsche in order to justify making excuses for obscurity, complexity, and incompetency, Nietzsche turns away indifferently: You need to be made for it or you will catch a cold. Thus, this thesis maintains the chance that it took: in continuously variable analyses of his writing, Nietzsche's concept of "being" transforms the everyday play of chance into a language of individuality and experience.

The first chapter sets in motion four seemingly disparate notions in Nietzsche that unfold, either explicitly or quietly, in the interpretations that develop over the course of Chapters II and III. Section I outlines Nietzsche's theory of the origins of language as a collectivizing attempt to appropriate the threat of meaninglessness in existence posed by the disorder and chaos of the "state of nature," or the war of all against all (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). Section II maintains that the notion of "grammar" and the concept of "history" are co-extensive and simultaneously usurp and conceal the production of meaning in the notion of "memorials." Section III contends the catholic purview of "reason" with the notions of "dread" and the "promise" that Nietzsche demonstrates bear on the development of memory in Derrida's later notion of the "psychical machine." Overall, Chapter I seeks to introduce prominent concepts and concerns in Nietzsche that demonstrate the philosophical nature of his thinking,

and which spur both analytic and literary interpretations of different yet relating concepts in Chapters II and III.

Chapter II maintains the essential hermeneutic nature of Nietzsche's philosophy of history supported by his notions of "consciousness" and "maybe" that begin an existential ontology of history in what I term the notion of "wonder." Section I emphasizes the interrelation of Nietzsche's ideas of "consciousness," "communication," and "language." Section II debates the idealized notion of the "subject" in discourse with Nietzsche's notion of the "dangerous maybe." Section III corroborates the notion of man as a "place of questioning" set forth by the French thinker Maurice Blanchot in the Cold War era with the notion of "wonder" put at risk by Jacques Derrida's "exposition" of the "archive" ("exposition" is a dangerous word to use to describe Derrida's analysis of the "archive," and the reasons for this will be made clear later on). The fourth and final Section emphasizes the ontological implications in Nietzsche's idea of "neutrality," which in turn maintains the trans-historical configuration of Nietzsche as thinker and Nietzsche as writer. Chapter II contests the marginal treatment of the ontological possibilities Nietzsche provides and provokes in his language (and his thinking about language), which serves as an entry point into Chapter III.



Chapter III takes on the issue of “death” in the everydayness of the question of “being.” Section I emphasizes Nietzsche’s notion of “selfishness” in order to expose the philosophical history of his conception of “truth” and the notion of the “forbidden.” Section II stresses the exigency of “being” in the persistence and continuation of the collectivizing “thought of death.” Finally, Section III correlates the notions of “woman,” “identity,” and “chance” in Nietzsche’s writing and their ontological implications in the signification of “being” in Nietzsche’s notion of the “real man.” A conclusion follows in order to stress (and therefore to resist concluding) the everydayness of Nietzsche’s language and its potential for carrying meaning beyond philosophical discourse and into the praxis of reading, writing, and labor.

Nietzsche’s thought poses serious questions to almost any field of humanities research (and indirectly to formal scientific research). Given the logistical and conceptual scope of this thesis, an almost unaccountable amount of theoretical material exists to further evaluate its claims, arguments, and inconsistencies. First, the content of the thesis either wholly omits or fails to sustain discussion of many of Nietzsche’s prominent contributions in intellectual history: his ideas on nihilism, asceticism, tragedy, nobility, *ressentiment* and revenge, bad conscious, good and evil, Christianity, among many others, are absent in the thesis’ text. Moreover, a number of topics of

profound interest to post-Nietzsche scholars and readers have been left out of consideration: the Nazification and de-Nazification of Nietzsche's thought, the concept of justice and politics, music, the "free spirit," and science, just to name a few. A plethora of scholarly analyses on Nietzsche fill the shelves of the best university libraries. The logistical constraints of the thesis project and, perhaps most crucially, the intrinsically constricting curiosities of its author are responsible for the sheer number in omissions of fascinating literature on Nietzsche's complex and transforming thought.

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The content of this thesis has been greatly influenced by a handful of French and German thinkers. The French "post-structuralist" philosophers and theorists of the twentieth century whose interpretations of Nietzsche have figured critically into the thesis and who are cited throughout it are Maurice Blanchot (b. 1907), Gilles Deleuze (b. 1925), Michel Foucault (b. 1926), and Jacques Derrida (b. 1930). The pivotal German thinker in Nietzsche studies is Martin Heidegger (b. 1889). Heidegger's tome entitled *Nietzsche* is cited by all of the listed French thinkers in their published works on Nietzsche. Thus, the French interaction with Heidegger's analysis of Nietzsche has produced a body of texts that are treated in this thesis as authoritative points of departure for its own lines of interpretation ("authoritative" to the extent that Nietzsche's philosophy allows).

Given the role these thinkers and their interpretations of Nietzsche play in the thesis' content, I have found it necessary to introduce briefly their general projects in intellectual history and the specific work each has done on Nietzsche. I have provided the dates of publication for their work on Nietzsche, should the reader consider the chronology and historical connectivity between discursive interpretations to be of interest, since this thesis is a limited extension of that historical "chain."

Maurice Blanchot (d. 2003) worked in several genres of writing, namely fiction, literary criticism, and theory. His contributive work on Nietzsche is the essay entitled "Reflections on Nihilism" in his book, *The Infinite Conversation* (1969). Blanchot concentrates on the form of Nietzsche's writing and its relation to a unique form of speech that Nietzsche introduced into philosophical discourse. For Blanchot, as among the other French thinkers, Nietzsche's writing is fragmentary and non-systematic. Blanchot focuses on the "edges" of Nietzsche's "fragmentary speech," wherein the thread of "nihilism" dangerously presents itself to the modern era. What Blanchot finds in Nietzsche's fragmentary and fragmenting thought is a "call for rigor," which he suggests is Nietzsche's "greatness."<sup>2</sup>

Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris, Vincennes St.

Denis, Gilles Deleuze (d. 1995) established himself primarily as a

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<sup>2</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 151.

theorist in the fields of literature, philosophy, the history of philosophy, and cinema. Deleuze contributed significantly to Nietzsche scholarship with the publication of *Nietzsche and Philosophy* in 1962. The overarching concern of the work is “what Nietzsche calls becoming”<sup>3</sup> and the form of modern philosophy as a critique that Kant had not executed.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, Deleuze emphasizes that the Nietzschean form of critique is primarily concerned with “evaluation” as a mode of being.<sup>5</sup> The question of being that emerges in the Nietzschean critique changes the form of the question that posits being; namely, Deleuze cites the form of the question of being in Nietzsche not in the traditional and metaphysical sense, “what is...?” but rather, “which one?”<sup>6</sup> This transformation of the question of being effectively recasts the concept of essence in terms of the plurality of what “one” is, as opposed to the unity of metaphysical essence or being. Interpreting Nietzsche’s philosophy as an “essential plurality” became the necessary prerequisite for engaging with Nietzsche in the post-World War II and Cold War era. For Deleuze, essence is always “sense” and “value,” the conceptions of which Nietzsche introduced in philosophy. This introduction was, for Deleuze, “Nietzsche’s most

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<sup>3</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), xii.

<sup>4</sup> Deleuze, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Deleuze, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Deleuze, p. 75-76.

general project.”<sup>7</sup> In emphasizing the concepts of sense and value, Deleuze embarks on a systematic interpretation of Nietzsche’s philosophy in which he establishes a unique yet highly analytical terminology of “forces” to articulate the complexity of Nietzsche’s idea of becoming. What is crucial to Deleuze’s conception of force is that it is not definitively physical or conceptual, but instead always connotes a coalescence of critique and interpretation in the critical element of evaluation and becoming—namely, difference and the differential element, respectively. As the differential element of critique, becoming affirms evaluation as the space of interpretation, effectively differentiation, which serves Deleuze’s more general project of combating the “modern conformism” of “a theory of values.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, Deleuze brings to the fore the magnitude of Nietzsche’s differential thought for philosophical discourse after Kant and Hegel.

The historical theorist Michel Foucault (d. 1984) examined the relation between social practices and scientific disciplines in the production of knowledge, particularly in terms of the institutionalization and ordering of knowledge into disciplines.<sup>9</sup> Foucault focused on several prominent subjects of Nietzsche’s thought: history, genealogy, tragedy, and the production of reason are

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<sup>7</sup> Deleuze, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Deleuze, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Press, 1984), 4.

concepts at play in Foucault's epistemological project on reason and madness.<sup>10</sup> In his most explicit engagement with Nietzsche, Foucault's essay entitled "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1971) situates the concept of history in terms of Nietzschean genealogy. Foucault posits genealogy in opposition to the search for an essential origin; such an origin is typically associated with the ideal of truth and the metaphysical essence of being. Thus, Foucault interprets genealogy along the same lines as both Blanchot and Deleuze: Nietzsche's philosophy is properly taken as an essential plurality. Accordingly, a genealogical treatment of history occurs on multiple registers: time, force, chance, and language. First, Foucault suggests, the "origin" is expressed as "descent," a complex of past events and accidents.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, the origin, as descent, occurs as a "place of confrontation" with the exteriority of contending forces—the confrontation "appears" in the locus of descent; this is "emergence."<sup>12</sup> In epistemological terms, the emergence of this history, which is to say knowledge, is also identity, for it is "historical consciousness," and "the subject of knowledge."<sup>13</sup> However, there can only be a subject if knowledge is imposed as an ordered "stage of forces" concealing its contrivance by appearing natural. This is collective knowledge, and it threatens to

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the history of the production of reason, see Michel Foucault, *History of Madness* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Foucault, p. 82.

<sup>12</sup> Foucault, p. 84.

<sup>13</sup> Foucault, p. 95.

dissolve the individual who maintains the knowledge of dissolution, which Foucault terms “the will to knowledge.” In his analysis of Nietzschean genealogy, Foucault articulates one of Nietzsche’s central suspicions: violence is the historical element of power. Thus, the difference essential to plurality is a form of violence, a thread of interpretation that Jacques Derrida carries further several years later.

The late Jacques Derrida is most commonly known as the founder of deconstructionism. Derrida’s engagement with Nietzsche takes its most direct form with the publication of *Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles*, in 1978. The title of the work is revealing, for it not only acknowledges the plurality that Nietzsche can be said to be, as the plural of style and Nietzsche as a possession of styles implies, but also hints at a necessary violence in the differentiating movement of the Nietzschean critique. “Spurs” signifies multiple provocations, jabs, and stimulations behind alterations of the pace, continuity, and systematic unfolding of traditional styles of writing and thought. Like Blanchot, Deleuze, and Foucault, Derrida capitalizes on the differencing act of plural interpretation that the Nietzschean critique instigates, and he concentrates, like Nietzsche, on value as an order or hierarchy established by the systematic oppositions in “Platonism” and metaphysics, which presuppose an axiomatic unity of essence.<sup>14</sup> However, Derrida also addresses difference in terms of “distance,”

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<sup>14</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 81.

thereby ushering in a phenomenological dimension of critique while expanding its applicability to phenomenological “objects,” which became, effectively, phenomenological signs of distance in a non-signifying language of interpretation—namely, deconstruction. Thus, Derrida carried the Nietzschean critique into a phenomenology of language.

The primary interpretations of Nietzsche’s philosophy incorporated into this thesis are those of Maurice Blanchot, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida. All of their writing on Nietzsche was published in or after the Cold War. The common thread linking all their thinking is the essential plurality of Nietzsche’s philosophy. Accordingly, in the Cold War era, Nietzsche became important to the existential context of thought that faced dissolution. Speaking narrowly, these four thinkers continued and expanded Nietzsche’s project to differentiate and evaluate philosophical discourse so as to multiply the possibilities of its value for the future.

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Through an analysis of both Nietzsche’s writings and the interpretations of the twentieth-century thinkers who appropriated his thought, this thesis sets out to analyze the question of being in Nietzsche’s ontology of language. The plurality of Nietzsche’s styles is an impetus to interpret that bears on the intentionality of being conferred by language. Consequently, there is more than one



language in Nietzsche, and so this thesis treats language as a multiple hermeneutics. Language appears as a symptom of paranoia and reconciliation with the state of nature (Chapter I); as consciousness (Chapter II); and as play of chance and death (Chapter III). To begin: to differentiate is to become the differential and silencing hermeneutic that resonates with being.

## Chapter I

### Self-Surveillance: Reason and Mnemonic Suppression

**Abstract:** Chapter I takes into consideration four seemingly disparate notions in Nietzsche's writing. Section I concentrates on the correlation of man and language in order to demonstrate the idiosyncratic symptom of paranoia in man stimulated by the imagery of the "state of nature." Section II emphasizes the coextension of grammar and the concept of history, which manifests in the notion of "memorial." Section III maintains Nietzsche's notion of the "promise" as the instituting act of "reason," which functions as a "psychical machine" produced by punishment.

### The Paranoid Animal: Man and Language in the State of Nature

Nietzsche's writing incites in the reader a sense of the *unheimlich*, or uncanny. His earliest exposition of the phenomenon of human language in nature tacitly communicates an unconscious facet in the psychical constitution of man: paranoia.<sup>15</sup> Strangely, Nietzsche rarely, if ever, engages this concept directly. Instead, he infers it by situating human existence in terms of a prominent notion in post-Renaissance intellectual history: the state of nature. Most closely aligned with the Hobbesian conception, Nietzsche begins an examination of the origins of language in terms of the state of nature defined as a "war of all against all" (the *bellum omnium contra omnes*).<sup>16</sup> As the context of explicitly violent discord (wherein, according to Hobbes, the life of the human animal is "nasty, brutish,

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<sup>15</sup> Leo Bersani offers an etymology of the term "paranoia": "*Paranoia* is a Greek word designating a distracted or deranged mind." Leo Bersani, "Pynchon, Paranoia, and Literature," (*Representations* no. 25, 1989), 63.

<sup>16</sup> *TL*, p. 255.

and short”), the state of nature is the scene of emergence for both “man” and language in Nietzsche’s thought. In terms of the parabolic structure of Nietzsche’s state of nature presented in his essay, “Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense,” the notions of man and language are manifest symptoms of the intrinsic violence of existence.

Together, these symptoms reflect the conscious diagnosis of the war of all against all as a state, or context, by the individual who seeks an escape route.

Nietzsche dissociates the notion of man from the notion of individuality, because “man” is the form of the individual’s appropriation from the state of nature by language. Consequently, the difficulty Nietzsche raises for a substantive treatment of man in modern discourse is his terminology. The terminology for “man” that Nietzsche employs is notoriously slippery, for on the surface he uses “man,” “human being,” “individual,” and “one” interchangeably. Nietzsche’s meaning for each of these terms is inextricably contextual, and this inextricability bears significantly on his theory of language. Possibly the best example—which I have already referenced and to which I will turn again in this chapter—of Nietzsche’s deployment of seemingly interchangeable terms that on closer inspection can only come to mean something strictly in their context, comes from the

posthumously published essay, “Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense,”<sup>17</sup> written in 1873:

To the extent that the individual wants to maintain himself against other individuals, in the natural state of things he has used the intellect mostly for dissimulation alone; but since man, out of necessity as well as boredom, wants to live in a society or herd, he needs a peace settlement and he tries to make the most brutal *bellum omnium contra omnes* vanish from his world.”<sup>18</sup>

In this example, the meaning of the “individual” is distinct from the meaning of “man.” On the one hand, the “individual” is a thing in nature and is defined by the exigency of survival under the duress of other individuals. On the other hand, “man” is the definitive relation between the individual and a collection of individuals. “Man” is not merely the human animal struggling to survive; he is also a perspective of that struggle, in that he desires to be part of a collective struggle. In order to be “man,” the individual “needs a peace settlement.” In Nietzsche, “man” is the desire to agree on the need for a “peace settlement,” and is, therefore, the intimated object of agreement. Thus, Nietzsche’s “man” is not Nietzsche’s “individual.” The former is an empty vessel for agreement—language—whereas the latter is an absence of accord, or a silence.

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<sup>17</sup> Several translations of the essay’s title [über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinn] exist: “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense,” “On Truth and Lie in a Non-Moral Sense,” and “On Truth and Lie in a Trans-Moral Sense,” to name a few. The basic project that the title reveals, regardless of the translation, is a scientific dissection of truth based on the empirical relativity of sounds (words) that become rationally significant as concepts in the creation of a system of meaning known as “language.”

<sup>18</sup> *TL*, p. 254-255.

For Nietzsche, language is the *mise-en-scène* of man; through language, man is symbolically filled with the meaning he lacked as an individual in the state of nature. In post-Renaissance intellectual history, particularly in the political thinking and social ethics of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, the attempt to appropriate the individual from the state of nature manifests in the “social contract,” the agreement to both honor and politically/legally authorize a certain mode of conduct as a member of the collective. In Nietzsche, however, the initiation of the social contract is the appropriation of the individual through language. This appropriation takes the form of the “concept”:

Let us now think in particular how concepts are formed: every word immediately becomes a concept precisely because it is not intended to serve as a reminder of the unique, entirely individualized primal experience to which it owes its existence, but because it has to fit at one and the same time countless more or less similar cases which, strictly speaking, are never equal or, in other words, are always unequal. Every concept comes into being through the equation of non-equal things.<sup>19</sup>

Nietzsche relies wholly on the difference between “non-equal things”—individuals—in his deconstructive analysis of concepts and, more broadly, language. For Nietzsche, every difference, which is to say every “thing,” is the “unique” and “entirely individualized” consequence of perception. The “primal experience” of perception is through and through phenomenological, especially if it is understood

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<sup>19</sup> *TL*, p. 256.

in the early twentieth-century terms of Husserl's phenomenology that established consciousness as the "rapport with the object [the 'thing' that is perceived]." For Nietzsche, the "thing" is the phenomenological difference that is, on the one hand, the domain of the individual and, on the other hand, the object of the concept that erases that difference. Therefore, the concept is the territory of the collective in individual experience.

Nietzsche understood the concept not only as the symbolic meaning of the word (symbol) but also as the individual agreement, in using language, to become the symbol of agreement indebted to, and therefore, possessed by language. Nietzsche's initial engagement with language is generally concerned with semiology, the study of signs and symbols in hermeneutic discourse. In modern linguistic terms that came into being through the work of Saussure two decades after Nietzsche's death in 1900, the difference between "signifier" (the mental image) and "signified" (the concept) appears as Nietzsche's early point of departure into his exploration of language formation. This exploration is oriented around two questions: "Are designations [words] and things [objects] congruent?"<sup>20</sup> "Is language the adequate expression of all realities?"<sup>21</sup> The relation between word (in semiology, the "sign") and object (the mental image produced by the concept whose sign/symbol is the word) that Nietzsche problematizes would

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<sup>20</sup> *WEN*, p. 255.

<sup>21</sup> *WEN*, p. 255.

become in the first half of the twentieth century the instituting question of linguistics that was in turn fundamental to the movement of structuralism. Whether or not Nietzsche is a proto-structuralist (like Giambattista Vico has been argued to have been) deserves further consideration. However, it is sufficient to suggest, at this point, that the problem of meaning, or “congruency,” in language marks an essential source of questioning and suspicion in Nietzsche’s thought. Furthermore, and perhaps essentially, the distinction that Nietzsche posits between language and “realities” implies the possibility that language is a particular reality in a multiplicity of possible others. The question then becomes, does language limit in its ‘inadequacy’ the possibility of accessing, or experiencing, realities it cannot present or express? Is man the “real” object of language?

For Nietzsche, the concept of man is meaningless if its meaning is taken to be essentially beyond the bounds of language. Nietzsche’s engagement with semiology and the problem of meaning begins as a phenomenology. For Nietzsche, the objects of perception are never external to the act of perceiving, although what is perceived may occur externally to the consciousness of actively perceiving (the awareness that one is actively perceiving something):

The diversity of languages immediately reveals that the word and the thing are not completely and necessarily congruent, but that the word is a symbol. But what does the word

symbolize? Surely nothing but representations, be they conscious or, in the majority of cases, unconscious.<sup>22</sup>

In Nietzsche, the notion of essence signifies plurality. Thus, the essence of a word (sign), which is to say the essential object it designates, is a substantive multiplicity of non-verbal, non-linguistic representations. Thus, not only is there no essential object to be represented in language, but language itself is an interrelation of symbols, or words. Therefore, language is a symbolic translation of empirical perception into meaning. However, this is not a positive definition of language for Nietzsche. Instead, the translation of phenomenological representations into symbols reveals the absence of essential meaning in the very act of perceiving, let alone the act of naming. Therefore, Nietzsche's semiotic understanding of language denotes a problematic intersection of phenomenology and ontology. In Nietzsche, the "conscious" act of assigning symbols to phenomena is not intrinsically aligned or identical to the "unconscious" act of phenomenological assembling; thus, the congruency between knowing and experiencing can never be affirmed as true or essential. Profoundly, Nietzsche relished the incongruence between knowledge and experience. What provoked his suspicion was that the force of language, or the act of signifying, clandestinely erases (forgets) the incongruence, or difference. This erasure unveiled for Nietzsche an

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<sup>22</sup> *WEN*, p. 84.



unnerving image of paranoia in the consciousness of man—  
unconditioned grandeur.

In the broadest sense of the “juxtaposition between man *and* world” (Nietzsche’s italics),<sup>23</sup> Nietzsche perceived a supreme arrogance and vanity in the value and significance man traditionally assigned to himself and his place in the world: “*Vanitas vanitatum homo.*”<sup>24</sup> Nietzsche relentlessly criticized the transcendental status assigned to the concept of “man” in philosophy, which he understood as the “other” that the individual (in the state of nature) became in language. In Nietzsche, the vanity of man is inseparable from the ontological intentions of language, because language appears as the manifestation of man’s (illusory) ability to master the world to which he is seemingly juxtaposed:

The significance of language for the evolution of culture lies in this, that mankind set up in language a separate world beside the other world, a place it took so firmly set that, standing upon it, it could lift the rest of the world off its hinges and make itself master of it. To the extent that man has for long ages believed in the concepts and names of things as in *aeternae veritates* he has appropriated to himself that pride by which he raised himself above the animal: he really thought that in language he possessed knowledge of the world.<sup>25</sup>

Language solidifies the supposed juxtaposition between man and world. The certainty or “knowledge” of whether or not this juxtaposition can actually be said to exist is appropriated by language;

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<sup>23</sup> *GS*, p. 205.

<sup>24</sup> *HH*, p. 307. *Vanitas vanitatum homo*: man is the vanity of vanities.

<sup>25</sup> *HH*, p. 16.

and therefore, the possible similarity or identity of man and world is concealed by language, that “other world” and defining distinction between man and world, or man and animal. For Nietzsche, man is the animal made paranoid by the necessity of its boredom.

### **The Grammatical Moment of History and the Concept of Memory**

For Nietzsche, “history” begins when the human animal becomes man. Man begins, in turn, at the moment wherein he differentiates himself from animals by naming them. Therefore, in Nietzsche, the concept of history begins with the word. “What is a word?” Nietzsche queries in “Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense”; it is the “portrayal of a nerve stimulus in sounds.”<sup>26</sup> The strictly neurobiological origin of the word localizes the beginning of history for Nietzsche, because the word becomes the scene of difference in the act of naming. “We divide things by genders,” Nietzsche remarks, “designating trees as masculine and plants as feminine. What arbitrary transferences! How far flown beyond the canon of certainty!”<sup>27</sup> Together with the word, grammar co-establishes the difference in names by arbitrarily engendering each with a sex, or biological (seemingly natural) disposition. Regardless of the validity or contrivance of this disposition, the grammatical (structural)

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<sup>26</sup> *TL*, p. 256.

<sup>27</sup> *TL*, p. 256.

establishment of difference in words sets in motion the differentiating force between man and animal. In grammar, the foundation of differentiating, which is to say naming or identifying, is seemingly laid by the animal-become-man.

A substantiated exposition of Nietzsche's unique analytical contributions to the philosophy of history is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this Section. However, it is sufficient to suggest that the specificities of the three types of "history" Nietzsche introduces into the philosophy of history—antiquarian, monumental, and critical history—are based on the force of differentiation predicated on grammatical structure.<sup>28</sup> Michael Marder, the author of the article entitled "History, Memory, and Forgetting in Nietzsche and Derrida," which is particularly influential to the concerns about "history" and the relation between Nietzsche and Derrida in this thesis, outlines Nietzsche's distinction between the three modes of history:

It may seem odd that the unhistorical animal and the absolutely historical "antiquarian" being have something in common. Nonetheless, both share the same feature that determines the totality of their existence. This feature is indifference. The animal (and, to a greater extent, the plant) is incapable of either affirmation, or negation. Merely reacting to external stimuli, it passively accepts the given, in the etymological sense of the term (*accipere*, as a captive). Learning the "yes-saying" and "no-saying" is a function of differentiation that develops in the course of a non-antiquarian—critical or monumental—history.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> On Nietzsche's three forms of history, see Nietzsche's essay "On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life," *Untimely Meditations* (1876).

<sup>29</sup> Michael Marder, "History, Memory, and Forgetting in Nietzsche and Derrida," *Epoche* 9, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 138.

Although the implications of “yes-saying” and “no-saying” assume crucial significations in Nietzsche’s later critique of values (the principles of which are evaluation and revaluation),<sup>30</sup> the possibility of either as a “function of differentiation” unfolds grammatically as a mode of history (critical and monumental). In broad strokes, Nietzsche’s concept of history signifies modes of differentiation, all of which nod toward grammar. In the case of “indifference,” which defines the “absolutely historical ‘antiquarian’ being,” history assumes the form of difference peculiar to that between man and animal. Marder conveys this difference as the form of the animal: “in his discussion of animality, Nietzsche suggests that indifference is a primal force that both pre-exists and permeates history.”<sup>31</sup> Therefore, Nietzsche’s overarching conception of history, at least in his early thinking, is defined as a mode of differentiation propelled by the force of indifference. Simply speaking, this mode or “function” of differentiation is a grammatical (anthropocentric) development reacting to the ubiquity of unhistorical animality in man. Thus, man assumes the form of the appropriated animal, which he then in turn names and engenders with difference.

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<sup>30</sup> At the time of his collapse (January 1889), Nietzsche was working on a large volume entitled *The Revaluation of Values* (or, in a different translation, *The Transvaluation of Values*), the first chapter of which is the posthumously published piece, *The Anti-Christ*.

<sup>31</sup> Marder, p. 138.

Nietzsche treats the notion of man substantively only as a unique memory of his (man's) animal nature. In the essay, "On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life," Nietzsche suggests that, "only through the power of employing the past for the purposes of life and of again introducing into history that which has been done and is gone—did man become man...."<sup>32</sup> In Nietzsche, man "becomes" man in returning the past to history through the present. The "power of employing the past" signifies Nietzsche's concept of memory and the repetition of "that which has been done and is gone." Problematically, the return of the past in the history produced by the present is precisely the animality against which man defines himself, because the return unveils the "permeating" force of animality at play behind the appropriation of the past in the historical present of man. For Nietzsche, there is no essential difference between man and animal; there is only the grammar of history with which man appropriates his animality through deferring it to words, names, and genders (difference).

As is widely known, Nietzsche considered man as a "household pet"<sup>33</sup> and the "caged animal."<sup>34</sup> However, this condition of imprisonment loses the force of Nietzsche's meaning if it is presented strictly as that in the state of society. Keith Ansell-Pearson notes that

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<sup>32</sup> *UM*, p. 64.

<sup>33</sup> *GM*, p. 24.

<sup>34</sup> See Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Viroid Life: Perspectives on Nietzsche and the Transhuman Condition* (Routledge: New York, 1997), 19.

in Nietzsche, man is “notable not only for his experiments on nature, but for his self-experimentation.”<sup>35</sup> Man’s “self-experimentation” unveils his need for an understanding of the “self.” Therefore, man’s ability to identify himself (as the “other” of animality) relies on the mirror he constructs to reflect what constructed it; this is the staggered mirroring process of grammar and history. In the production of the self (interiorization), grammar establishes the historicity of difference that comes to be called “man.” In Nietzsche, this historicity “fills” the concept of memory with the “emptiness” of forgetting.<sup>36</sup> What is left of man—his “truth”—is the “empty husk.”<sup>37</sup>

Nietzsche, as well as the twentieth-century French thinkers mentioned in the introduction, particularly Derrida, concentrated on the syntactic representation of history in philosophy. Marder contends that, for Derrida, history unfolds as units of present tenses tied together:

[Describing] history as a historicized anachronism, as the ordered disorder, and as ‘the linking of modalized presents’, Derrida implies that the production of history compulsively suppresses and represses the materials it works with/on.<sup>38</sup>

Marder suggests that, in Derrida, history is process of assembling “material” that bears, in turn, the imprint of its having been assembled; this imprint is in turn the past which provides the material

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>37</sup> *TL*, p. 258.

<sup>38</sup> Marder, p. 142.

for the continual (not to be confused with “progressive”) production of history. Through Marder’s interpretation, Derrida understands the “production of history” to be the continuous assembling of historical assemblages (“material”). Marder’s notion of “material” is synonymous with Nietzsche’s notion of the “present” as a history of “that which has been done and is gone.” Consequently, the motion of consuming what has been regurgitated—in Nietzsche, this is “rumination”<sup>39</sup>—is the syntactic force which Nietzsche approaches as history.

One of Nietzsche’s most important contributions to modern thinking about the concept of history is implied by Marder’s (and Derrida’s) notion of history as a “suppressing” and “repressing” operation; in Nietzsche, this is called “power”:

I lay stress on this major point of historical method [that progress occurs according to the prosperity of a single stronger species], especially as it runs counter to just that prevailing instinct and fashion which would much rather come to terms with absolute randomness, and even the mechanistic senselessness of all events, than the theory that a *power-will* is acted out in all that happens.<sup>40</sup>

At the same time man confronts (“suppresses”) animality with history, this very confrontation re-affirms what Marder previously suggested was the “permeating force of animality.” The effort man makes to distinguish himself from animals (man’s “other”) re-affirms the animality he tries to confront and contain. This re-affirmation is

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<sup>39</sup> *GM*, p. 9.

<sup>40</sup> *GM*, p. 52.

beyond man's ability to contain (it "suppresses"), on the one hand, and defines him as he attempts to contain it (it "represses"), on the other. In Nietzsche's more positivist concept of history, the continual operation of this affirmation (where man opposes the animal) and re-affirmation (of the animality in man) is that of the "power-will." For Nietzsche, the implications of this power-will and the notion of power totalize the ways in which the concepts of "truth," "knowledge," and "being" can be approached, which is the concern of monumental interpretations of Nietzsche by Heidegger in the first half of the twentieth century and Deleuze in the second half.

Nietzsche's later theory of history concentrates on the notion of a trans-historical force "is acted out in all that happens."<sup>41</sup> In Nietzsche, this memorial to history is the state, and it signifies war:

While without the state, in the natural *bellum omnium contra omnes*, society is totally unable to strike roots on a larger scale and beyond the bounds of the family. Now that states have developed everywhere, the drive of the *bellum omnium contra omnes* is concentrated in the terrible tempest of war between peoples and discharges itself, as it were, in less frequent but all the more violent blows.<sup>42</sup>

For Nietzsche, the correlation of state and war is indivisible. Moreover, the one produces the other, and as such, the violence of war (and the state of nature) is built into the state. To be precise, Nietzsche conceives of the state as man's self-suppression (repression) in the act of erasing (suppressing) the natural appearance of violence

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<sup>41</sup> *GM*, p. 52.

<sup>42</sup> *WEN*, p. 73-74



in life. Consequently, the phenomenon of war is hardly surprising, particularly for Nietzsche, because it has become established by the very attempt to eradicate it in the formation of the state. Thus, the state is an unconscious memorial to violence.

For Nietzsche, man defines himself in the production of memorials. However, Nietzsche is explicit in his assertion that this ‘definition’ is not “being,” although it is the unifying mistake of man to take his definition as that of being, or identity. The question of “being” and identity, which is inextricably bound to the production of memorials, and “writing” in particular, will be treated extensively in Chapter II and III. Presently, however, “reason” will be the point of departure for Section III, wherein Nietzsche’s notion of the “promise” will be examined in terms of the ideas of “punishment” and “memory.”

### **The Promise to Know Thyself: Dread, Torture, and Reason**

**Note:** Much of the content in the present section, and to a lesser degree in the subsequent section, draws directly from the ideas contained and implied by the following quotation taken from Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morality*. The quotation has been placed at the beginning of this section for two reasons. On the one hand, placing it at the beginning will help avoid repetitive footnotes and, on the other hand, it will expose the reader to a number of ideas that will be at play, sometimes at once, over the course of this and the next section.

(From *Genealogy of Morality*):<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *GM*, p. 39.

[Think] of old German punishments such as stoning...breaking on the wheel...impaling, ripping apart and trampling to death by horses, boiling of the criminal in oil or wine...cutting out flesh from the breast; and, of course, coating the wrong-doer with honey and leaving him to the flies in the scorching sun. With the aid of such images and procedures, man was eventually able to retain five or six 'I-don't-want-to's' in his memory, in connection with which a *promise* had been given, in order to enjoy the advantages of society—and there you are! With the aid of this sort of memory, people finally came to 'reason'!

In Nietzsche, “reason” is a social machination by which animality is kept in check by the (human) animal itself; for Nietzsche, this is man’s “training.” Over the course of history, man “lost his animal common sense,”<sup>44</sup> only to have it supplanted by “reason.” The notion of reason in Nietzsche is born from the duress of an always already-established authority; the manifestation of this authority is communicated in the (mnemonic) imagery of “punishment.” However, Nietzsche does not explicitly distinguish whether it is the punished or the specter of punishment from which reason emerges—does the “wrong-doer” become reasonable after he is punished, or, as seems to be the case, does the onlooker “come to reason” by associating the images of punishment with the alleged reasons behind it—namely, “wrong doing”? The fundamental assumption that Nietzsche illustrates in the relation between punishment and reason is the divination on the part of the spectator (of punishment) that punishment is the effect of known causes—again, “wrong doing.”

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<sup>44</sup> *GS*, p. 145.

However, the divination of cause from effect is the fundamental error of which Nietzsche accuses both the common people and science throughout his thinking:

Basically, the common people double a deed; when they see lightning, they make a doing-a-deed out of it: they posit the same event, first as cause and then as effect. The scientists do no better...all our science...still stands exposed to the seduction of language and has not rid itself of the changeling foisted upon it, the 'subject'....<sup>45</sup>

In images of punishment, “reason” identifies the appearance of pain—or effect—with an essential cause, or wrong doing, that in turn identifies the spectator as the would-be subject of punishment were he to do something “wrong.” For Nietzsche, “reason” is coerced from the individual by the machinated images of punishment “procedures.” Thus, reason is that which man has already agreed to do; either be punished or “enjoy the advantages of society.”

In Nietzsche, reason comes into being as a mode of memory: it is the retention of “fix or six ‘I-don’t-want-to’s.” What gives this form of memory its efficacy is its co-extension with a definable and common purpose—to enjoy the advantages of society. Together, the concepts of memory and reason in Nietzsche constitute the authority attributed to the notion of the “promise.” For Nietzsche, the “promise” man makes perpetuates the mundane exigency of conforming to its terms: either “enjoy the advantages of society” or

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<sup>45</sup> *GM*, p. 26.

be punished for “doing-wrong.” There is the promise of punishment and the promise of enjoyment; and yet, the threat of the former never disappears. Thus, for Nietzsche “reason” always agrees to enjoy what is not forbidden; it is a perpetual agreement to act accordingly. The notion of the “forbidden” is a prominent thread in Nietzsche’s thought, and it will be reintroduced later in Chapter III.

At this point, however, the notion of the promise that Nietzsche maintains as a mode of memory appears to be the installation of reason in the individual by the state of society. The “promise” is a correlation in the ideas of “responsibility” and “debt,” and is therefore unique to the state of society. In Nietzsche, man assumes responsibility for the debt of being made responsible for the “advantages” he is to enjoy in society: “man himself will really have to become *reliable, regular, necessary*, even in his own self-image, so that he, as someone making a promise is, is answerable for his own *future!*”<sup>46</sup> Although the concept of the future will be taken up in Chapters II and III, it is sufficient to suggest that for Nietzsche, man is obligated to “his own future.” On the one hand, the future is the canvas for man’s “self-image,” and on the other hand, man is the image already painted on the canvas. In any case, the correlation of “responsibility,” “future,” “debt,” and “self-image” are manifestations

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<sup>46</sup> *GM*, p. 36.

of reason by which man assimilates into the role set out by society to identify him.

In Nietzsche's perspective on the state (society), "identity" and "subject" are synonymous, in that they connote positions under surveillance. What troubles Nietzsche is the historicity of subjection—its commonality and, perhaps, its inexorability. Derived from the "contractual relationship" between "creditor and debtor", Nietzsche calls the model of historical subjection the "legal subject": "[The] contractual relationship between *creditor* and *debtor* is as old as the very conception of a 'legal subject' and itself refers back to the basic forms of buying, selling, bartering, trade and traffic" (Nietzsche's italics).<sup>47</sup> For Nietzsche, this promise to be a subject, and to know what that being is (reliable, regular, necessary), is "precisely what constitutes the long history of the origins of responsibility."<sup>48</sup> Nietzsche aligns himself with the idea of responsibility only to the extent that man is responsible for establishing what responsibility is. Once responsibility establishes and decrees what man should be, Nietzsche assails it. Consequently, in Nietzsche the notion of responsibility designates a mode of intentionality by which individuality is erased. The promise, to which the individual in society is assigned responsibility and for which he is made responsible, is secured through this erasure, or "overlooking the individual and the

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<sup>47</sup> *GM*, p. 40.

<sup>48</sup> *GM*, p. 36.

real.”<sup>49</sup> This erasure and “overlooking” is the manifestation of reason—self-surveillance—in man.<sup>50</sup>

In Nietzsche, the primary “advantage” of society which man “enjoys” is security. In order to achieve “security,” there must be duration and durability. For Nietzsche, duration is the object of society, and so man, in order to exist in society, is required to become its “regular, reliable, necessary” subject. As Nietzsche insisted throughout his thinking, man emerges where the individual disappears. Therefore, man is the “mark” of individuality’s disappearance; in Nietzsche, the process of “marking” (identifying) is the function of reason, which occurs exterior to the individual in punishment. Strangely, this conception of reason derived from Nietzsche resembles what Derrida later terms the “archive”:

Because the archive, if this word or this figure can be stabilized so as to take on a signification, will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive, internal experience. On the contrary: the archive takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of the said memory. *There is no archive without a place of consignment, without a*

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<sup>49</sup> *TL*, p. 257.

<sup>50</sup> Nietzsche excoriates the value system of “asceticism” for similar reasons, in that the ideals that subject the body and mind of the ascetic become “fixed” and “unforgettable,” to the point where the ascetic (and the Christians who follow) installs a system of belief that precludes and negates other modes of thinking and value: “In a certain sense, the whole of asceticism belongs here: a few ideas have to be made ineradicable, ubiquitous, unforgettable, ‘fixed’, in order to hypnotize the whole nervous and intellectual system through these ‘fixed ideas’—and ascetic procedures and lifestyles are a method of freeing those ideas from competition with all other ideas, of making them ‘unforgettable’,” (*GM* 38).

*technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside...the archive is hypomnesic.*<sup>51</sup>

From Nietzsche and Derrida, the concept of reason functions as the archive of the promise. The physicality of punishment consigns the promise to the body of the punished for all to see (the body as “place of consignation”), while reason operates as the “technique of repetition,” with which man becomes “reliable, regular, necessary.” Accordingly, the “place of originary and structural breakdown of the said memory” is the memory that develops from “unique” and “entirely individualized experience.” In Nietzsche, reason is responsible for the ordering of memories (as images); it orders them in the form of “I-don’t-want-to’s.”<sup>52</sup> For Nietzsche, reason functions specifically in society to extract individuality from the individual person in order to fix his identity as a member of the collective. Thus, as the archive that “will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive, internal experience,” reason externalizes the internality of experience by conforming the individual to the promise he has made in order to escape punishment.

For Nietzsche, punishment is the “rationally” controlled expression of the *state of nature* by the state. The “promise” secures the agreement among the collective to be punished by the state on the grounds of reason: “[The] state needs above all to be totally freed

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<sup>51</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 11.

<sup>52</sup> *GM*, p. 40: “[Pain] is the most powerful aid to mnemonics.”

from the terribly unpredictable convulsions of war, so that it can be used rationally....”<sup>53</sup> For Nietzsche, the “rational” use of war by the state is punishment; even more explicitly, punishment perpetually reconstitutes and re-authorizes the basis on which it appears justified, or legal; this basis is reason.

In Nietzsche, reason develops as an assemblage of mnemonic “procedures” that transpire externally to the individual human being; and yet, the use of reason by the individual in judging—“I don’t want to”—repeats the procedural principles by which it is mnemonically ordered. For Nietzsche, reason is unique to man precisely because man is responsible for its emergence—he has been made responsible and in turn makes himself responsible for this emergence and re-emergence (repetition). In Nietzsche, the operation of reason resembles that of a machine:

It was Descartes who first ventured the idea that [animals] could be seen as *machina*: the whole of physiology has been working to prove this claim. We are even logically consistent enough not to exclude humans, as Descartes did. To the extent that human beings are understood at all these days, they are understood as machines.<sup>54</sup>

Nietzsche maintains the association of human beings with machines to the extent that man appears as a trained animal. In Nietzsche, the origins of reason are not in the natural settings occupied by different species; for Nietzsche, the notion of man’s “intellect,” which is

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<sup>53</sup> *WEN*, p. 73.

<sup>54</sup> *AC*, p. 12.



employed for “dissimulation,” is aligned with the state of nature (as opposed to society).<sup>55</sup> In Nietzsche, the natural context from which reason originates is the collective, or the herd. Thus, in Nietzsche the particular environment from which man develops is what sets him apart from other animals. Therefore, the function of reason is to reproduce the context that supports it.

The interaction between the material (environmental) context and the mode of functioning the individuals within that context execute in order to maintain themselves and their sustaining environment situates the development of reason in a larger perspective than Nietzsche initially offers; this is Derrida’s notion of the “psychical apparatus”:

Far from the machine being a pure absence of spontaneity, its *resemblance* to the psychical apparatus, its existence and its necessity bear witness to the finitude of the mnemonic spontaneity which is thus supplemented. The machine—and, consequently, representation—is death and finitude *within* the psyche” (Derrida’s italics).<sup>56</sup>

For Derrida, the psychical apparatus is “supplemented” by the “machine.” On the one hand, the machine functions to limit the “spontaneity” with which memory appears in the psyche (mind). On the other hand, the psychical apparatus signifies the concept of “mnemonic spontaneity,” or the seemingly uncalled for materialization of memory in the psyche. In Nietzsche, reason operates similarly to

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<sup>55</sup> *TL*, p. 253.

<sup>56</sup> Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 14.

the machine, because the memories it contains are impressed by images of punishment that delineate an order off which judgments are based. Thus, in both Nietzsche and Derrida, the notion of the “machine” signifies an ordering principle that functions primarily to suppress. However, Derrida’s notion of the psychical apparatus denotes an intrinsic trait of suppression in the psyche; this suppressive quality appears natural, although the “machine” does not. In Nietzsche, on the other hand, acts of reason (judgment) that transpire from an assemblage of memories (images of punishment) are oriented by social considerations that appropriate memories with which they have affinity. For Derrida, the psyche operates along principles of materiality, whereas in Nietzsche, reason functions in accord with social principles.

However, Nietzsche maintains the persist element of suppression in the role reason plays in society. In Nietzsche, the mnemonic order developed from images of punishment (pain) with which reason parses the material of judgments inherently constrains individual activity; this is the “social straightjacket.” Thus, Nietzsche’s conception of reason corresponds to Derrida’s notion of the psychical apparatus, in that both suppress the mnemonic material they work with. The effect of either differs depending on what is suppressed. In broad strokes, Derrida terms the mnemonic effect the “impression.”

For Nietzsche, the focus of this thesis, the effect that the “impression” of punishment (effectively torture) makes is the “promise.”

In Nietzsche, the notion of “dread” traces the pathway of the “promise” in otherwise unrelated cultures.

You almost want to add that wherever on earth you still find ceremonial, solemnity, mystery, gloomy shades in the lives of men and peoples, something of the dread with which everyone, everywhere, used to make promises, give pledges and commendation, is *still working*...(author’s italics).<sup>57</sup>

For Nietzsche, “dread” is the quintessential consequence of the promise. The symptoms (“shades”) of this consequence—“ceremonial, solemnity, mystery, gloom”—demonstrate the conformity penned by the suppressive installation of reason by the specter of punishment/torture (if “dread” signifies the mastery of pain in mnemonic technique). Nietzsche is most explicit about the efficaciousness of punishment, because the “dread...*is still working*.” Consequently, the origins of the promise disappear in the tradition it establishes. Thus, for Nietzsche reason is responsible for the continuation of conformity and suppression in history. Or, to be more explicit, history is the perpetuation of suppression through reason. In the next chapter, Nietzsche’s relatively marginal notion of “consciousness” will be maintained as a critical contribution to his philosophy of history that becomes hermeneutically unique in the notion of what I call “wonder.”

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<sup>57</sup> *GM*, p. 38.

## Chapter II

### Nietzsche's Dangerous Maybe: Wonder and the Archive

**Abstract:** Chapter II juxtaposes the notions of “wonder” and “consciousness” in relation to Nietzsche’s philosophy of history. Section I emphasizes the connectivity of “consciousness,” “communication,” and “language.” Section II contends that Nietzsche’s idea of the “dangerous maybe” locates the traditional notion of an ideal “subject” in a position of mandatory yet hermeneutic change. Section III establishes a correlation between “wonder” and the space of “questioning” set forth by Maurice Blanchot and threatened by Jacques Derrida’s notion of the “archive.” Finally, section IV focuses on Nietzsche’s engagement with the notion of “neutrality” in order to stress the idea of an transhistorical distance at play between thinking about Nietzsche and reading his writing. Chapter II serves as an entry point into the ontological concerns of Chapter III, where at issue is the question of being in perspectives about death.

### Forgetting and the Historical Specter of Consciousness

Nietzsche challenges the authenticity traditionally attributed to the notion of “consciousness” in philosophy. In Nietzsche, the notions of “consciousness,” “communication,” and “language” are co-extensive. For Nietzsche, each of these ideas is a facet of the overarching disposition of man in the state of society; this disposition is signified by the everyday co-dependency of one man on another. Furthermore, Nietzsche perceived this mundane neediness as a symptom of infirmity in man’s self-image:

*[Consciousness] in general has developed only under the pressure of the need to communicate; that at the outset, consciousness was necessary, was useful, only between persons (particularly between those who commanded and who obeyed); and that it has developed only in proportion to that usefulness. Consciousness is really just a net connecting one person with another—only in this capacity did it have to*

develop; the solitary and predatory person would not have needed it.<sup>58</sup>

Nietzsche is explicit as to which position is firm and which is weak. The “solitary and predatory person” signifies for Nietzsche the unique phenomenon of individuality in nature. However, Nietzsche does not suggest that the predatory person is not conscious or, even stronger, that he is ‘unconscious.’ On the contrary, Nietzsche’s notion of “consciousness” appears as a byproduct of unconscious forces at play in individual men. Since Nietzsche treats the “need to communicate” as the impetus behind the development of consciousness, the difficulty Nietzsche’s consideration about consciousness presents stems from the obscurity of his thinking on who needs to communicate and who does not. On the one hand, Nietzsche assumes the existence of a solitary, unabashedly violent human being strong enough to subsist on his own. On the other hand, however, Nietzsche only has access to the human being who does communicate and appears to need to do so. For Nietzsche, the idea of the strong and violent human being illustrates the limitations of communication itself, because Nietzsche can only address this human being as an idea the signification of which is inaccessible to the language Nietzsche requires in order to communicate it. The point that comes to light in the juxtaposition between the one who needs to communicate and the

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<sup>58</sup> *GS*, p. 212.

one who does not is the silence that signifies the notion of the latter, or the predatory and solitary person.

Oddly, one of Nietzsche's most general projects is the inversion of meaning in language. For Nietzsche, meaning is an appearance assembled in the act of communicating; therefore, what is comprehended as meaning or meaningful—the sign of 'being conscious'—marks a distance between what is communicated and what is meant. For Nietzsche, this distance is the difference between man's consciousness and his initial disposition before the emergence of language as it appears now:

[Due] to the nature of *animal consciousness*, the world of which we can become conscious is merely a surface- and sign- world, a world turned into generalities, and thereby debased to its lowest common denominator,—that everything which enters consciousness thereby *becomes* shallow, thin, relatively stupid, general, a sign, a herd-mark; that all becoming conscious involves a vast and thorough corruption, falsification, superficialization, and generalization. In the end, the growing consciousness is a danger; and he who lives among the most conscious Europeans even knows it is a sickness.<sup>59</sup>

With the idea that things become "signs" upon entering consciousness, which is to say that language is the active appropriation of phenomena into a system of meaning, Nietzsche posits an interface between semiology and phenomenology. This interface provides the genealogical grounds Nietzsche requires in order to subject meaning to the dissection of its history and to turn away from the "growing

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<sup>59</sup> *GS*, p. 213-214.

consciousness” that obliterates the unique and individual dimension of the “animal consciousness.”

For Nietzsche, “consciousness” is an impression; this is the “herd mark.” Problematically, the notion of consciousness that assumes priority in determining the way things are suddenly appears as a “thing” appropriated by language. Thus, what Nietzsche sets out to reveal in his consideration of consciousness is the unconscious assimilation of perception into an abstract system of signification. The “herd-mark” designates the intentional dislocation of “thing” from appearance; this dislocation is also that between being and identity in language. At issue in the idea of dislocation is its unconscious intentionality.

For Nietzsche, the threat that language poses to individual (animal) consciousness is the unconscious usurping of intentionality by the individual itself. In society, or the herd, the individual is dissolved by the self-consciousness of his language:

My idea is clearly that consciousness actually belongs not to man’s existence as an individual but rather to the community- and herd- aspects of his nature; that accordingly, it is finely developed only in relation to its usefulness to community or herd; and that consequently for each of us, even with the best will in the world to *understand* ourselves as individually as possible, ‘to know ourselves,’ will always bring to consciousness precisely that in ourselves which is ‘non-individual,’ that which is ‘average’; that due to the nature of consciousness—to the ‘genius of the species’ governing it—our thoughts themselves

are continually as it were *outvoted* and translated back into the herd perspective.<sup>60</sup>

The connectivity between language and consciousness suspends the growth of the individual and the multiplicity of possible perspectives that turn away from the dominant herd perspective. It is clear that Nietzsche's concern with "understanding" and the ability to "know" oneself is bound to his concern with consciousness and language. It is, however, insufficient to conclude that Nietzsche's ideal of "understanding" and "self-knowing" is simply non-linguistic or is some mystical and hopeless kind of knowledge about the unconscious. Rather, the ideas of understanding and self-knowledge are concerned with perspectives that bring the "herd perspective" into question.

In Nietzsche, the meaning of consciousness precipitates as an object of historical knowledge; that is, consciousness is an historical perspective. Michael Marder's analysis of Nietzsche and Derrida's gestures into the philosophy of history concentrates on the epistemological problematic of the historical specter, which Marder addresses in the form of ghosts (in Derrida's writing). Although the figure of the ghost is not a recurrent or dominant thread in Nietzsche's thinking, Marder associates the notion of the ghost in Derrida's writing with the figure of the "god" in Nietzsche. Marder

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<sup>60</sup> *GS*, p. 213.



concludes from Derrida that, “ghosts are misrecognized.”<sup>61</sup> Consequently, he suggests that, “Nietzsche refers to this misrecognition as the ‘*genealogical* confusion’ exemplified in the origin of religion: in the end ‘the progenitors of the *most powerful* clans...[are]...necessarily transfigured into a *god*”<sup>62</sup> (Nietzsche’s italics). In Nietzsche, the “god” assumes the position of divinity in the historical consciousness of later clans. For Nietzsche, the “god” is a memorial to domination and subjection, the history of the “most powerful clans.” What is disquieting about this is that for Nietzsche consciousness is inextricable from its historical perspective.

In Nietzsche, the problem of knowledge is its hierarchical relativity. With regard to the epistemological concern of the dialectic between god and man (“clan”), Nietzsche asserts that, “it is not the opposition between subject and object which concerns me here; I leave that distinction to those epistemologists who have got tangled up in the snares of grammar (of folk metaphysics).”<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, the metaphysical aspect of the dialectic between god and clan (the god as the object of worship by its human subjects) entangles the understanding of the history from which man as worshipper originates: “Even less am I concerned with the opposition between ‘thing in itself’ and appearance; for we ‘know’ far too little to even be

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<sup>61</sup> Marder, p. 151.

<sup>62</sup> Marder, p. 151.

<sup>63</sup> *BGE*, p. 214.

entitled to *make* that distinction.”<sup>64</sup> The distinction between “thing in itself” and “appearance” that Nietzsche rejects is precisely the distinction that causes the “genealogical confusion” of the historical specter; as the metaphysical origin (non-phenomenon) of the thing-in-itself, the “god” becomes entangled in the interplay of its descent and emergence—its history—that is the concern of the epistemologist.<sup>65</sup> The “understanding” that makes the distinction between the god and man (the distinction between object and subject, thing in itself and appearance) is the confusion, or conflation, of knowledge and non-knowledge. Nietzsche’s understands the “god” as an epistemological denotation of a consequently knowable history; it resembles a conscious celebration of consciousness, wherein metaphysics and knowledge unite. Thus, the concern of Nietzsche’s epistemologists is the disentanglement of what we know we do not know. As Nietzsche himself stated, this is not what concerns him.

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<sup>64</sup> *GS*, p. 214.

<sup>65</sup> *BGE*, p. 200: “‘How *could* anything originate out of its opposite? for example, truth out of error? or the will to truth out of the will to deception? or selfless deeds out of selfishness? or the pure and sunlike gaze of the sage out of lust? Such origins are impossible; whoever dreams of them is a fool, indeed worse; the things of the highest value must have another, *peculiar* origin—they cannot be derived from this transitory, seductive, deceptive, paltry world, from this turmoil of delusion and lust. Rather from the lap of Being, the intransitory, the hidden god, the ‘thing-in-itself’—there must be their basis, and nowhere else.’ This way of judging constitutes the typical prejudgment and prejudice which give away the metaphysicians of all ages...” To be clear, the entanglement of the ‘god’ in its history is the “hidden god” of the “thing in itself,” which is, accordingly, the “genealogical confusion” of which Nietzsche speaks and the historical specter that Marder analyzes as the Nietzschean “ghost.”

## “Maybe!” and the Riddle

In Nietzsche, the development of consciousness always implies dislocating individuality from experience. This dislocation is a mode of forgetting for Nietzsche. Marder suggests that, “the difference between memory and forgetting lies in *what* is to be forgotten (time or life), not *whether or not something* is to be forgotten.”<sup>66</sup> In terms of Nietzsche, individuality is perpetually dissolved by language—the individual is “what is to be forgotten” in language. However, Nietzsche maintains the attempt to return individuality to language by gesturing toward the space of the forgotten in the semiotic “sign”. In order to do this, Nietzsche dissociates the notion of truth from its assumed substantiality behind appearance in the traditional philosophy of knowledge.

For Nietzsche, the notion of “truth” in philosophy is essentially empty; that is, “truth” is an essential absence of individual experience. “What then is truth...[Coins] that have lost their design and are now considered only as metal and no longer as coins.”<sup>67</sup> Nietzsche treats truth as a substance, on the one hand, and an appearance, on the other. For Nietzsche, truth is merely an essential recollection, a positing and an answering, a game of hide and seek: “If a man hides something behind a bush and seeks and finds it in the same place,

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<sup>66</sup> Marder, p. 142.

<sup>67</sup> *TL*, p. 257.

there is not much to praise about this seeking and finding, and the same holds for seeking and finding ‘truth’ within the domain of reason.”<sup>68</sup> Nietzsche emphasizes the necessity of forgetting at play in the production (seeking and finding) of truth. Thus, in Nietzsche truth is neither an object nor a subject that exists separately from the assumption that it exists. What Nietzsche implies in his analysis of “truth” is an insurmountable distance between essence and possibility. Thus, for Nietzsche the notion of truth signifies the inevitability of interpretation in a philosophy of knowledge.

In Nietzsche, “knowledge” is coextensive with interpretation and the “historical sense,” or the configuration of the past in the present. It was Nietzsche’s aim to synthesize hermeneutics with a model of history that remained transhistorical in both individual and disciplinary interpretations of history; this is the “supra-historical.”<sup>69</sup> However, Nietzsche confronts the difficulties the “historical sense” presents to historical knowledge, in order to emphasize the interrelating concepts of memory and forgetting which knowledge inevitably, and unconsciously, implies.

The historical sense, like consciousness, presents a danger: “there is a degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of the historical sense, which is harmful and ultimately fatal to the living thing,

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<sup>68</sup> *TL*, p. 259.

<sup>69</sup> *UM*, p. 65.

whether this living thing be a man or a people or a culture.”<sup>70</sup> In broad strokes, the danger of the historical sense lies in the suppression of “life” by the dissolution of forgetting that Nietzsche asserts is necessary for life: “It is altogether impossible to *live* at all without forgetting.”<sup>71</sup> For Nietzsche, forgetting is essential to the possibility of history. The seeming paradox in Nietzsche is the necessity of forgetting to the possibility of memory. Consequently, Nietzsche introduces the notion of the “unhistorical”: “The unhistorical is like an atmosphere within which alone life can germinate and with the destruction of which it must vanish.”<sup>72</sup> For Nietzsche, no pure state of knowledge exists, precisely because knowledge comes into being through the paradoxical forces of the historical and unhistorical senses, or the interplay between memory and forgetting. However, knowledge is not strictly historical for Nietzsche; “tragic knowledge” figures prominently into his thinking but demands an exposition that extends beyond the scope of this Section.

The paradox in the concepts of memory and forgetting implied by Nietzsche’s notions of the historical and unhistorical sense localizes a hermeneutic source of possibilities in the production of knowledge; this is “the dangerous maybe.” Nietzsche continued the investigation of the historical and unhistorical senses that he began in

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<sup>70</sup> *UM*, p. 62.

<sup>71</sup> *UM*, p. 62.

<sup>72</sup> *UM*, p. 63-64.

his early writing throughout his intellectually productive life; it was the terms of the investigation that changed over that period. The questions of the historical and unhistorical take the form, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, of the concept “maybe”:

For all the value that the true, the truthful, the selfless may deserve, it would still be possible that a higher and more fundamental value for life might have to be ascribed to deception, selfishness, and lust. It might even be possible that what constitutes the value of these good and revered things is precisely that they are insidiously related, tied to, and involved with these wicked, seemingly opposite things—maybe even one with them in essence. Maybe!<sup>73</sup>

The fundamental interrelation of “seemingly opposite things” takes on the question first posed by the phrases “historical sense” and “unhistorical sense,” because it demonstrates an interconnectedness through which the apparition of oppositions is at all possible. In Nietzsche, “maybe” signifies the pure possibility of perception; a thing, phenomenon, or concept is inseparable from its possibility. Thus, the assertion that differences exist, whether they are between phenomenal appearances before the eyes or conceptual significations in language, requires what Nietzsche explicitly rejects as “*the faith in opposite values.*”<sup>74</sup> For Nietzsche, such a faith is that of “the metaphysicians.” Regardless of the association between faith and metaphysics, the problematic of difference is the essential problematic of knowledge and knowing. In truth, if we cannot affirm that one

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<sup>73</sup> *BGE*, p. 200.

<sup>74</sup> *BGE*, p. 200.

thing is different from another, and that our methods for distinguishing are responsible for the knowledge of the distinction, how can we possibly *know* anything beyond the establishment of difference? The dogmatic resolution of such a question is not Nietzsche's concern.

In Nietzsche, the notion of "maybe" assumes the force of knowledge by always concluding itself as inconclusive. The force of "maybe" perpetually stimulates research along new hermeneutic lines, because the traditional and binary mode of Platonic meaning relies on opposition cemented in faith, or the ideal forms. Nietzsche, on the other hand, "deconstructs" the oppositional binaries that determine difference in order to open other lines of difference. For example, the possibility that the "truthful" and "deception," or the "selfless" and "selfishness," are "insidiously related" and "maybe even one with them [their oppositional other] in essence," projects the uncertainty of difference into other (different) hermeneutic planes. Thus, the concept of "maybe" (written as "Maybe!") affirms interpretation, as opposed to affirming its cessation in the "faith" of oppositional certainty.

In Nietzsche, there is no intractable or central hermeneutic that does not bring itself into question or de-center itself. Derrida contends that Nietzsche's style (of writing and of thought, though they cannot be said to be identical) propels interpretation toward an

undisclosed and nomological hermeneutic: “[The] question of style must be measured against the larger question of the interpretation of Nietzsche’s text, of the interpretation of interpretation—in short against the question of interpretation itself.”<sup>75</sup> In Nietzsche, interpretation is a question, but one that eventuates an answer that is subject to further interpretation. Thus, it is impossible to ask the question, “what is interpretation?” outside of the style or manner of representation (again a question of interpretation). Therefore, in Nietzsche the answers to philosophical inquiries, particularly the instituting question of metaphysics (“what is...?”),<sup>76</sup> assume the form of possibility delineated by interpretation.

The essential subject of Nietzsche’s philosophy is “chance.” This idea will be returned to in Chapter III. For the moment, however, it is necessary to note that Nietzsche’s idea of “maybe” is an attempt to come to terms with the element of chance in life, which is *not* to say the idea of “maybe” is Nietzsche’s attempt to “reconcile” philosophy with chance. On the contrary, Nietzsche looked toward the idea of chance as the indifferent space of possibility that coheres philosophy with life. In Nietzsche, the notion of “maybe” memorializes chance, because the lines of interpretation that it spurs take “change” as their subject. For Nietzsche, only the notion of “maybe” is able to reflect

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<sup>75</sup> Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 71-73.

<sup>76</sup> Deleuze, p. 75.



the variability and irreconcilable multiplicity of interpretation instigated by the element of chance.

In Nietzsche, the idea of “maybe” institutes a “philosophy of interpretation,” which many later thinkers studying and interpreting Nietzsche—in this case, Maurice Blanchot—approach as such:

It is relatively easy to bring Nietzsche’s thoughts into a coherency that would justify their contradictions, either by lining them up according to a hierarchy or by making them dialectical. There is a possible—a virtual—system whereby the work, abandoning its dispersed form, would give rise to a continuous reading. To useful, necessary discourse. Now we understand everything, without obstacles and without weariness. We are reassured that such a thought, tied to the movement of research that is also the seeking of becoming, can lend itself to a general exposition. Moreover, this is a necessity. Even in its opposition to dialectic, it must arise out of a dialectic. Even disengaged from a unitary system and engaged in an essential plurality, this thought must still designate a center on the basis of which the Will to Power, the Overman, the Eternal Return, nihilism, perspectivism, tragic thought, and so many other separate themes go toward one another and reach harmony according to a single interpretation: even if this occurs precisely as the diverse moments or stages of a philosophy of interpretation.<sup>77</sup>

The “harmony” of which Blanchot speaks is dislocated or “disengaged” from a “unitary system.” Nonetheless, Blanchot contends that the multiple themes of Nietzsche’s thought reflect a “single interpretation.” This is difficult to refute, particularly because the possibility of a single interpretation lies in the space created by points of divergence and intersection among multiple lines of interpretation. For Blanchot, Nietzsche’s philosophy forms an image of coherency;

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<sup>77</sup> Blanchot, p. 151.

this is the “virtual system.” However, Nietzsche’s philosophy functions as a system only in “useful, necessary discourse.” For Nietzsche, the authority of discourse, or its “necessity” and “utility,” is never secure insofar as it is essentially plural. The resonance of Nietzsche’s philosophy reaches its fever pitch in the “diverse” or rupturing moment of “harmony”; this is pure possibility and the alterity of Nietzsche’s hermeneutic subject.

### **Under the Cow’s Gaze: Questions, Enigmas, and Wonder**

In Nietzsche, interpreting is an act of creating. The space of possibility that drives and realizes Nietzsche’s central yet de-centering hermeneutic transcends the principle of unity in philosophy; this is Zarathustra’s will: “And all my creating and striving amounts to this, that I create and piece together into one, what is now fragment and riddle and grisly accident.”<sup>78</sup> The product of Zarathustra’s creating, the “one,” is not a reconciliation any more than it is the solution or solubility of the “riddle,” “fragment,” and “accident” that composes it. In creating the “one,” Zarathustra is de-centered from all his “creating and striving”; he dominates it. Thus, Zarathustra wills something higher than reconciliation: “that will which is the will to power must

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<sup>78</sup> Z, p. 110.

will something higher than any reconciliation...”<sup>79</sup> In Nietzsche, the idea of “something higher” is the space of pure possibility; man’s relation to this space is one of wonder.

In Nietzsche, wonder begins all questioning, because its haecceity is a marked silence. In “On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life,” Nietzsche suggests that, “a human being may well ask an animal: ‘Why do you not speak to me of your happiness but only stand and gaze at me?’ The animal would like to answer, and say: ‘The reason is I always forget what I was going to say’—but it forgot this answer too, and stayed silent: so that the human being was left wondering.”<sup>80</sup> It is in the state of wondering, which occurs as the relation between the unhistorical and historical sense, in which man is positioned. Thus, the notion of wonder is signified by Nietzsche’s idea of “maybe.” Man confronts the silence of his position with the dual question and affirmation of his positionality; this position is the consciousness of “maybe.” In Nietzsche, the association of wonder and the aggravating uncertainty implied by “maybe” comprises man’s existential position in the world of appearance and animality.

For Nietzsche, man’s existential position is an historical development; as a child, he begins in a metaphysical semblance of time. According to Nietzsche, both the animal and the child “[play] in

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<sup>79</sup> *Z*, p. 112.

<sup>80</sup> *UM*, p. 60-61.

blissful blindness between the hedges of past and future.” Both are, for Nietzsche, unhistorical. However, the child that becomes man also gains the sense of becoming, which is history:

Yet its play must be disturbed; all too soon it will be called out of its state of forgetfulness. Then it will learn to understand the phrase ‘it was’: the password which gives conflict, suffering and satiety access to man so as to remind him what his existence fundamentally is—an imperfect tense that can never become a perfect one.”<sup>81</sup>

For Nietzsche, history never consummates in man, but always leaves him, instead, to wonder what will be from the basis of perceiving what “was.” In Nietzsche, history is a rupture of fluid experience, which is forgotten with the knowledge of what “was,” or what was experienced. Two degrees of history appear in Nietzsche. On the one hand, knowledge is historical, and on the other hand, experience becomes historical when individuality disappears through the fissure in the “state of forgetfulness” instigated by memory (remembering). For Nietzsche, the problem history poses to what appears to be the metaphysical experience of the child is the contextualization of presence in memory; that is, experience is merely the façade of historical knowledge.

Nietzsche’s ontology issues from the relation of wonder and history. In Nietzsche, man formulates the question of identity,

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<sup>81</sup> *UM*, p. 61.

“who?”, under the gaze of the cow. For Nietzsche, the question of “who” is also the question of “truth”:

The will to truth which will still tempt us to many a venture, that famous truthfulness of which all philosophers so far have spoken with respect—what questions has this will to truth not laid before us! What strange, wicked, questionable questions! That is a long story even now—and yet it seems as if it had scarcely begun. Is it any wonder that we should finally become suspicious, lose patience, and turn away impatiently? that we should finally learn from this Sphinx to ask questions, too? *Who* is it really that puts questions to us here? *What* in us really wants “truth”?<sup>82</sup>

Nietzsche’s essential suspicion implied by his attack on “wicked, questionable questions” that issue from an assumed position of truth demands a different form of questioning. This form of questioning does not rely on binaries. The difficulty of Nietzsche’s questions rests on the fact that they cannot be answered by their opposite without first supposing an opposition. It is impossible to *know* that to have become suspicious is to have been previously unsuspecting; to have lost patience is to have been patient; to turn impatiently away requires that one was patiently facing the object from which one turns. Rather, Nietzsche’s rhetoric demands a mode of answering that brings history (as a “chain of modalized presents,” in Derrida) into question. For Nietzsche, suspicion denotes a becoming-question. This mode of “becoming” in Nietzsche is the fissuring of historical knowledge that reveals an essential questionability.

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<sup>82</sup> *BGE*, p. 199.

In Nietzsche, the question of being is dissociated from traditional notions of truth. Instead, the notion of truth that Nietzsche promotes takes the form of questioning. Therefore, for Nietzsche the question of being is signified by the questionability of existence in identity, or historical knowledge; this is the question “who.” Blanchot later and indirectly picks up the thread Nietzsche sets forth. He situates the question “who” in relation to wonder and identity; this relation is an inescapable disorientation in the state of knowing (historical knowledge):

When after the Fall Jahweh asks Adam “Where are you?” this question signifies that henceforth man can no longer be found or situated except in the place of the question. Man is from now on a question for God himself, who does not question.<sup>83</sup>

As the “place of the question” or man become-question, man is not questioned from outside himself except by silence, or that which “does not question.” Rather, the questionability of his identity is also the locus and possibility of historical knowledge. For Blanchot, the spatial orientation of the question (“where”) is located outside of the material that provides it space; this is man “found in the place of the question.” In Nietzsche, the problematic mirror for knowledge, which is the gaze of the cow—or “God”—under which man attempts to know himself, forms the unfulfilled history of identity; in Nietzsche, the “gaze” is the material to be translated into identity. Thus, for

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<sup>83</sup> Blanchot, p. 14.

Nietzsche the concept of history entails material and ontological dimensions to which man is inextricably bound; this is man's "imperfect tense that can never become a perfect one." In Nietzsche, there is always an enigmatic emptiness in experience that drives the quest for knowledge.

The material dimension of history (or what comes to be known as history) is the crucial point of connection around which Nietzsche's genealogy is oriented. For Nietzsche, language is the medium through which the materiality of history is to be accessed: "[The] main moral concept, '*Schuld*' ('guilt') descends from the very material concept of '*Schulden*' ('debts')...."<sup>84</sup> Through the etymology of words, Nietzsche exposes the material facet of historical knowledge that is forgotten in the presence of meaning. For Nietzsche, meaning (signification) is appropriated in the present by forgetting (mental) and distance (material). As a genealogist, Nietzsche's project is to introduce the role of appropriation and domination (forgetting [repressing] and suppressing) into the concept of history. Michel Foucault concentrates Nietzsche's genealogy on the material (human) body. For Foucault, it is in the form of man's body that presents history to knowledge:

The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task

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<sup>84</sup> *GM*, p. 39.

is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body.<sup>85</sup>

As the impression of events imprinted by history, the body is the material locus of history until it becomes knowledge after being "traced by language and dissolved by ideas." For Foucault, the body is the expression of genealogical descent; it provides a material locus for the possibility of language and ideas. In Foucault's analysis, Nietzsche's genealogical deconstruction of meaning (signification) in the present (historically speaking) unveils the substrate of history and language; this is man. In turn, man becomes the substrate of identity, and therefore, questionability. For Nietzsche, this material questionability presents a very "real" possibility for individuation in the concept of the "future."

For Nietzsche, the concept of the future signifies a turning away from man; this was the meaning of the question "who really puts truth before us?" In Nietzsche, the question of the future is responsible for putting truth before man. Therefore, for Nietzsche the individual is responsible for putting the question of the future to man. Problematically, Nietzsche's "individual" begins to appear as an "archive" of questions that draws him into a history that is not his; this is the individual's exteriority and the locus of history. Together, the exterior locale of history maintains the concept of the future.

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<sup>85</sup> Foucault, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, p. 83.



Thus, as the substrate of the future, the exteriorized individual is identified by what Derrida calls “the question of the archive”:

In an enigmatic sense, which will clarify itself *perhaps* (perhaps, because nothing should be sure here, for essential reasons), the question of the archive is not, we repeat, a question of the past. It is not the question of a concept dealing with the past that might *already* be at our disposal or not at our disposal, *an archivable concept of the archive*. It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow. The archive: if we want to know what that will have meant [future perfect], we will only know in times to come [future imperfect].<sup>86</sup>

The exteriorized individual, who is the “question of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow,” is the “regular, reliable, necessary” man of “responsibility” in Nietzsche. Therefore, the “reasonable” man is the question of the archive, and the question of the future. Thus, the archive maintains the possibility of the individual in history, but one that remains always “already” in the future. For Derrida, the danger of individual dissolution is carried by the question of the archive; and yet, Nietzsche equally conveys the danger of this dissolution, although he calls it “reason.” In Nietzsche, reason imperils the question “who” by externalizing it to the barrage of historical forces that in turn conceal its individuality. Thus, the individual disappears in history. For Derrida, this disappearance is the question of the archive that always “remains the same”: “Who comes first?” This is question is also Nietzsche’s: “who puts the question here?” The answer to both is

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<sup>86</sup> Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 36.

the question of the future. In both Nietzsche and Derrida, the question “who” is the question of the future—or wonder and the space of questioning.

### **Nietzsche’s Silence: Excess, Neutrality, and Reality**

*Maybe* Nietzsche’s “who?” and Derrida’s “archive” are identical; *maybe* they are the question and response to history; *maybe* “we” are an historical reality. In any case, Nietzsche’s emphasis remains the same: “who” confronts “us” with the question of truth? As has already been introduced (this is archivization at work), Nietzsche’s question is a call for identification; and yet, the veracity of identity is perpetually deferred to the future. For Nietzsche, only the life of man bears the burden of the question. Therefore, the question of the future, the possibility of identity and the truthfulness of its signification, are oriented around the question of “being.” With great insistence, Heidegger concentrates on the ontological question of being implied by the title of Nietzsche’s final project, *Ecce Homo*: “[Was] not the last thing that Nietzsche himself completed for publication the piece that is entitled *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is?*”<sup>87</sup> The originality of Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo* is due to the fact that its subject is *not* “being,” but rather, the apparition of “being”

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<sup>87</sup> Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, p. 3.

called “Nietzsche”; behold (*esse*) Nietzsche. *Ecce Homo* is the assembled image of “being”; in other words, it resembles Zarathustra’s creation of “one”<sup>88</sup> from accidents and riddles.

Nietzsche’s purpose in *Ecce Homo* is to create an impression of “being.” The book is not “who” Nietzsche is any more than the name “Nietzsche.” Nietzsche’s texts are vestiges of something termed “being” in discourse: “I am one thing, my writings are another.”<sup>89</sup> Nietzsche tells us of this difference in his book; he tells us in writing. In Nietzsche, there is the text that leads us back to the text in the search for an absent author. The relation between “author” and “text” is a prominent theme in twentieth-century Continental thought, but it is beyond the scope of the present section to compare Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo* with the intriguing thinking by the likes of Roland Barthes (in his essay “Death of the Author”) and Maurice Blanchot (and his idea of “the absence of the book” in *The Infinite Conversation*). In his writing, Nietzsche disappears in order to appear in the guise of being that is not Nietzsche: “I am the one who I am! Above all, do not mistake me for anyone else!”<sup>90</sup> Nietzsche cannot be mistaken for his writings, even if it is through his writing that Nietzsche comes to be (for the reader).

In Nietzsche, “being” is treated strictly as excess; this “excess” is writing. Heidegger contends that to “know who Nietzsche is and who

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<sup>88</sup> See Chapter II, sec. III.

<sup>89</sup> *EH*, p. 99.

<sup>90</sup> *EH*, p. 71.

he will be” is to think the thought (the will to power) that exceeds both text and research. For us today, Nietzsche is an exposition if his writings are read to know him.<sup>91</sup> “Being” does not figure into Nietzsche’s thought as the ideal form, like it does for Plato and Socrates. For Nietzsche, the notion of “being” signifies an overcoming of its potentiality to be thought and the consequent delivery of “being” to the precepts of knowledge. This is Zarathustra’s imperative: “*human being* is something that must be overcome” (my italics).<sup>92</sup> Simply speaking, “being” for Nietzsche is the absence of language in language.

Through his writing, Nietzsche’s being, or Nietzsche’s “I am,” silences the drive to master him for discourse. Nietzsche *is* the silence that conditions the writing that speaks of an author called “Nietzsche” imprinted on his books. Heidegger presents this silence as a question of the future: “Who Nietzsche *is* and above all who he *will be* we shall know as soon as we are able to think the thought that he gave shape to in the phrase ‘the will to power’” (Nietzsche’s italics).<sup>93</sup> “Who” Nietzsche “is,” according to Heidegger, gains its relevance to Nietzsche research in relation to the question of Nietzsche’s futurity, namely “who” Nietzsche “will be.” For Heidegger, “who” Nietzsche is cannot

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<sup>91</sup> Heidegger, p. 3.

<sup>92</sup> Z, p. 5.

<sup>93</sup> Heidegger, p. 3.

be object of research, because the attainment of this object turns away from the thought it purports to comprehend:

We shall never experience who Nietzsche is through a historical report about his life, nor through a presentation of the contents of his writing. Neither do we, nor should we, want to know who Nietzsche is, if we have in mind only the personality, the historical figure, and the psychological object and its products.<sup>94</sup>

As has already been introduced in Chapter I, Nietzsche affirms the incongruity between knowledge and experience. Heidegger maintains the incongruity between “knowing” and “experiencing” in order to reveal the space and possibility of the future, which is Nietzsche’s silence. Nietzsche’s silence takes the form of “destiny” in Heidegger: “[In] *Ecce Homo* it is a matter neither of the biography of Nietzsche nor of the person of ‘Herr Nietzsche.’ In truth, it is a matter of a ‘destiny,’ the destiny not of an individual but of the history of the era of modern times, of the end of the West.”<sup>95</sup> On the one hand, “destiny” posits the possibility of history. On the other hand, it signifies the “consummation” of knowledge about history, which is always a hermeneutic (that of the “West” and “modern times,” for Heidegger). Heidegger is responsible for the idea of “consummation” in Nietzsche, which is connected to his assertion that “Nietzsche never thought existentially, he thought metaphysically.” The relationship between Nietzsche and metaphysics is complex and extensive, but the idea of Nietzsche’s silence can be seen as the semblance of

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<sup>94</sup> Heidegger, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Heidegger, p. 3.

“consummation” that speaks from an unknowable distance. Who is Nietzsche, if ‘he’ is the not his writing? This is the question of being, and its answer is—the one who asks (to which one in turn [later] asks, “who?”).

Nietzsche’s writing has been celebrated and condemned by later thinkers. The twentieth-century French thinkers like Blanchot, Derrida, and Deleuze find the value of Nietzsche’s thinking in its rigorous lines of interpretation that eventually instigate their own contradiction. For Blanchot, “the fragmentary speech which is Nietzsche’s does not know contradiction. This is strange.”<sup>96</sup> Nietzsche’s thought does not actively search for contradiction (this would indicate the tacit assumption of opposition which is Nietzsche’s project to deconstruct). Instead, the movement of Nietzsche’s hermeneutic extends to the point of contradiction, because it ends up evaluating the basis from which any one of his interpretations began. On the other hand, Nietzsche is also conceived of as a poor philosopher, particularly by analytic philosophers in the field of ethics, precisely because of the contradictions unique to his thinking. The model contradiction in Nietzsche is represented by the already-quoted assertion: “I am one thing, my writings are another.” Nietzsche reveals and conceals himself, because the “I” that appears as Nietzsche is precisely what conceals “Nietzsche” from

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<sup>96</sup> Blanchot, p. 153.

comprehension. The aim of Nietzsche's contradiction is to destabilize "being" (or "Nietzsche") as an ideal. For Nietzsche, the contradictory nature of discourse that maintains "being" as an "ideal" precludes philosophical engagement with "reality":

You rob reality of its meaning, value, and truthfulness to the extent that you *make up* an ideal world...The 'true world' and the 'world of appearances'—in plain language, the *made-up* world and reality...So far, the *lie* of the ideal has been the curse on reality, it has made humanity false and hypocritical down to its deepest instincts—to the point of worshipping values that are the *reverse* of those that might begin to guarantee it prosperity, a future, a high *right* to a future.<sup>97</sup>

The concept of being, which Nietzsche re-conceptualizes in the *Genealogy* (the subject of Chapter III in this thesis), "curses" reality, because it relegates reality to a condition of knowing dictated by ideals. Ideals, for Nietzsche, are "idols" (gods).<sup>98</sup> In Nietzsche, the meaning of "reality" is meaningless to knowledge. Nietzsche's engagement with the notion of "reality" is an attempt to subvert its status as a subject of discourse. For Nietzsche, "reality" is always "made-up" in order to appear "real," which is to say "ideal." Thus, in Nietzsche, "reality" signifies the absence of truth in "the true-world." This absence is indifferent to meaning and knowledge in life. For Nietzsche, "reality" outstrips its conception. Consequently, Nietzsche strikes a new pose.

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<sup>97</sup> *EH*, p. 71.

<sup>98</sup> *EH*, p. 71.

Nietzsche claims that his uniqueness stems from his “neutrality” to the “overall problems of life.” This is difficult to accept, because such a claim provides no subject for debate or discourse. Moreover, Nietzsche associates his “neutrality” with the “happiness of [his] existence”:

The happiness of my existence, perhaps its uniqueness, lies in its fatefulness; to give it the form of a riddle: as my father I am already dead and as my mother I am still alive and growing old. This double birth, from the highest and lowest rungs on the ladder of life, as it were, simultaneously decadent and *beginning*—this, if anything, explains that neutrality, that freedom from partisanship in relation to the overall problems of life, that is, perhaps, my distinction.<sup>99</sup>

For Nietzsche, existence and fate are co-extensive. The indifference or “neutrality” of this co-extension nonetheless allows the possibility of form, or the form of “being” *who* appropriates neutrality and is thereby, like Nietzsche, “distinct” (“neutral”). This is contradictory. Nietzsche claims that he is distinct (“perhaps” unique) because he is born of neutrality (wherein the hierarchy of his “double birth” is encompassed and dissolved). And yet, this is Nietzsche’s writing, and it is presented “in the form of a riddle.” Thus, in Nietzsche the form of being is always “the form of a riddle”; this is Nietzsche as writing distinct from Nietzsche implied by “I.” Nietzsche returns to the present through the reader of his text (Nietzsche’s “body”). “We” appear *before* the text, while Nietzsche traverses history in our

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<sup>99</sup> *EH*, p. 74-75.



interpretation of the riddle (the form of his “being”). Now, Nietzsche asks about the future—Who are you?

## Chapter III

### The Death Wish: Woman, Chance, and Identity

**Abstract:** Chapter III maintains the exigency of “death” in Nietzsche’s engagement with the everydayness of the question of “being.” Section I emphasizes the persistence of “selfishness” at play in the extrapolation of the “forbidden.” Section II heralds the necessity of “death” in Nietzsche’s conception of “doing.” Finally, section III propounds the correlation of “chance,” “woman,” and “identity” in Nietzsche’s ontological signification of “being.”

#### Forbidden Exploits: Truth, Selfishness, and Meta-text

We must remember Nietzsche’s assertion, “I am one thing, my writings are another,” in order to begin exploring who Nietzsche is and the question of being this exploration unavoidably unveils. The disparity between the two Nietzsches—Nietzsche as text and Nietzsche as “I”—introduces the ontological question of identity that appears to any interpretation of the Nietzschean *corpus*. Thus, we begin with the corpse; this is the text and the body. We take from Nietzsche’s assertion that we do not know him, although we familiarize ourselves with his writings. From the texts, we may piece together a coherent whole; we can make an exposition of the writing that contributes, as Blanchot suggests, to “useful, necessary discourse.” However, over the *course* of interpreting Nietzsche in the text, the other Nietzsche that is not his writing appears as *dis*—course. Nietzsche appears unannounced in a detour from the writing assigned to him and for which he is held accountable, because the writing does

not fully reveal the reality of the author: “Even one’s thoughts one cannot entirely reproduce in words.”<sup>100</sup> And yet, the coherency of Nietzsche’s texts, in the form of an exposition that takes into account even the contradictions that are essential to his thought and to his uniqueness, are not Nietzsche. We fail to know Nietzsche, because ‘he’ slips away in a resemblance to the text.

As Heidegger has noted, with Nietzsche it is a question of experience. Nietzsche is an experience of the thinking that is possible only as a detour from the writing that traces the flux and force of thought. Nietzsche himself knew and maintained this: “[To] understand six sentences from [*Zarathustra*]*—*that is, to have *experienced* six sentences from it*—*would raise you to a higher level of existence that ‘modern’ men are capable of achieving” (author’s italics).<sup>101</sup> For Nietzsche, “coming-to-know” signifies “coming-to-be,” or “becoming”; it is the unique understanding that becomes experience. In this becoming, the movement of the thinking that becomes experience always gestures toward the future. Becoming always realizes (it does not answer) the question of the future, the question of the archive, and the question of being. Thus we appear before ourselves through the text in the guise of Nietzsche.

This is disconcerting, and Nietzsche’s project is to encourage the necessity of this panic initiated by the question of being. In

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<sup>100</sup> *GS*, p. 148.

<sup>101</sup> *EH*, p. 100.

confronting the phrase, “How to become what you are,” the question of being assumes the form of a riddle. Like the written phrase, the riddle is fragmented by the question it unveils. Its answer demands more than a discursive (written or spoken) response; the response necessitates an identity beyond the language of grammar and signs, or the forms of identification in discourse. In short, Nietzsche’s question demands excess in the structural play of language. At play in Nietzsche’s language (his “fragmented speech”)<sup>102</sup> is an exteriority of text, or “being” marked by text. Thus, in Nietzsche the question of “being” necessitates the problematic treatment of the “text as fragment.”<sup>103</sup> In the fragmentation at play in Nietzsche’s language, the question of being gains a veneer of substantiality and a semblance of becoming.

In Nietzsche, the question of being connotes a predicament of solitude; this is an ontological silence. For Nietzsche, the problematic of language is the essential incapacity of “signs” to convey meaning independently of a system and relativity; this inextricable connectivity is the “superficialization” and “generalization” of language in the “net”

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<sup>102</sup> See Chapter II, Sec. IV.

<sup>103</sup> Blanchot, p. 141: “Every interpretation of Nietzsche should, then, remain faithful to these principles: remain unsatisfied until one has found that which contradicts what one has asserted about him; maintain amidst the contradictions the exigency of the whole that is constantly present, though constantly dissolved by them; never conceive of this whole—which is non-unitary—as a system, but as a question, and as the passion of the research in its impetus toward the true, one with the critique of all that has been acquired in the course of the research; grasp anew “the real dialectic”: thought as play of the world, text as fragment.”

of consciousness.<sup>104</sup> The collective nature of consciousness for Nietzsche employs language as a claim on solitude in order to know what it is; and yet, the solitary identity that emerges has already been claimed in the act of collecting and identifying (*knowing*) it. Thus, making the assertion “it is” signifies that “it” already “was” (for Nietzsche, this is the “password” of history).<sup>105</sup> Thus, language confronts the possibility of solitude in an *act* of appropriating what had already been set out for appropriation, and is therefore the scene of confrontation between knowledge and experience; between consciousness and solitude; between animal and man; between individuality and collectivity. In Nietzsche, language formulates the binary context of the “being” that Nietzsche calls into question with the fragmented phrase “how one becomes what one is”: “Becoming what you are presupposes that you do not have the slightest idea *what you are*” (author’s italics).<sup>106</sup> For Nietzsche, “being” is a question beyond the text; it is lost to the authority and jurisdiction of language in ontological questions of identity. In everyday language, “being” becomes excessive.<sup>107</sup>

Nietzsche seeks to transgress the traditional limits philosophy sets for the notion of “being.” In Nietzsche, this transgression occurs by questioning the correlation of “concepts” and “ideals” in discourse.

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<sup>104</sup> See Chapter II, Sec. I.

<sup>105</sup> See Chapter II, Sec. III.

<sup>106</sup> *EH*, p. 96.

<sup>107</sup> See Chapter II, Sec. IV.

Transgression implies “wandering in the forbidden”;<sup>108</sup> for Nietzsche, the “forbidden” is worldly “truth” (juxtaposed to “ideal” truth): “[It] is precisely the truth that has been absolutely forbidden so far.”<sup>109</sup> In illustrating his philosophy as that which “strives for the forbidden,” or “*Nitimus in vetitum*,”<sup>110</sup> Nietzsche’s project is not to refute truth in order to replace it. In a different fashion, Nietzsche extrapolates the origins of the notion of “truth” in philosophy. For Nietzsche, the notion of “truth” reflects “the *hidden* history of philosophers, the psychology of its greatest names” (Nietzsche’s italics).<sup>111</sup> In Nietzsche, “truth” is the discursive mask of intentionality.

For Nietzsche, the problem of philosophy is the production or “error” of truth. In Nietzsche, “truth,” “knowledge,” “being”—among the instituting subjects of Western philosophy—appear as symptoms of unconsciously suppressed individuality:

Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir; also that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constituted the real germ of life from which the whole plant had grown.<sup>112</sup>

For Nietzsche, the philosopher and philosophy are distinct, in the sense that author and text are distinct from one another, just as Nietzsche is one thing, his writings another. In Nietzsche, “discourse”

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<sup>108</sup> *EH*, p. 72.

<sup>109</sup> *EH*, p. 72.

<sup>110</sup> *EH*, p. 72.

<sup>111</sup> *EH*, p. 72.

<sup>112</sup> *BGE*, p. 203.

exteriorizes (masks) the interiority of intentionality in an attempt to appropriate the intrinsic individuality of nature (in man) through the impression of “truth.” Thus, for Nietzsche the “hidden history” of “every great philosophy” is the success of its bait—“truth”: “In the market place one convinces with gestures.”<sup>113</sup> In Nietzsche, “truth” is a “convincing gesture” that sells in the market place of philosophy. Truth is defined by the quantity of attention it attracts; the signification of truth is the measure of its popularity, commonality, and desirability. Thus, in Nietzsche truth is the façade of desire.

This negative perception of “truth” that belongs to Nietzsche depicts “truth” as a commodity in the marketplace propelled by “selfishness.” The association of “truth” and “selfishness” is Nietzsche’s paramount contribution to the question of being in discourse: “[There] needs to be a genuine answer to the question of *how you become what you are*. And this leads me to that masterpiece in the art of survival—*selfishness*” (author’s italics).<sup>114</sup> In Nietzsche, “selfishness” signifies an instinct to dominate, subject, and command; “selfishness” is identical to the notion of “master” in Nietzsche. Consequently, Nietzsche contends that the ideal of “truth” in philosophy is the secret (“hidden”) ideal of mastery held by the philosopher (the “clever animal”):<sup>115</sup> “For every drive wants to be

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<sup>113</sup> Z, p. 235.

<sup>114</sup> EH, p. 96.

<sup>115</sup> TL, p. 254.

master—and it attempts to philosophize in *that spirit*” (author’s italics).<sup>116</sup> The “spirit” of mastery—selfishness—is neither animal nor human [*menschlich*] in Nietzsche; it is a life force. In a different vernacular, Deleuze holds that the notion of “master” delineates the possibility of identity: “[Force] is that which appropriates the thing, which exploits it, which takes possession of it or is expressed in it.” Deleuze’s “force” signified in Nietzsche by the notion of “selfishness” is the interiorization of exteriority; the individual expresses what it appropriates and exploits. In this way, the “exteriority of accidents”<sup>117</sup> that locates the individual subject also possesses it. Thus, “identity” is a dual disposition in subjection and possession.

Nietzsche exposes identity as the ideal of “mastery.” In Nietzsche, the question of identity that holds “being” as an ideal form (that of “master”) situates the notion of individuality in a worldly reality of exteriority and accident (Foucault’s analysis of “history” in Nietzsche). For Nietzsche, the exteriority that situates the subject-position of individuality manifests in the identity of the subject who possesses its effects within him. In Nietzsche, the interplaying indifference of “accidents” is paramount, although Nietzsche excoriates “man” for overlooking their authority: “[These] petty concerns—nutrition, location, climate, recuperation, the whole casuistry of selfishness—are far more important than all the concepts

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<sup>116</sup> BGE, p. 204.

<sup>117</sup> Foucault, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, p. 81.



people have considered important so far.”<sup>118</sup> Such a claim is nothing short of profound. In Nietzsche, the division between the notions of “exterior” and “interior”—or “objective” and “subjective”—is erased (this is the genealogical hermeneutic). Therefore, the dissolution of interiority and exteriority, which is the affirmation of neutrality, is precisely the coming to be of the individual as the appropriation of the territory, the “quantity of reality,” that it expresses.<sup>119</sup> Becoming what you are means becoming the reality of your fate: “*Amor fati* [love of fate]: that you do not want anything to be different, not forwards, not backwards, not for all eternity. Not just to tolerate necessity, still less to conceal it—all idealism is hypocrisy towards necessity—but to *love* it...”<sup>120</sup> Consequently, becoming one’s fate implies becoming played-out, or being “not for all eternity”; this is the cessation or neutralization of interiority and exteriority in the concept of the future. Thus, how one becomes what one is necessitates “death.”

### **Posthumous Continuity: Doing, Imperilment, and the Sunset**

From the analysis thus far, we are now confronted with the ambiguous question of the congruency between the notions of “reality” and “death”; this is the question of being. The difficulty of

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<sup>118</sup> *EC*, p. 98.

<sup>119</sup> Deleuze, p. 3.

<sup>120</sup> *EH*, p. 99.

this question is precisely that the very expression and attempt to represent “reality,” “death,” and “being” in discourse is to disjoin meaning from the exclusivity of individual experience. This limitation must be noted in order to substantiate the hermeneutic these terms proffer as concepts, however disappointing that may be. We can only speak of “reality” and “death” if we acknowledge that we remain to become the meaning of those ideas; we will come to signify them. This signification is the coalescence of knowing and experiencing (in the future) that Nietzsche introduces with *Zarathustra*.<sup>121</sup> Nietzsche tentatively defines “reality” as “our world of desires and passions, and we could not get down, or up, to any other ‘reality’ besides the reality of our drives—for thinking is merely a relation of these drives to each other.”<sup>122</sup> In Nietzsche, “reality” is a rapport, in the Husserlian sense. For Nietzsche, “thinking” is a symptom of this rapport; it is neither internal nor external, “down” or “up.” Thus, for Nietzsche thinking is a neutral movement of intentionality inaccessible to epistemological capture. For Nietzsche, this inaccessibility is “being” in motion (the movement of the relating “drives”). In Nietzsche, “being in motion” and “becoming” are the terms with which to approach the concept of “death.”

What Nietzsche means by becoming is being. For Nietzsche, there is no concept of being distinct from acting, or “doing”: “There is

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<sup>121</sup> See Chapter III, Sec. I.

<sup>122</sup> *BGE*, p. 237.

no such substratum [of being]; there is no ‘being’ behind the deed, its effect and what becomes of it; ‘the doer’ is invented as an afterthought—the doing is everything [*das Tun ist alles*].”<sup>123</sup> In Nietzsche, “being” means “doing.” Like “being,” “doing” is not a concept for Nietzsche. Consequently, “doing” is affirmation, which is being. Deleuze maintains that Nietzsche does not altogether abandon the possibility of “being” as a concept. Instead, he holds that Nietzsche associates the notion of “being” with “affirmation”: “Nietzsche does not do away with the concept of being. He proposes a new conception of being. Affirmation is being.”<sup>124</sup> In Nietzsche, “doing” is how one becomes what one is, because “affirmation” is a perspective that attains to itself. This was the movement of “questioning” implied in the plural interpretation of identity, or Nietzsche’s “who”<sup>125</sup> (as “which one”).<sup>126</sup>

As has already been introduced in the final Section of Chapter II, Nietzsche’s concept of “being” remains (emerges) as a question today, for the question of identity that issues from the discursive divide between Nietzsche’s “I” and Nietzsche’s “writing” is located in Nietzsche’s reader. The question descends from the text into its

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<sup>123</sup> *GM*, p. 26. It should also be noted that in Goethe’s *Faust*, “In the beginning was the deed.” Nietzsche’s notion of history might be usefully compared with Romantic conceptions of history in relation to the question of being.

<sup>124</sup> Deleuze, p. 186.

<sup>125</sup> See Chapter II, Sec. IV.

<sup>126</sup> See Chapter I, Sec. I.

future, which is the present (always “imperfect”).<sup>127</sup> Today, “Nietzsche” remains a question for the future; like Dionysus, Nietzsche is reborn from the fragments of text that resemble and conceal their authority (in the intimation of an “author”): “Some are born posthumously.”<sup>128</sup>

In Nietzsche, the concepts of “being” and “death” are co-extensive, because their conceptual limitations imply a totality, or “One.” However, in Nietzsche “totality” is essentially plural (as Blanchot and Deleuze emphasize). Therefore, Nietzsche’s notion of “being” does not signify a totality beyond the mode in which it comes to be; this “mode” is Nietzsche’s notion of “doing.” If “being” is understood strictly as “doing,” then Nietzsche’s phrase, “the doing is everything,” is more than a rhetorical emphasis of his rejection of a “being behind the deed.” Indeed, it is an attempt to signify “doing” not only as “being,” but also as its totality, or “everything.” Thus, in Nietzsche “reality” and “everything” imply a multiplicity of irreconcilable modes that individually come into being through modes, or “doing.” The all-encompassing yet “neutral” perspective of these modes is Nietzsche’s conception of “life.” Heidegger understands the significance of “everything” in Nietzsche’s thought as “life” and “beings as a whole”: “In Nietzsche’s thinking *life* is usually the term for what is and for beings as a whole insofar as they are. Occasionally,

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<sup>127</sup> cf. Chapter II, sec. III.

<sup>128</sup> See Deleuze’s *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 16-18.

however, it also means *our* life in a special sense, which is to say, the Being of man” (author’s italics).<sup>129</sup> The “Being of man” that Heidegger posits is precisely the individuality of experience amassed in the neutral perspective of “life” and “beings as a whole.” Therefore, this neutral perspective—Nietzsche’s “neutrality”—is the “Being of man” in “doing,” which for Nietzsche is an evaluating perspective (and evaluation of perspective, or another perspective). Thus, the reality of being is doing.

In Nietzsche “doing” is strictly individual; “doing” occurs behind its effect, or the appearance and exteriority of being-active, which is a function of the herd (social activity). Two approaches to the notion of “activity” are possible. On the one hand, the perceived (phenomenal) effect of activity is of collective concern; this is the object of politics as a network of surveillance (in Nietzsche, “consciousness”<sup>130</sup>). On the other hand, Nietzsche maintains a mode of doing that does not need a political or conscious purpose; in fact, Nietzsche’s general interest in politics, rights, and social institutions derives from a model of ethics ordered by positive notions of violence and domination, as opposed to an egalitarian model oriented by a philosophy of “liberalism.”<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Heidegger, p. 15.

<sup>130</sup> cf. Chapter II, sec. I.

<sup>131</sup> See Keith Ansell-Pearson’s, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker: The Perfect Nihilist* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1994), 9-12.

However, in Nietzsche the positive mode of doing from which the notion of “being” is indissoluble persists by way of rupture. In Nietzsche’s case, writing is an activity that bears the mark of doing: the marks that comprise the text mark the continual force of doing that spawns a *corpus* of work in the corpse of individuality.<sup>132</sup> In Nietzsche, text is a form of rupture; the act of writing, which is the material ordering of pen put to paper, ink spread to lines, lines interrelated and distanced to communicate the space that forms the word, is a mode of rupture. Thus, rupture creates the text. The semblance of the whole (totality) is imperceptible multiplicity and modality of rupture. For Nietzsche, “doing” is continuous (as are the grammatical tenses of the terms, “doing” and “being”); and yet, “doing” ruptures the image of continuity (text). This is Nietzsche’s paradox: “doing” is the rupturing of “being” as text or creation, because “doing” is creating: “the doing is everything.” Again, the form of being in Nietzsche returns to that of the riddle. Again, being returns as a question. The return of the question is Nietzsche’s hermeneutic and ontology. The return of being in the form of the question that Nietzsche’s ontology brings about continues in Blanchot. Blanchot maintains this inexorable ontology of question and being: “Questioning is the movement wherein being veers and appears as the

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<sup>132</sup> See Chapter III, Sec. I.

suspension of being in its turning.”<sup>133</sup> The “movement” Blanchot upholds as the appearance of being bears on Nietzsche’s notion of “becoming.” In similar fashion, Deleuze contends that “[Becoming] has being and only becoming has being.”<sup>134</sup> Therefore, in Nietzsche the force of questioning is “doing,” wherein one becomes what one is as the vehicle of the future; this vehicle is rupture.

The notions of “thinking” and “questioning” have identical significance in Nietzsche (even if they do not constitute a “substratum” for identity). For Nietzsche, the notion of the individuality of thought, as the “relation of drives,” is not identical with that of subjectivity, because “becoming”—the vehicle of the future—is a pluralistic style of thinking that does not take “being” as an essentially singular and unified subject. Deleuze emphasizes the relation of style and thought in becoming (creating): “to think is to create: this is Nietzsche’s greatest lesson.”<sup>135</sup> The co-extension of thinking (questioning) and doing affirms *continuous* being—rupture—insofar as it overcomes “suspension” and the image of continuity, habit, repetition and repeatability. In Nietzsche, thinking is continuous as a style of becoming that ruptures continuity, or “consciousness.” Thus, Nietzsche’s hermeneutic threatens the

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<sup>133</sup> Blanchot, p. 13.

<sup>134</sup> Deleuze, p. xi.

<sup>135</sup> Deleuze, p. xiv.

stability of custom, morality, and surveillance. Nietzsche threatens man.

Nietzsche threatens man with the child of his style of thought; this is the Overman. Nietzsche introduces the Overman as the figure of the affirmation, or being, that overcomes man, which is to say, man as the image of “continuity.” Blanchot interprets the movement of this overcoming and its representative, the Overman, as the doing of questioning:

In truth, what is the overman? We do not know and, properly speaking, Nietzsche does not know. We know only that the thought of the overman signifies: man disappears; an affirmation that is pushed furthest when it doubles into a question: does man disappear?<sup>136</sup>

The Overman “signifies,” because it immediately questions what is brought into significance by its affirmation that “man disappears.” The signified disappearance of man is, again, precisely the place of the question: “does man disappear?” Thus, the Overman signifies the concept of the future in the questioning and rupture of man. For Nietzsche, man is not the ideal form of the future. Consequently, Nietzsche attempts to rupture the concept of man as the essential subject of philosophy; this is the meaning of “philosophizing with a hammer,” which is the subtitle to Nietzsche’s final work, *Twilight of the Idols*. For Nietzsche, philosophizing with a hammer is the doing, or thinking, in which philosophical thought and life coalesce in a style of

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<sup>136</sup> Blanchot, p. 158.



living and thinking. Deleuze maintains that, “this is why we always have the beliefs, feelings and thoughts that we deserve given our way of being or our style of life.”<sup>137</sup> The coalescing of life and thought connotes a style of “being.”

In Nietzsche, “being” configures to the thought of “death”; this configuration is “style.” Two styles of thought figure prominently in Nietzsche: Antichrist and Christian. Each mode signifies a distinct relation between “becoming” and the “future”; that is, each disparately conceives of the relation between “life” and the possibility of eternity in “death.” Consequently, the notion of the “future” is the notion of “death” in Nietzsche. For the Antichrist, the future necessitates the cessation of thought in existence, the condition of its “not for all eternity,” in order to think the future as possibility. Therefore, “eternity” is not an ideal in this mode of evaluating (“being”).<sup>138</sup> On the other hand, the Christian holds eternity as the ideal form of “being”: the Christian seeks the afterlife (continuity) in eternity (“Heaven”). In Nietzsche, the thought of the future, either as “eternity” or as “possibility,” is a thought of “death.” Nietzsche emphasizes the essential proximity of thought and silence in his illustration of the relation between future and death:

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<sup>137</sup> Deleuze, p. 1.

<sup>138</sup> Deleuze, p. 1: “Evaluations, in essence, are not values but ways of being, modes of existence of those who judge and evaluate, serving as principles for the values on the basis of which they judge.”

It's always like the last moment before the departure of an emigrant ship: people have more to say to each other than ever; the hour is late; the ocean and its desolate silence await impatiently behind all noise—so covetous, so certain of its prey. And everyone, everyone takes the past to be little or nothing while the near future is everything; hence this haste, this clamour, this outshouting and out-hustling one another. Everyone wants to be the first in this future—and yet death and deathly silence are the only things certain and common to all in this future! How strange that this sole certainty and commonality barely makes an impression on people and that they are *farthest* removed from feeling like a brotherhood of death! It makes me happy to see that people do not at all want to think the thought of death! I would very much like to do something that would make the thought of life even a hundred times more *worth being thought* to them (author's italics).<sup>139</sup>

Styles of “being”—configurations of “death” in thought—signify qualities of “feeling” in reality; this is the “brotherhood of death.” Consequently, “death” is not an ideal form or truth for Nietzsche. In Nietzsche, the thought of “death” is the “feeling” of being alive. For Nietzsche, “feeling” connotes the possibility of reality in being. Problematically, Nietzsche contends that the “common” mode of “being” signifies a turn to distraction in order to avoid the certainty of death; this is “outshouting,” “clamour,” and “haste.” Moreover, for Nietzsche the turn away from the thought of death dulls, suppresses, and devaluates the “feeling” of being alive; this turning-away from the notion of “death” alienates “being” from the possibility of the future and the continuation of life necessitated by death. For Nietzsche, the idealization of the future (as on the “emigrant ship”) turns away from

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<sup>139</sup> GS, p. 158.

the thought of “death” in an attempt to rupture the inevitability of its possibility. However, for Nietzsche this turning-away merely fissures “doing” in the abandonment of style to the collective din of “clamour” and “haste”; that is, the thought of life assimilates the collective style for a distraction from “silence.”

For Nietzsche, “death” alone maintains the possibility of the freedom to be (in the “infinite” sense). Zarathustra asserts that, “My death I praise to you, the free death that comes to me because *I want*” (Nietzsche’s italics).<sup>140</sup> For Zarathustra, the “free death” is a form of praise. Zarathustra does not “want” death. He wants to live in order for death to come to him. Thus, life is free from death in “free death,” because it lives as if in infinity, or the affirmation of the infinite. The notion of “being” presented by Zarathustra is inextricable from the future, because it is not conjugated by the exigency of fearing or escaping death. Zarathustra does not know death, and he praises his own “wanting” to die as the appropriating force of his wanting (willing) to possess death.

Zarathustra qualifies this “wanting” as the wanting to die “at the right time.”<sup>141</sup> What Zarathustra implies with the idea of ‘dying at the right time’ is that the life that perishes has consummated itself in death: “I show you the consummating death that becomes a goad and a promise to the living. The consummated one dies *his* death,

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<sup>140</sup> Z, p. 54.

<sup>141</sup> Z, p. 53.

victorious, surrounded by those who hope and promise.”<sup>142</sup> For Nietzsche, death consummates life by returning the future to the living through the promise that descends in death (to those “surrounding” the one who dies). For Nietzsche, “being” becomes “death” as a promise of the future in life; this is the promise of pure possibility and multiplicity.

The “free death” that Nietzsche introduces in *Zarathustra* is the consummation of “being” that promises the possibility of individuality for the future. The potentiality of “I” continues in death to live on in its promise kept by the living: “In your dying your spirit and your virtue should still glow, like a sunset around the earth; or else your dying has failed you.”<sup>143</sup> In dying, which is still a form of life to the living, Zarathustra proclaims the continuation of “being” in the creation of rupture (dying) that ramifies and multiplies in the appearance of consummation (death); this is the “sunset.” In Nietzsche, “death” is still “doing,” so long as the “death” of one becomes the promise of “death” to another; for Nietzsche, “death” is the semblance—the “glow”—of individuality in “being” (in conjunction with Heidegger’s phrase, “Being of man”). In Nietzsche, the semblance or appearance of “death” marks the continuation of “doing,” or “being”; like the text, “death” is the image of continuity ruptured by the individuality of the promise’s recipient. Thus, for Nietzsche, death

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<sup>142</sup> Z, p. 53.

<sup>143</sup> Z, p. 55.

promises the emergence of being—the continuation of rupture—in the future; “death” affirms the futurity of “being.”

### **The Living Monument: Woman, Sphinx, and Identity**

In Nietzsche, “identity” and “being” emerge in death; this is Nietzsche’s existential ontology. The perspective that Nietzsche offers in *Zarathustra* strictly favors life by demanding, seeking, finding, *wanting* and willing death. In wanting death, being (“doing”) comports toward the inevitability of its cessation, such that the being that radiates from the specter of the individual’s death (the sunset, the writing) germinates in the present in order to emerge in the future. For Nietzsche, this germination is the child.

For Nietzsche, death is actively created in the child. Zarathustra wants the life after death, although this is not the Christian afterlife: “I want your victory and your freedom to long for a child. You should build living monuments to your victory and your liberation.”<sup>144</sup> For Nietzsche (or Zarathustra), “being” continues to identify in death through the “living monument” of the child; and yet, the child continues to identify the future of death: “You should build over and beyond yourself.”<sup>145</sup> In Nietzsche, the notion of “identity” (as “being”) becomes through genealogical descent: the child is created as the

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<sup>144</sup> Z, p. 51.

<sup>145</sup> Z, p. 51.

living monument to death. Thus, for Nietzsche the child identifies “death” as the promise of life; consequently, the child dies in the future as a continuation of this promise. In Nietzsche, the movement of the future unfolds as the appropriation of death in the life that later dies; the child is both the “living monument” and the mausoleum.

In Nietzsche, the question of the child connotes the notions of “identity” and “being” that have, as Nietzsche did, a “double birth.” Whence the child? Nietzsche is generally perceived as a misogynist, and the child is Nietzsche’s way of assigning and explaining an essence to woman: “Everything about woman is a riddle, and everything about woman has one solution: it is called pregnancy.”<sup>146</sup> The contemporary Nietzsche scholar and translator Adrian Del Caro contends that Nietzsche’s particular views on woman (at least in *Zarathustra*) “were no doubt influenced by his traumatic experience with Lou Salome, with whom he had been in love. The writing of [*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*] coincides with and chronicles Nietzsche’s coming to terms with the profound betrayal he felt at the hands of both Salome and Paul Ree.”<sup>147</sup> Whether or not this excuses or at least pacifies the vitriol of Nietzsche’s writing remains beyond the scope of this section. Nonetheless, the notion of “woman” in Nietzsche figures dramatically into the more general subjects in philosophy with which

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<sup>146</sup> Z, p. 48.

<sup>147</sup> Z, p. 41-42.

Nietzsche worked. Perhaps most uniquely, Nietzsche associates the notion of “woman” and “riddle,” which situates the ontological question of “being” (“riddle” as the form of “being”) in terms of the everyday, as opposed to esoteric discourse and metaphysics.

In Nietzsche, the notions of “woman” and “child” connote the interrelation of riddle and solution—the question of being and “doing.” For Nietzsche, the genealogical tree of the family carries the idea of “origins” inaccessible to the discursive meaning of “reality” and “being” in the world. In Nietzsche, the movement that correlates these concerns is “death.” Whether or not the movement of “death,” as the unfolding of “history” in life, touches on the notion of the “death drive” appropriated in the twentieth century by Freud and later by Derrida is too broad for the present consideration of “woman,” “child,” and “man.” However, the force of destruction implied by the notion of “death” bears on Nietzsche’s notion of creation and “child.” In Nietzsche, the relation of woman, child, and man unveils the genealogy of the question of being introduced by death: the disappearance of man in death becomes in the child the question “does man disappear?”<sup>148</sup> Consequently, for Nietzsche the “solution” that the child becomes to the “riddle” of woman exhibits woman as the being of truth: “Supposing truth is a woman—what then? Are there not grounds for the suspicion that all philosophers, insofar as

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<sup>148</sup> cf. Chapter III, sec. II.

they were dogmatists, have been very inexpert about women?”<sup>149</sup>

Supposing that truth is a woman, man (the *dogmatist*) assails her.

And yet, being “inexpert,” he is left empty-handed. His inexpertness with woman reveals his distance from her, even in the grandest or “great” efforts to attain her.

It is at a distance that man knows woman. Derrida contends the necessity of this distance, the misidentification of which “would be at the risk of death *itself*” (Derrida’s italics):

A woman seduces from a distance. In fact, distance is the very element of her power. Yet one must beware to keep one’s distance from her beguiling song of enchantment. A distance from distance must be maintained...If it is necessary to keep one’s distance from the feminine operation...it is perhaps because the ‘woman’ is not a determinable identity.<sup>150</sup>

In Nietzsche, distance (woman) arouses identity (“man”) yet always remains to be identified (“being” or “doing”). In Nietzsche, woman is the bearer of identity but never identifies what she bears; rather, she gives birth to the becoming of identity—the child. Thus, it is woman, or truth, with which man consummates the being of “his” identity through procreation (the production of the living monument). Finally, in the drive to procreate, man attempts to appropriate his death by appropriating woman (a woman, or women) with a child: “A man is for woman a means: the end is always the child.” For Nietzsche, the child is the end that woman seeks. In producing a child, man

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<sup>149</sup> *BGE*, p. 192.

<sup>150</sup> Derrida, *Spurs*, p. 49.



appropriates both his death (through the child) and truth (woman)—he produces an identity that he did not carry in him. In Nietzsche, this double appropriation is signified by marriage: “Marriage: that is what I call the will by two for creating the one who is more than those who created it. Respect for one another I call marriage, and respect for the one who wills such willing.”<sup>151</sup> In Nietzsche, truth (woman) and “doing” (“being”) are married in the identity of the future, or “willing.” For Nietzsche, “man” is absent in the future; for identity—man—is overcome by the future of identity that truth bears but does not identify. Man appears in order to disappear. Blanchot contends that the future identity is signified by the Overman whom Zarathustra proclaims with joy; yet, following this proclamation, Zarathustra proclaims with hesitancy and timidity that man perpetually re-appears to be dissolved again. For Blanchot, this was the sense of the “eternal return.” The question continues to emerge: “does man disappear?”

In Nietzsche, the Overman does not replace man. For Nietzsche, man has become real as a confrontation and espousing with the figure of truth: “what is woman for a man?”<sup>152</sup> For Nietzsche, this question is the question for the “real man”: “Two things the real man wants: danger and play. That is why he wants woman as the most dangerous plaything.” Man is real insofar as he wants “danger” and “play.” Thus, in wanting woman, “the most dangerous plaything,” man wants death

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<sup>151</sup> Z, p. 52.

<sup>152</sup> Z, p. 48.

and identity; woman is his greatest and gravest evaluation. In Nietzsche, the notion of “woman” means more than an instrument with which biological man procreates. Woman is the everyday sphinx; man plays with the riddles she proffers at the same time as the identity of man faces annihilation in failing to answer her. This is why in Nietzsche the riddle of woman is solved with pregnancy: the child is born as the consummation (self-consumption) of the sphinx.<sup>153</sup>

If woman is for man what the sphinx was for Oedipus, then the appropriation of death that man seeks in woman is precisely the “distance” of man’s identity from the semblance of its truth, “the condition of its being alive,” in death. Derrida maintains this distance as an “undecidability” which constitutes “the gaze of Oedipus”:

Although there is no truth in itself of the sexual difference in itself, of either man or woman in itself, all of ontology nonetheless, identification and verification of identity, has resulted in concealing, even as it presupposes it, this undecidability.<sup>154</sup>

The “sexual difference” between man and woman is a *dis*—engendered space or distance. Thus, the “identification and verification of identity” that is ontology is the very designation of that space as truth. For man, this is the identification of woman (which for Derrida does not concern her). This identification is “concealed” precisely because

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<sup>153</sup> In Greek mythology, the sphinx is always female. She posits a riddle to whoever chances upon her. If the riddle is answered incorrectly, the sphinx kills the person. If the riddle is answered correctly, the sphinx devours herself.

<sup>154</sup> Derrida, *Spurs*, p. 103-105.

the verification of that identity is also what identifies man. Yet, the distance between man and truth, or man and woman, is not “truth in itself” but “undecidability”; this undecidability is the chance of “death” in “being.” Thus, death can be said to be neither far nor near, neither looming nor distant. In truth (for man), it is always present in woman. In the dis-engendered distance of truth, the chance of death is everywhere present. At play in the encounter between Oedipus and the Sphinx, there was always the chance of death, but who would die was undecided until the riddle was solved. The death of the riddle was its answer: man. Yet, in Oedipus’ spoken answer, “man” came into being only under the duress of death, or the death threat of the sphinx that was posed *within* her. It is, therefore, the chance of death that conditions the identity of man carried by the woman in the child.

In Nietzsche, the identity of man in the course of his life has the potentiality of being “real.” For Nietzsche, the “real man” who needs only danger and play (“woman”) becomes “real” through the chance of death surrounding woman; this is the “glow” that marks her distance. Thus, man becomes “real” as he seeks and engages woman. In Nietzsche, woman is the chance of death; she appears as both the death that he is not (the sphinx devours herself) and the death that he needs in order for the emergence of identity in the future (the child). However, the chance of death is not engendered, and it occurs everywhere and *indifferently*. Man and woman are one (“married”) as

existential positions, because the indifference of chance is the plane on which the riddle of the human *being* plays out. It is from its *neutral distance* with death that being comes to be. In Nietzsche, “being” never knows death as its other. Everyday the chances to be and die remain to be summoned and unveiled by the creating that becomes creation. The child is still not yet born.

## Conclusion

Where is Nietzsche, today? The content of the Chapters that lead up to this question, which is the beginning of the Conclusion, leaves us wondering whether or not discourse about Nietzsche has always been an unconscious dialogue with him. By engaging the Nietzschean *corpus*, we engage with the question with which he leaves us in *Ecce Homo*: “Have I been understood?” Something strange, *unheimlich*, has happened in this thesis. The introduction began with the preliminary warning in the Preface of *Ecce Homo*: you must be made for Nietzsche’s writings. Now, the Conclusion returns to the departing question in *Ecce Homo*: has Nietzsche been understood? Yet, where is the body of *Ecce Homo*? In the space of the text’s body, its midsection, under the title “Why I am so Clever,” Nietzsche tells us of “three things” that “you should not get wrong at any cost”: “the choice of nutrition, the choice of climate and location...and the mode of recuperation.”<sup>155</sup> These ingredients to the formula of “becoming what you are” (subtitle to *Ecce Homo*) turn us away from Nietzsche if we are to understand him. The physical document of Nietzsche’s text is the corpse awaiting examination. But what is *unheimlich* about this is that the examination has produced another body: Chapters One, Two, and Three of this thesis, this physical document. It marks the “becoming” of something, but what that exactly *is* remains in question.

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<sup>155</sup> *EH*, p. 89.

“I” certainly do not know, since it is a question of experience, as it was (if you remember) for Heidegger and for Nietzsche in *Zarathustra*. Thus, it is to be concluded that this Conclusion is supposed to be the child of the thesis, which is itself a child of “becoming.”

What is most surprising about this thesis is that its subject, Nietzsche, disappears over the course of interpretation. While Nietzsche disappears, Deleuze, Derrida, and Foucault emerge. And yet, the emergence of these thinkers, in the various forms of their books about Nietzsche which I have before me, witnesses the return of Nietzsche in the genealogical element of the subject in the French thinkers’ works. In Chapter I, Nietzsche quietly appears as a Derridian deconstructionist in his analysis of reason and mnemonics that appear in Derrida as the “psychical machine” in the notion of the “archive.” This thesis has continued that process to a certain extent. At several points in Chapters II and III, after Derrida’s idea of the archive was introduced in Chapter I, a certain phrase was repeated: “as has already been said....” This phrase marks the process of archivization, because it is the mark or “impression” made by the archive. This is the exteriority of the individual that introduces the question of being in Nietzsche, since “being” is not a substrate for him. Thus, the physical document of this thesis bears the mark of an interiority that emerges only as the individual (“me!”) becomes external and literally “spills onto the page” with language. Yet, the process (of

archivization) continues, because the language, as physical writing on the pages, conceals the origins from which the writing emerges. Thus, this thesis demands interpretation, because it fails as an exposition. The thesis, as a whole, is the result of a choice and an inability. Nietzsche is nowhere to be found if I want to blame him for the difficulty I have had in writing an interpretation of his texts. Thus, for the Conclusion and the Introduction to the thesis, I have changed styles. This remains a question for the future.

Chapter II witnessed the inverted turnstile of Nietzsche's "maybe." Specifically, the principle of maybe does not operate linearly in hermeneutics. Instead, the essence of maybe as a question of itself—maybe it is, maybe it is not—is a rhizomatic growth of questions that rupture the representability of maybe as a concept in discourse. Furthermore, the rupture of representation as the force of maybe instigates silence; and yet, silence always has a given form. It can only be encountered as the unknown and can never be known apart from the form of its encounter with language, be it the spoken, heard, written word (a phenomenological encounter), or the written word as the silence of being in the text (an ontological encounter). Silence, the abyss, chaos, are functions of language.

The surprises in Chapter III are several. First, *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, is not a treatise on human nature, *nor* is it the "personal confession" of the author, the "unconscious memoir" of

the philosopher. Rather, it is the confessor of the reader, the psychoanalyst of the reader's unconscious. Secondly, "philosophizing with a hammer" is being as detour (*dis*—course) from discourse. Third, Nietzsche appears again as a deconstructionist. The "people's thought of life" is the presence of Platonism in modern thought: the value of the thought of life in the appearance of its opposition to death. Nietzsche, however, begins with the appearance of death in the thought of life in order to multiply the value of life. Like a deconstructionist, he inverts the hierarchy of value, previously based on the opposition of life (as value) and death (as non-value).

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Casting the dice...The relation between Nietzschean evaluation and Derridian deconstruction would be a fruitful course of research to pursue in terms of the question of Nietzsche today. So would an analysis of Nietzsche's "dangerous maybe" in terms of Deleuze's "rhizome." The correlation that Alexander Nehamas points out between Nietzsche's plural conception of essence as interrelation and difference, together with Ferdinand de Saussure's elaboration of linguistics that defines language as a system of difference, might yield a structurally precise interpretation of Nietzsche's thought as the unfolding of future (twentieth-century) thought. Or, to spur further



inquiry into the signs of becoming—woman, child, and death—; is the Overman Nietzsche's child?

If Nietzsche is approached not as a person or an historical figure, but as a body of writing and depository of wonder, then the subject of Nietzsche as a topic of study is a study in the ontology of language. As a language, Nietzsche is a "destiny" and historical consummation of Being beyond the page. The interpreter of Nietzsche is the subject of the posture his reading takes at the specter of Nietzsche's speech. One comports oneself to Nietzsche as the possibility of his being. Comporting in this way is wondering, and it is conveyed, as Blanchot suggests, through the approach that Nietzsche took to the world: "thought as play of the world, text as fragment."<sup>156</sup> We might read in order to wonder, or we might read in order to know. Nietzsche's project demands that we read in order to know that we wonder. Thus, the proximation of wonder and being affirms the tragic thought of difference, first in the form of the phenomenon of death in its realization of existence, and later as the ontology of this fissure in discourse. We speak a language but are also spoken by it. Identification through the construction of silence, or the being of becoming as the silencing of language. Thus Nietzsche speaks.

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<sup>156</sup> Blanchot, p. 141.

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