

Hegel, Nietzsche and the Beyond Within Life

by

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Abstract

This thesis consists of a critical examination and comparison of Hegel's philosophy of history and Nietzsche's doctrine of nihilism. The thesis argues that the result of Hegel's thought is the collapse of the transcendent dualist world-view, with the resultant need to project values attached to life: Nietzsche's positive philosophy is such an attempt.

Hegel's philosophy of history is followed in the Master/Slave dialectic as elaborated in the Phenomenology of Spirit. This leads to an examination of the notion of the end of history, which is the culmination of the dialectic as the State, politically, and as the Sage, philosophically. The thesis argues that despite Hegel's thoroughgoing appropriation of values, accessible to humanity through Reason, our practical experience is of loss only: of the disappearance of an objective world of values. Far from realising the inherently meaningful nature of the human world, the result of the Hegelian revolution is nihilism.

The discussion of Nietzsche's notion of nihilism turns on his distinction between the 'other-worldly' nihilism inherent in the transcendent dualist world view, and the radical nihilism which is the effect of expecting values to emerge from such a world, but despairing of ever knowing them. Nietzsche's solution is to perceive values as the projection of a beyond from out of the richness and fullness of life---what he calls 'will to power.' And this, the thesis argues, is a return to Hegel, giving content to the Idea, to the relation of selves in the world which is one of actual freedom, and complete responsibility.

Both philosophers approach the question of meaning from the same negatively conditioned perspective of the collapse of transcendent dualism. Their positive philosophies are their attempts to adopt an attitude towards the objectivity of values as the beyond within life.

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Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to read Nietzsche in the light of Hegel's philosophy of history. Hegel provides the context which is the essential negative condition for Nietzsche's ideas. What Hegel accomplishes is the abolition of the transcendent dualist world-view, which requires that philosophy turn away from the search for truth in a realm beyond life, and engage in the projection of a beyond within life.

Hegel's thought negatively conditions that of Nietzsche because the result of its success is to exclude certain possibilities from subsequent philosophical discourse. These 'limits' are ones which Nietzsche specifically adopts: references to a fixed, other-worldly beyond are, in fact, references to nothing, and are therefore nihilistic. At the same time, the world of humankind---the immanent, temporal, and 'present' reality---is imbued with absolute power and potential.

Hegel collapses the transcendent dualist world-view by incorporating all of its essential elements into a unified whole, one which contains and is, in fact, wholly constituted by human self-consciousnesses. But in so doing, he destroys the 'over-all' or 'behind-everything' character of the objective beyond, and so makes meaning-giving references impossible in previous ways. Nietzsche recognises the immediate, negative consequences of the dissolution of the transcendent dualist world view, and describes it as the 'death of God.' By imbuing the

world with divine Spirit, by showing the necessary interdependence of the 'particular' and the 'universal,' the temporal and the eternal, Hegel has brought this about: he has deprived the transcendent beyond of its effective power, and therefore the previous, historical force of faith in God. Far from making the world a more meaningful place, Nietzsche tries to show that our reaction to the death of God is nihilism, because values have been attached so firmly to divine authority, and to 'absolute' reference.

For this reason, Hegel's philosophy is not of as much practical use for Nietzsche as one would have thought. In a curious way, Nietzsche is both wholly determined by it, and yet free with respect to the future and the formulation of his own ideas. The conclusion of Hegelian philosophy is the attainment of a standpoint from which we can act fully self-consciously. In terms of the philosophy of history, this standpoint is the end of history. As the development of freedom and the rising to self-consciousness of man, history is ended. But the drive to put oneself in a wider framework, to situate and find meaning in life, continues, and gains force by being now raised to the level of self-consciousness. Being is becoming and Being is a whole: Hegel's metaphysical reconciliation is recognised by Nietzsche, de facto if not de jure, in the doctrine of the eternal recurrence.

The success of Hegel's critique is undeniable: the historical world-view of transcendent dualism has lost its effective power. But his positive philosophy is

unacceptable for post-historical humanity, largely because it is the mere elaboration of a conclusion: it is a reflective condition, which projects no future. The Sage is a type of humanity which reflects back upon the whole of its becoming: it is radically imbued with potential, yet because it is not forward-looking, it anticipates no states of affairs not yet at hand. For Nietzsche, this type of humanity 'depreciates life,' and since life is now the new source of all our value-feelings, it is also nihilistic.

Both Hegel and Nietzsche deny themselves the possibility of engaging in philosophy by attempting to discover values which are references to a fixed and unchanging realm of truth. Their 'positive programme' is therefore the attempt to posit or project values out of our actual existence, onto an object which extends beyond the particular self, and reflects upon the self as its enlightenment and growth.

Hegel believed that philosophy always gives utterance to its times: it is the moment of speech which links action and Being. Philosophy marks the dénouement, the decline of an era: its resolution by complete articulation. What it does is both observe and make a change: these things are ultimately indistinguishable because the thought of the thing is inconceivable apart from the thing itself. Therefore, Hegel recognises---in both senses---the collapse of the transcendent dualist world-view. If a meaningful life is to be possible, then values must be found or made which are of life, and from life. It is this negative

condition which unites the positive philosophies of both Hegel and Nietzsche.

If what we previously held to belong to the transcendent beyond has in fact been made present and not merely destroyed by its progressive appearance as history, then our actual existence should be 'pregnant with the future': our mortal lives in a world of appearances is one which we may now approach with both tremendous power, and awesome responsibility. The 'positive programmes' presented by the two philosophers are therefore of the same genus, if not of the same species. For this reason, it is more useful to draw out similarities in approach than differences, to more adequately examine the worth of results. The negative context of the collapse of transcendent dualism marks the same starting-point for the constructive philosophies of both Hegel and Nietzsche: both are attempts to find meaning for humanity from a beyond which is within life.

The value in following the argument of Hegel's philosophy of history is, first of all, to elaborate the Hegelian notions of Reason, history, dialectic, individuality and freedom. Secondly, one thereby demonstrates Hegel's contention that Being becomes, that the essence of what-there-is is to appear, as it is, in itself, to itself. That 'substance' which is the object of philosophy is not a remote realm of truth, but an exhaustive whole, which is, ultimately, a radically present reality, accessible to the knowing subject through mediation, or the terms of Reason.

Hegel's philosophical science includes the knowing and acting subject; his account accounts for itself. The circular nature of Hegel's philosophy is a self-sustaining whole which circumscribes everything---both spatially or 'absolutely' and temporally or 'eternally'---and marks the bounds of sensibility. But, at the same time, it exhausts all possibilities: any conceivable configuration of things exists both in potential and in fact 'within' the Hegelian circle. Hegel therefore provides the widest possible tableau upon which post-Hegelian philosophers, such as Nietzsche, are able to project their own particular vision.

The conclusion of Hegel's philosophy of history is the end of history: in philosophy, this is reflective wisdom, and in action, this is the regime of actual freedom. The end of history is not the ever-receding goal of man's striving in the realm of action: it is not an occasion outside of time, but the meaning of temporality, within temporality. It is in this sense that the end of history is an 'eternal moment': not a realm of eternity remote and distinct from one's actual life being led, but the very substance of that life, its telos which is implicit in the beginning, makes itself apparent and known in the process, and is fully realised in the end. Hegel is, therefore, not a philosopher of dualism, not 'metaphysical' in the sense of opposing the real and the ideal absolutely. What he does is to set up oppositions in appearance, or phenomenologically, for the sake of understanding, in order that the world and humanity within it can be made intelligible. In

fact---or 'actually,' or at the end of history---these oppositions form a unity, one which comprehends and is comprehended by man when he rises to self-consciousness.

Therefore, when Nietzsche attacks transcendent dualism, this cannot be seen to be, in practice, a reference to Hegel. As Stephen Houlgate writes, "Hegel is in fact an ally of Nietzsche's in his critique of transcendent dualism."¹ Although some question may exist whether Nietzsche thought he was criticising Hegel, when he attacked the view that there was an overriding, imposing, systematising order of things, Hegel is not, in fact, a proper object for such an attack. For philosophy, if not for the history of philosophy, the attack on dualism is not carried out against Hegel. When one views the conclusion of Hegel's philosophy properly, one sees that Nietzsche's demonstration of the nihilism inherent in the dualist world-view raises man out of what Hegel would call his 'incomplete moments of consciousness.' Such levels of consciousness are inadequate to that level of reality articulated and made manifest by Hegel, and have not yet reached the 'new starting point' of the end of history perspective: the emergence into the world of human self-consciousness.

Nietzsche's writings make relatively little mention of Hegel, and do not provide a clear picture of his view of

¹ Stephen Houlgate, Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). p. 37.

his predecessor. The principal target of his attack on transcendent dualism was Kant, and at times Nietzsche seems to put Hegel in the same camp. In one place, in The Will to Power, Nietzsche writes: "Hegel seeks reason everywhere ---before reason one may submit and acquiesce."² His view of Hegel here is that, for Hegel, reason is an object to be discovered, which, when found, imposes its structure upon an accepting and otherwise formless human being. This is, as will be made clear, an erroneous view of Reason in Hegel. In Hegel, Reason actually appears in a two-fold movement: the world is structured from out of the self, by the externalisation of the inner nature of the human individual, and the resultant 'world-made' reflects upon the self as its objective certainty or confirmation. Nietzsche would describe this as the pleasure of the will in finding things to oppose it, things which it must have the strength to overcome. For Hegel, Reason is not 'found' in the terms of mediation, nor has it any existence prior to the emergence of the apparent opposition between the self and the world, whether one considers this question logically or temporally. Nietzsche's will to power is precisely this 'driving-outwards' of the self, the positing of the world from the overabundance or potential within a human person. Hegel sees the influence of this self-determination as Reason from the immanent perspective, and

2 Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. Edited by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Random House, 1967). p. 60.

he also looks at this same process from the objective point of view. Nor does Nietzsche ignore this latter aspect: he is not trapped in modern subjectivity, what I call 'sheer wilfulness.' His strong assertion of human individuality is of a situated self, a self with radical responsibility because of the 'fatefulness of every act.' Amor fati is essential to will to power: the self extends beyond its immediacy into the future, through the consequences of present action, and it extends into the community or culture, through the reactions of similarly free individuals. This context, with respect to which we are both entirely free and wholly responsible, is the beyond within life. So Nietzsche's view of 'will to power' does conflict with the view of Reason as a structure imposed upon reality, and Nietzsche may have seen himself as being opposed to Hegel in this respect. But, in fact, Hegel's notion of Reason is not 'metaphysical': It is neither imposed nor external, and so it is not inconsistent with Nietzsche's world-view. It is this common, negative condition which is most interesting, and the beginning of a useful comparison. As Houlgate observes: "Not only are Hegel and Nietzsche both critics of 'reality-behind-appearance' dualism or 'other-worldly' consciousness; they are both critics (at least in intent) of all conceptual oppositions or Gegensätze."³ To compare these two views, in a mutually engaging way, is therefore useful to philosophy, while to oppose them from a textual point of view forms

³ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 22.

merely a footnote to the history of philosophy.

Houlgate makes the case that Nietzsche failed to carry out his intent to criticise all conceptual oppositions, and that, in fact, Nietzsche's definition of "life" is metaphysical. On the contrary, I believe that if Nietzsche is wrong to say that, for Hegel, the Idea is pre-existing, then Houlgate, by the same token, is wrong to say that, for Nietzsche, life is pre-existing. For Nietzsche, metaphysics is imposition, and Houlgate, like many others, sees the will to power and Nietzsche's extreme individualism in just this light. But this leaves out of account the eternal recurrence, and why Nietzsche would want to introduce or hold such a doctrine. I perceive eternal recurrence as the objective counterpart to the self in the whole of will to power. Amor fati, or the fatefulness of every act, introduces an objective beyond within life. Tragedy rescues humanity from the nihilism of absolute freedom. Thus I 'read in' a dialectical movement to Nietzsche's philosophy, but not as an over-riding structure. I perceive a whole which is a unity, but one which subsists in a context of nihilism: there is nothing behind appearance, and there is nothing outside life.

There are indications that Nietzsche formed a more sophisticated view of Hegel in his later writings. In a passage from Will to Power, which I cite in the conclusion, Nietzsche describes Hegel as a romantic, who longs for a return to the 'Greek world,' but who finds that he can only do so through the 'rainbow-bridges of concepts.' This, I

believe, is a correct understanding of Hegel, and demonstrates Nietzsche's insight into the consequences of previous philosophy which situated his own. Hegel shows, in the Phenomenology, that the greatest height to which man can aspire, in the realm of objective Spirit, is the condition of ethical life, which can only be founded in substantial community. Man possessed this, in the form of the Greek polis, but only immediately, which is to say, only in an unreflective way. This first appearance of ethical life could not survive the effects of man's emerging self-consciousness, and of his attempts to ground this condition in something else, in something more primordial. These attempts projected the beyond to life which marked the decline of the feeling of satisfaction in life. And so, Hegel describes the beginning and development of the dialectic, which can be seen as the history of man's progressive attempts to recapture the feeling of situatedness in ethical life, but from a perspective which is mediated (i.e., through the terms of Reason). Nietzsche is thus afforded the possibility of a perspective which reflects upon this whole movement. He is able to perceive the projection of a beyond to life---a realm of truth alienated from the actual, human world---as a long path away from, and ultimately back to, the condition of man's greatest happiness. Quite consistently with Hegel, Nietzsche argues that this historical enterprise made it impossible for man to belong to his former condition in the same way as before, because his

actions reflect upon, and transform his self. The 'completion of the circle' or return to the origin, is therefore accomplished on a different level, one which is higher because now man is reflective, he is self-conscious, he has realised at the same time his essential freedom and his radical responsibility. And so, Nietzsche's more sophisticated view of Hegel turns out to be more fruitful than his blank opposition to the straw man of Hegel's 'dualism.'

For the purposes of philosophical inquiry, it does not matter what Nietzsche's views were on the historical Hegel. What is of importance is whether it is useful or not to view Nietzsche from an Hegelian perspective. I believe that it is, and that new insight can be gained into Nietzsche's thought by casting it in the light of Hegelian conclusions.

On a philosophical level, then, the most difficult task in reconciling the philosophies of Hegel and Nietzsche arises in considerations of the notions 'the whole' and of 'unity.' Briefly, Hegel states that the whole is a unity, and Nietzsche denies this. But what Nietzsche attacks is the idea that there is a rationality behind things, that somehow reason comes first, and 'real' things like people and events fit into its categories. Nietzsche sees this view as a fundamental confusion of cause and effect. In fact, for him, truth is about things, it emerges from their essentially pre-rational life. I argue, however, that this view does not contradict Hegel, and that the combination of

Nietzsche's acceptance of the notion of a whole---as is shown in his doctrine of eternal recurrence---with potentially infinite variations within---through the idea of will to power---leads one to a view of 'unity' in the Hegelian sense.

The unity of all things in Hegel is not 'behind' those things, not their 'cause' or logically prior principle. Unity emerges from the way things appear, ultimately revealing the whole. Reason describes the two-fold movement of selves projecting a world, and the world projecting itself through instantiation in selves. It is nothing behind things or beyond things; unity is neither presupposed nor 'absolute' in the transcendent/dualist manner. Houlgate rightly observes that "The words 'reason' and 'Idea' in Hegel's philosophy refer to the immanent dialectical rationality within nature and human self-consciousness."⁴ Nietzsche does not oppose this view: he attacks the transcendent beyond, and neither 'reason' nor 'the Idea' in Hegel form such a beyond. A proper understanding of Reason in Hegel leads to the recognition that the unity of the whole is nothing over-and-above the whole, but only a description of the ultimate relatedness of all things within the universe of discourse. Houlgate writes: "To say that consciousness is rational for Hegel is not to say that consciousness conforms to a presupposed notion of reason."⁵ The notion of Reason serves to show

⁴ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 151.

⁵ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 179.

that the relation of the self to the world is real, that there are other entities which 'object' to the self, but, at the same time, thereby extend it into a wider framework, so that, in the end, it is not 'merely' a self, but a self-determining individual (i.e., a subject through objects). This conclusion is essential to Nietzsche's view that will to power is not 'carte-blanche' for sheer wilfulness, but a projection of the world which reflects back upon the self in a very real way as its fatefulness, through the consequences of action.

The conclusion of Hegelian philosophy in a realised whole which is a unity does not limit or oppose Nietzsche in the way that transcendent/dualist philosophy does. Hegel's conclusion articulates the Nietzschean perspective in negative terms: it excludes the possibility of meaningful references to an external world of truth, and shows the need for objectivity within a comprehended whole for meaning to be possible. In fact, Hegel's philosophy is an example of Nietzsche's 'ideal' of the affirmation of the whole, of 'bearing the greatest burden,' and taking ultimate responsibility. What Nietzsche does is to emphasise the aspect of will, of the connection of the subject to process, into the non-imposing structure of a reality made manifest by Hegel. In Hegelian terms, he makes distortions within Being which are essential to the dialectic: he emphasises some aspects of the whole, and wilfully leaves out of consideration others, in order to make a meaningful life possible for us, being human actors

with perspectives limited by our mortality, and the discrete nature of the self.

This philosophical project is necessary because of the success of the Hegelian revolution. Hegel describes the end of history as a return to self, as a 'night of self-consciousness,' or as reflective wisdom. Both Hegel and Nietzsche show that reflective wisdom, or 'world-historical philosophy' mark the decline of an age, and the end of strong action, in the sense of the production of unforeseen consequences. Conclusions are essentially meaningful with reference to their origin---they always afford the perspective of looking-back upon a spent force and a finished movement. But conclusions are not merely a return to the beginning, but a recollection at a new height, by benefit of the experience of the whole. From this new height, one is able to project new goals, to perceive wider horizons. So the end of history only completes one great movement: the emergence of self-consciousness. This effectively recaptures the ability to feel 'at home' in the world, but now across the 'rainbow-bridges of concepts,' or through Reason, or a mediated relation to other individuals: the return, at a new height, to the condition of ethical life.

Nietzsche describes how one can live in such a world, how one can manifest one's actual freedom when one knows one is ultimately responsible. He must first show, as Hegel does, why it is impossible to act authentically in an 'historical' way, which was to 'find oneself' involved in

inevitable progress, to act and speak with reference to a state of affairs removed from one's life temporally (i.e., the Christian millennium) or spatially (i.e., the transcendent other-world of truth). Now, these beyonds are within life---the 'return to self' means that the human individual is once again potent with world-creating force. Nietzsche grapples with the problem of how one actively engages in what is effectively post-historical life.

When one sees that, for Hegel, the end of history marks a most radical return to self, now at the level of self-consciousness, one can understand better Nietzsche's statement that 'will to power' is ontological. Will to power can be ontological and still not be logically prior its manifestation through subjects. This is certainly the case with Hegel's notion of 'desire,' which is how he begins describing the dialectic from an immanent point of view: it is his entry-point into the circle, rather than the foundation of the whole system. Houlgate writes:

Hegel's is a non-metaphysical philosophy because it does not conceive of the subject as a foundational entity or as a simple substance in the manner of a Leibnizian monad. The subject for Hegel is constituted in the activity of thinking and speaking; it is not merely a spiritual 'thing' which underlies that activity.⁶

Houlgate argues that Nietzsche's philosophy is metaphysical, because 'life' is a 'foundational entity.' But for Nietzsche, the self can only be said to possess will to power, or to exist at all, dependent upon the resistance of obstacles, and the strength it exhibits in

⁶ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 167.

their overcoming.

Hegel's beginnings are on the level of appearance, made for the sake of the understanding. Nietzsche argues just as forcefully that there is nothing behind appearance, no guiding principle which underlies activity. His emphasis on will to power can therefore be seen as a useful distortion or 'necessary fiction,' made in order to bring to light the ultimate connectedness of things. Will to power is ontological, but not metaphysical in Houlgate's sense of the term. It is thought which moves from the subject to the object through the term of mediation, and then reflects upon the subject as its higher nature. In Hegel's terminology, these things form an identity (i.e., a unity) 'absolutely,' or universally. In Nietzsche's terminology, these things 'return eternally.' Eternal recurrence is the objective counterpart of the self in the whole of will to power. To assert this is to 'read in' a dialectical movement in the Hegelian manner: not as an over-riding structure, but as the immanent development of life in its aspects both as the radically free self and as the fatedness of its context.

Nietzsche saw himself as engaged in a new task, made possible because of the exhaustion of previous movements and forces. This perspective makes sense in light of Hegel's philosophy of history. Stanley Rosen recognises this when he writes: "Having exhausted the spiritual capacities of reason, he [Nietzsche] believes, man once more girds his loins and attempts to become master and

possessor of nature, not by ordering and measuring or by speculatively appropriating it, but by projecting or creating it ex nihilo."7 In other words, once reason is incorporated in the human individual at the level of self-consciousness, man begins anew. His creation is only apparently 'ex nihilo' because everything is now known to be 'present' or at hand with the full elaboration of reason. But this everything is effectively nothing: in itself and as a whole, it is the context for widespread nihilism, as Rosen argues. Only by selecting certain possibilities and excluding others is a meaningful life made possible: Rosen calls this 'tradition,' or the 'discontinuity of remembering and forgetting.' Tracy Strong brings out this same point, which is the dilemma of having all possibilities before one, but needing to select only one to most truly manifest one's nature, and find the reflected happiness of situatedness in life: "Nietzsche continues on to indicate that human life characteristically reposes on a forgotten past. If one cannot forget, such that all is eternally present, then action and life itself become impossible, for all choices appear equally invalid."8 Hegel's reflective wisdom, incorporated in the person of the Sage, is such a condition where the past is 'eternally present.' The new task is therefore to cast eternity into

7 Stanley Rosen, Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1969). p. 93.

8 Tracy B. Strong, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration. (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1975). pp. 26-27.

temporality, and what is present into a beyond. This task is now different from the way things appeared historically. From the perspective of reflective wisdom, of one who has experienced the whole, this task is self-conscious: the eternal return of things is perceived in their temporal appearance, and the beyond is a beyond within life. From the standpoint of wisdom, one excludes possibilities for the sake of action and authentic engagement, which produces consequences which are novel configurations of already 'rationally present' things, which in turn reflect upon the acting subject, generating a new perspective, and new possibilities for this process to repeat itself.

Neither Hegel's 'recollection of the spirits' or Nietzsche's 'eternal recurrence of the same' is a mere repetition. Were it to be so, it would be an imposed structure upon human experience, which both Hegel and Nietzsche deny. One re-encounters former perspectives from 'new height' because of the addition of experience. Experience emerges from active engagement between selves and world: again, it is something which is coincidental with all other aspects of the whole. The dynamic of life is the proper focus of thought for both these philosophers. Hegel describes this as the movement of dialectic: the tendency of all things to look for their essential nature in their opposites, and to recover themselves there. Nietzsche describes this as the working of vital will to power: the capacity to take in more than what one immediately has; to extend oneself into a wider context

through an overabundance of force or life. Both philosophers are therefore anti-dualists; both emphasise the real, the actual, and life over the abstractions of previous philosophy. Houlgate writes:

Hegel and Nietzsche share a common aim: to criticise the lifeless abstractions that in their view have formed too prominent a part of European religious and philosophical thinking since the Greek period, and to develop a new mode of philosophising which does justice to the multiple and dynamic quality of life.⁹

A discontinuity must be set up by this 'new mode of philosophising.' Although all aspects of life are comprehended to form a unity, or to exist within a whole, they must, on the level of action, be taken to appear to 'happen.' It is for this reason that Nietzsche emphasises 'life' or 'will to power,' and not because he believes that these things have any existence apart from human beings who live, or who manifest will to power. I therefore disagree with Houlgate's view that life is an 'external standard,' which Nietzsche sets up as an alternative to transcendent standards given by dualist philosophy. In Houlgate's view, "Nietzsche criticises traditional metaphysical concepts, particularly that of the subject or soul, by reference to the external standard of 'life.'"¹⁰ 'Life' is as much a thought-beginning for Nietzsche as 'desire' is for Hegel. One 'completes the circle,' and so comes to realise that life is not a logically prior category, through Nietzsche's argument of the eternal recurrence, his elaboration of a

⁹ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 182.

¹⁰ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 182.

holistic perspective which provides a beyond to life which is within life as its fullest possible expression. To begin one's consideration with the self, or the will, emphasises our perspective on this movement, but it does not exclude the Hegelian 'reverse' movement of the whole through selves, or eternity engendered in time as history. The human dimension is meaning-creating and meaning-finding when one excludes, for the moment, consideration of the universal or eternal aspect of things, and concentrates on the 'importation of will' into events. This is what Nietzsche perceived himself as doing, not discovering that some force called 'will to power' underlies life. Béla Egyed rightly observes that "Nietzsche never says that will to power is, or determines, the essence of being."¹¹ Nietzsche does not observe that the will to power is true: What he does is assert the will to power because its time is ripe. I argue that this is the appropriate kind of activity in a post-Hegelian and post-historical world. Nietzsche describes his task, in The Antichrist, as follows: "The problem I thus pose is not what shall succeed mankind in the sequence of living beings (man is an end), but what type of man shall be bred, shall be willed, for being higher in value, worthier of life, more certain of a

¹¹ Béla Egyed, "Tracing Nihilism: Heidegger to Nietzsche to Derrida," in Nietzsche and the Rhetoric of Nihilism, edited by Tom Darby, Béla Egyed and Ben Jones. (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989). p. 4.

future."¹² What is different is the emergence of self-consciousness, of freedom as self-determination. The capacity is now there to take an active part in events beyond the historical enterprise of progress and liberation: now, the flow of events is affirmed according to one's strength of will, is conditioned to manifest one's freedom in a particular way.

Nietzsche therefore gives content to Hegel's notion of the ongoing dialectic, or the continual presencing of all things. The death of God means, in fact, that the divine Spirit has been dissipated into the world: man is made divine. This turn of events can only progressively appear once, and reflection upon them can only truly enlighten a person once. Thereafter, their appearance is a matter of self-aware projection, of willing a change, of involving oneself in the stream of events. This is the same kind of movement, and so Hegel speaks of it as a 'recollection' and Nietzsche refers to it as a 'return.' But the change which has occurred in the origin---the new height of the self as a result of experience---means that the actual movement forward will be new: not truly unanticipated as before, but effectively spontaneous because of the limitations of particular and mortal human individuality. Nietzsche writes, in Twilight of the Idols: "Progress in my sense. I too speak of a 'return to nature,' although it is really

¹² Friedrich Nietzsche, The Antichrist, in The Portable Nietzsche. Translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1968). p. 570.

not a going back but an ascent---up into the high, free, even terrible nature and naturalness where great tasks are something one plays with, one may play with."¹³ Will to power illuminates the subjective side of experience: the need to exercise one's freedom, to 'play' with the apparently given substance which is at hand, available for the imposition of one's nature upon a wider tableau. But the eternal recurrence, to 'will for all eternity, eternally the same,' introduces the objective aspect: the need to take ultimate responsibility upon oneself, to radically situate the manifestations of one's freedom so that they are, reflectively, authentic or meaningful.

The progress of history, as elaborated by Hegel, was a certain kind of process, which produced a certain kind of result. But the nature of things to manifest themselves, to themselves, as they are, continues. Nietzsche shows that although the essential movement remains the same, it is impossible for the same process to re-emerge identically, or immediately self-same. Thus, we cannot now begin with the historical perspective that the goal of human striving is a world of truth removed from our own or a condition of eternity at odds with our temporality and mortality. But we will continue to cast out objects to be overcome, and project a future to be realised. Now, however, we will know that we subsist with reference to a

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, in The Portable Nietzsche. Translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Viking Press, Inc., 1968). p. 552.

beyond which is within life. The beyond is our present life's higher or future condition; it is the fatefulness of our actions in the present, extending their ripples of consequences into our social condition and our future. This was essentially our activity within history, but now we engage in it from a new height, having learned, by our experience, the need for the discontinuity of remembering and forgetting. Houlgate draws attention to this self-determining, or 'non-metaphysical' situatedness of human life when he writes: "The self-imposed fate of man [is] the fact that he drives himself to maturity through the unintended consequences of his actions."¹⁴ Hence Nietzsche's amor fati, his requirement that we adopt a self-conscious attitude towards fate, to the 'unintended consequences' of our freedom which are made irrecoverable by relentless temporality. All events are ultimately reducible to an origin in an extension of self into the world, into a manifestation of will to power. But for one's own life, the appearance or consequences of these things is fate. Only from the present, and momentarily forgetting the past, can the future be projected, can an action be creative or 'spontaneous,' and can a meaningful life be led.

It is for the foregoing reasons that this examination of Hegel's philosophy of history and Nietzsche's philosophy has been undertaken. Hegel is absolutely instrumental in

¹⁴ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 152.

collapsing transcendent dualism, making possible Nietzsche's proclamation that 'God is dead.' One sees that Nietzsche confronts real problems when one views his situation as resulting from the conclusion of Hegelian philosophy. The point is to imaginatively read Nietzsche, and to apply his ideas, as necessitated by a negative context which was most fully elaborated by Hegel. The unsatisfactory nature of Hegel's positive programme makes future engagement in philosophy, along the lines taken by Nietzsche, absolutely essential if we are to lead a meaningful life. I agree with Heidegger's view that "there exists between the two [Hegel and Nietzsche] an essential connection that conceals itself in the essence of all metaphysics."¹⁵ It is my purpose to explore this connection in the present thesis.

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead'" in The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays. (New York: Harper and Row, 1977). p. 59.

Chapter One
Hegel's Philosophy of History

Reason in Hegel

One may begin a discussion of Hegel's philosophy almost anywhere, for his system may be described as circular rather than linear. As such, it has no real 'beginning,' no origin in an unquestioned and unquestionable premise. Hegel's claim is to have elaborated the system of philosophical science, which is a completed whole which contains and is the content of itself. Any entry point into this system is unquestioned for the moment only, for the circular nature of the system means that any premise is in the end a conclusion, a reflection of itself through the whole of the system's elaboration. The circularity of Hegel's philosophy is both its weakness and its strength: it stands or falls depending on its completeness. Hegel must posit a metaphysics which is exhaustive, which contains all and therefore excludes no possibilities, for his philosophy to be complete. I shall examine this claim to completeness through Hegel's philosophy of history, which is the temporal and human experience of this circle.

Having chosen the philosophy of history as the entry point into Hegel's system, I will begin by following the argument on mastery and slavery given in the Phenomenology of Spirit. To introduce this, a few remarks shall be made about the nature of reason for Hegel, by way of a preface to his arguments about the philosophy of history. It is Hegel's view that one does philosophy by following the development of an idea (of course, by doing so one is drawn

into Hegel's view that ideas do develop, but this will be considered further in the section on the dialectic). Therefore, although one can state baldly the nature of reason, such statements are not philosophy. Hegel himself says that prefaces are useless to philosophy, but he makes this statement in his own preface to the Phenomenology!¹ Before following the development of reason through history, then, the following remarks can be made about this all-important concept.

"Reason" is the preeminent idea in Hegel's philosophy and, moreover, of the world which that philosophy projects. Reason is not merely a faculty of the human mind, it is also the very essence of the world itself. The difference between "reason" in ordinary usage, and "Reason" in Hegel's philosophy is the difference between mere ratiocination in the mind of a human being, and the very structure and activity of universal "Mind" or "Spirit": "Being" and not "a being" in its essence, in its engagement with or working-out of itself. Hegel uses the term "Understanding" to denote the everyday usage of "reason": for him, Reason is much more. To get at this idea that Reason is structure, and not just a kind of thinking, we must understand that, for Hegel, "reason is purposive activity."² To define Reason is therefore to state the nature of its activity, or to say what it is that Reason does.

1 G. W. F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit. Translated by A. V. Miller. Forward and Analysis by J. N. Findlay. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). p. 1.

2 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 12.

We can see what Reason does by looking for its effects in the world. The 'purposive activity' of Reason is its directed presencing, its making itself apparent as that effect which is human history. Whatever Reason is can be known by following its appearance. For now, we can anticipate the end of the metaphysical journey by stating that, for Hegel, "Reason is the soul of the world it inhabits, its immanent principle, its most proper and inward nature, its universal."³ As an 'immanent' principle, Reason can only be grasped from within, by engaging oneself in the process of its development: to do this is to comprehend world history, and to return to the 'starting point,' to grasp Reason itself.

The dominance of this notion of Reason in Hegel's philosophy is indicated in his Introduction to the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, where he writes: "The only thought which philosophy brings with it is the simple idea of reason---the idea that reason governs the world, and that world history is therefore a rational process."⁴ Reason can be the only thought of philosophy because it is subject, process, and object. Reason as subject is the 'soul of the world': Reason itself does its rational activity as history. Reason as process is this activity itself, the 'inward nature' of the world it not only

³ G. W. F. Hegel, Hegel's Logic: Being Part One of the Encyclopædia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830). Translated by William Wallace. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975). p. 37.

⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of World History; Introduction: Reason in History. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). p. 27.

inhabits but makes up. Reason as object is its own the whole of the process of realisation: the telos or end of reason is its completed appearance, its making present and obvious what it essentially is. Reason can be the only thought of philosophy because in Hegel's formulation it is indeed exhaustive: Reason is Hegel's alpha and omega, the origin, substance, and end of the world. The nature of Reason is thus its appearance as world-history, within the space/time of human being which, as we shall see, is the medium of this appearance. If Reason is purposive activity, then its nature is discovered in its end, in the completed realisation of itself which is its telos. Hegel's teleological view of Reason leads him to the startling discovery that world-history, the substance of Reason, is ended: the knowledge of Reason and the end of history are two aspects of the same process. Again in the Introduction, Hegel writes: "To try to define reason in itself---if we consider reason in relation to the world---amounts to asking what the ultimate end of the world is; and we cannot speak of an ultimate end without implying that this end is destined to be accomplished or realised."⁵ History is not an open-ended process, directed towards some indeterminate and ever-receding goal. Rather, it is end-directed: namely, to the realisation of Reason, to the arrival at the perspective of self-consciousness. The end of history is, first of all, the logical category overarching both the ideal and the real. But it is more than

⁵ Hegel, Reason in History, p. 44.

this metaphysical abstraction: the end of history is a state of affairs entered into by humanity as the completion of the historical enterprise to belong to the world through the categories of Reason. And so, as will be shown, history not only is ended, but has ended by this very realisation. The conclusion of Hegelian philosophy, inasmuch as it embodies world history, is the end of history.

Hegel considers Reason not just as a way, but as a beginning and an ending: in his terms, Reason is not merely mediation, but subject and object also. His philosophy is a consideration of what Reason is in-itself, which means that it is not only a consideration of reason in a mind, but of Reason as Mind: Reason is not just an effect but a cause---it does things, it is an agent in the world. Reason itself is directed towards an end, namely, its own realisation, its complete 'presencing,' or 'showing-forth.' Cause and effect, origin and destination, beginning and end---these are 'moments' or aspects of one thing: Reason. In the Preface to the Phenomenology, Hegel makes clear that "everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as Substance, but equally as Subject."⁶ The True is simply 'what there is' (Being) and 'what this does' (Becoming). Reason as a subject, as Mind or Spirit, is that Being whose appearance is its own Becoming. A phenomenology of Spirit, then, is a description of what Being does as Reason. To grasp the movement of Being as

⁶ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 10.

the progress of Reason, or the phenomenology of Spirit, is to grasp what Being is, because its nature is essentially its activity. Being is rational; reason is purposive activity; therefore the essence of Being resides in the outward showing of its inner self, which is its Becoming. Hegel writes:

The true is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a result, that only in the end is it what it truly is; and that precisely in this consists its nature, viz. to be actual, subject, the spontaneous becoming of itself.⁷

The phenomenology of Spirit is Being working itself out to its end; it is Being becoming what it truly is. Hegel says that the True is the whole and also that it is Subject. In other words, there can be no 'outside' to what there is, and this 'what-there-is' (which is, in fact, everything) does something. Conventionally, philosophers think of themselves as 'subject'; Being, therefore, is something that exists for them. It is somehow apart for the purposes of examination: it is their object. But mankind, including philosophers, is part of Being, and so the subjectivity we have as actors and thinkers is something within Being. The essence of Being-as-Subject, the nature of what the 'what-there-is' does, is not what it is, or how it appears, to us, but what it is in itself. Being retains its conventional status of substance, as an object for our inquiry, but because it is the whole, it

⁷ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 11.

cannot be truly 'outside' or 'external' to us, even as an object. Being is not, as an object, essentially something for us, because we are not, and cannot be, disinterested observers. The truth of Being-as-Object can only be what it is for itself.

If the True is both subject and object, and if it is the whole, then Being, what there is, must be mediated: there must be distinctions within Being itself. Distinctions must exist within Being because there is Reason within it. "Reason" describes whatever is about or by the whole, the True, whether it is a statement, a thought, or an action. Hegel describes this predication of Being, this connectedness as subject and object, this permeation by Reason, as the dialectic. For Hegel, Being is a whole which is differentiated: "In the philosophical proposition the identification of Subject and Predicate is not meant to destroy the difference between them, which the form of the proposition expresses; their unity, rather, is meant to emerge as a harmony."⁸

The dialectic is the description of the nature of Reason as both subject and object, as both that which acts and that which is acted upon. The dialectic is a tension and a movement, what Hegel calls "this course that generates itself, going forth from, and returning to, itself."⁹ The appearance of this dialectic, the succession of the moments through which it manifests itself, is its

⁸ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 38.

⁹ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 40.

phenomenology. By this phenomenology, Reason becomes, and knows itself to be, what it truly is. The end, or telos, of the dialectic is where Reason reaches this self-knowledge: "The sole endeavour of spirit is to know what it is in and for itself, and to reveal itself to itself in its true form."¹⁰ What it knows, in the end, is its true nature: that all along its 'other,' its object, was itself, the subject. In Hegel's terms, the end of the dialectic is where Being is in-and-for-itself. This awareness which comes into Spirit, into Reason-as-Subject, is its self-realisation. This self-realisation is nothing other than self-consciousness---the kind of thinking which expresses 'I' and 'other' (but knows both to be a unity in Reason). Hegel writes: "the essence of spirit, then, is self-consciousness."¹¹ The dialectic is the process of Reason as simple consciousness, as 'subject,' becoming Reason as self-consciousness, as that subject which knows its object to be itself within a completed whole of differentiated Being. History is the self-realisation of Reason, in time, for man. Because Reason is its own object, what it is it is for itself. Knowing the object is, in the end, a return to self: "For the in-itself is consciousness; but equally it is that for which an other (the in-itself) is."¹² To realise the nature of Reason is to bring together its two aspects. The first aspect is

10 Hegel, Reason in History, p. 53.

11 Hegel, Reason in History, p. 51.

12 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 104.

Reason as Spirit, as that universal Mind which is the agent of the world, which through its activity comes to self-awareness. The second aspect is Reason as substance, as the structure of the world, as the effect of the first aspect of Reason. Ultimately, Reason is both: what it is and what it does; Being and Becoming; thought and reality. In the Logic, Hegel writes: "It may be held the highest and final aim of philosophic science to bring about, through the ascertainment of this harmony, a reconciliation of the self-conscious reason with the reason which is in the world---in other words, with actuality."¹³

This is where the human dimension comes in, and we can begin the phenomenology as history, for man is the medium of Reason, the substance of the consciousness of Being. Through him, Being knows itself as Reason---thus it fulfils its nature, it realises its end. The dialectic is, abstractly, or in-itself, the phenomenology of Spirit: the succession of moments of Reason's articulation of Being. But for us, for man in an through whom Reason works, the dialectic is the progress of history. History is the connection between man the immanent, worldly being, and Spirit the transcendent, metaphysical being. For Hegel, "world history as a whole is the expression of Spirit in time."¹⁴ Just as the real nature of Reason is revealed to itself at the end of its phenomenology, so too is man, the incarnation of this movement, revealed to himself at the

¹³ Hegel, Logic, p. 8.

¹⁴ Hegel, Reason in History, p. 128.

end of his history. When Reason is fully realised as Being which is in-and-for-itself, man is thereby revealed as completed self-consciousness. Man's telos is self-knowledge. This essence resides in the end of history, the culmination of the process by which man becomes fully self-conscious. As Alexandre Kojève observes in his commentary on Hegel: "Man is Self-Consciousness."¹⁵ It is all the same movement: man achieves self-consciousness, and self-consciousness (Reason as Being which is in-and-for-itself) achieves itself through man.

Mastery and Slavery

In order to illustrate Hegel's philosophy of history, and so to explain the notion of the end of history, I will follow the argument in the Phenomenology of Spirit in the section entitled "Self-Consciousness." I choose this part because it enucleates the whole work, setting out a 'mythological' beginning of history, and anticipating its paradigmatic end.

The foundation or 'beginning' of history for Hegel is undifferentiated Being, Being in-itself, the True simply as subject, consciousness without an object. Rather than speaking as Hegel does, of the dialectic as it appears to not-yet-fully-realised Being, I will speak of it as it appears to man, the manifestation of self-consciousness. This makes the phenomenology more concrete and accessible

¹⁵ Alexandre Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969). p. 3.

as history. The dialectic begins, or history commences, then, with the existence of a desire. Man experiences a desire, and this lifts him out of the level of simple unity, out of that consciousness which says "I am I" and goes no further. This occurs because desire reveals an object: the object of desire is the thing which will satisfy it. Equally, the object is the lack within man, his experience that he does not have what he wants. And the emergence of the object reveals the existence of a subject. The object is the 'other,' that which is desire, and the subject is 'I,' that which desires. So the existence of a desire makes possible the first and simplest kind of dialectical tension: "I desire the other."

To satisfy a desire, one must take the object into oneself: in Hegelian language, one must negate its otherness. 'Taking in' the object destroys the other as something which stands apart from the 'I,' and it also fills the lack within that 'I.' The subject is thereby conditioned by its object: its desire has turned out to find its essence in something apparently other than itself. Yet this otherness is actively denied, and a certainty of self regained, through the satisfaction of desire. Hegel writes: "Desire and the self-certainty obtained in its gratification, are conditioned by the object, for self-certainty comes from superseding this other: in order that this supersession can take place, there must be this other."¹⁶

¹⁶ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 109.

The simplest kind of desires are natural desires, those which obtain for man as an animal. The existence of the desire of hunger, for example, introduces a limited sentiment-of-self: the awareness of man as a subject and food as an object implies that human life subsists in a biological context. It is in this way that the object conditions the subject; man takes on the character of what he desires: like the food he eats, he is part of the natural world.

For man to know himself as something more than a part of natural being, though, he must find as an object for his desire something apart from nature. If man could find such an object, one which exists beyond 'given' reality, then by appropriating it he would rise above nature. Kojève writes that "for there to be Self-Consciousness, Desire must therefore be directed towards a non-natural object, toward something that goes beyond the given reality."¹⁷ But, so far, both the 'I' and the 'other' have been experienced solely as parts of 'given' reality. Only what is already there reveals itself, 'presences' itself, in the primitive dialectic of sentiment-of-self. The only thing which is actually introduced into given reality is the desire itself. Desire is the mediation, that thing which introduces differentiation into Being. And because desire is between 'I' and 'other,' desire is apart from 'I' and 'other.' Desire itself is that something which rises above given reality. Man, therefore, distinguishes himself from

¹⁷ Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 5.

nature by making desire his object. In other words, he desires a desire, which is to say that he makes himself the object of another human being's desire.

Man goes about satisfying his desire for the desire of another in the same way as before: by overcoming it as an object; by negating its otherness. The apparent independence of the other from one's own consciousness must be superseded. Hegel writes: "Self-consciousness is thus certain of itself only by superseding this other that presents itself to self-consciousness as an independent life; self-consciousness is Desire."¹⁸ Again, as with natural objects, the subject is conditioned by its object through this act of supersession (or 'negating otherness'; or 'satisfying a desire'). The self becomes human by having another human as the object of its desire.

Put less abstractly, the desire for the desire of another is the need to be acknowledged, the need to be recognised. Hegel calls this the achievement of objective certainty of self. Self-certainty rises to objective truth in human recognition because the self is in turn recognised by its object. The other turns out also to be a self, similarly human. Consciousness in general, then, becomes not only subject, but object as well. The experience of self as both subject and object is self-consciousness. Thus, Hegel observes: "Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for

¹⁸ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 109.

another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged."¹⁹ This acknowledgement is a two-fold process, because what is true for one human consciousness is also true for the other. Each is an object for the other, and aware subjectively that this is the case: "They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another."²⁰ The complete satisfaction of human desire, which is what fully realised self-consciousness is, lies in mutual recognition. In other words, man is only human in a community of his kind. One needs others for one to be what one is: "Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness."²¹

Here, though, Hegel is anticipating the end of the dialectic of desired desires, in order to see what it means. The way this dialectic first appears, though, to man in history, is quite different. For man as the medium of consciousness does not at first recognise the other as being human like himself. Why should he, when the only 'self' he knows, which he experiences, is his own? So man at first confronts the other as he did purely natural objects: by negating its otherness; by denying its independence. Man attempts to destroy the object as such: he tries to kill his opponent. This movement, or dialectical development, is also occurring in the other, because in fact (or to us, the phenomenological observers) that other is also a subject, also a self, and sees the

19 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 111.

20 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 112.

21 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 110. (Emphasis Hegel's)

first subject in turn as something external and unessential to itself. In order to satisfy the desire for the desire of another, each moment of consciousness, each person, "seeks the death of the other."²² The purpose of this fight is not only to deny the object, but it is intended also to confirm the subject. Man shows that he is unattached to life by risking that very life in a murderous struggle for pure prestige.²³ The struggle serves each combatant equally: to 'prove' that the other is unessential to oneself, and that one's self is an identity apart from nature. One is apart from nature because one's natural being---life---is held to be of less importance than one's non-natural being: prestige, the way one appears for another, becomes of paramount importance. It is Hegel's contention that "the relation of the two self-conscious individuals is such that they prove themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle."²⁴

The important object in this dialectical movement is death itself. By confronting death through this murderous struggle, man attempts to rise above the natural, given world of which he has been hitherto an indistinguishable part. To overcome, or to realise death in this way, is in fact a prerequisite of freedom: "If man were not mortal, he is, he would not be free of God. Consciousness of this would not be free of the eternal and infinitely given, that freedom, and it alone, can satisfy Man's infinite pride,

22 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 113.

23 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 8.

24 Hegel, Phenomenology, pp. 113-114.

that is, his unbounded desire for recognition."²⁵ To be recognised, to realise one's own consciousness (i.e., to be self-conscious), one must obtain from the other acknowledgement, to find oneself, objectively, in him. One rises above the merely natural, and so realises freedom, by confronting death in the form of this other. Thereby, one demonstrates one's unnaturalness, which is at first taken to be the substance of one's humanity. To desire the desire of another, to seek recognition, to strive for prestige---this movement marks the emergence of human being out of natural being: "Man appears, then, in the midst of the naturally given world, for the 'first' time when he risks his life in a murderous struggle for pure prestige."²⁶ Prestige, the non-natural object, is thus the first human object.

This life-and-death struggle is the 'mythical' beginning of history for Hegel, the division between man living in time but within nature, and man living in time as history. The difference is that man here 'realises' death, and now knows himself as a mortal being. Through history, man will come to transcend his mortality not by treating life to be of no account (the way of the master), but by revealing that life in an enduring way through action, thought, and speech (the way of the slave). But in the dialectic of master and slave, history finds its genesis

²⁵ Barry Cooper, The End of History: An Essay on Modern Hegelianism. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984). pp. 92-93.

²⁶ Cooper, End of History, p. 93.

and its substance. Barry Cooper writes:

The fights and labours of Masters and Slaves are the occasions for the appearance of death; the realization of that appearance can come only with a reflective account of those appearances. But the fights and labours of Masters and Slaves are the substance of history. Consequently, the sought-for account will be an account of history. It will be also an account of man, the one whose being is historical.²⁷

There are three possible outcomes to this life-and-death struggle: when both combatants die; when one dies; or when both live because one submits to the other. In the first case, both men, both 'moments of consciousness,' have failed to gain recognition and also to show that they are unattached to the natural world: a dead object cannot provide recognition, and a dead subject has a purely natural, organic nature. Clearly, the dialectic of consciousness is not advanced by this result. In the second case, the victor has indeed shown that he is apart from the natural world, because he has risked his life. But he gains no objective confirmation of self through his risk, because his opponent is dead. As a moment of consciousness then, he is therefore back where he started, as a merely subjectively certain self, who is confronted only by natural objects.

It is the third result which advances the dialectic. The victor triumphs over the other, yet the vanquished continues to live, and so acts as an objective confirmation of his victory. The one who is defeated gives up his desire to be recognised by the other, and recognises that

²⁷ Cooper, End of History, p. 105.

other: he is the slave. The slave thereby shows that, for him, life is more important than prestige. The one who wins the fight does not back down, refuses to recognise the slave, but is recognised by him: he is the master. There is recognition here, so this is a 'human' dialectic, but there is not mutual recognition: "For recognition proper the moment is lacking, that what the lord does to the other he also does to himself, and what the bondsman does to himself he should also do to the other. The outcome is a recognition that is one-sided and unequal."²⁸

The problem is that the master does not and cannot satisfy his desire for recognition by being recognised by the slave. This is because he himself does not recognise the slave as being human; "in the beginning, he sees in the other only the aspect of an animal."²⁹ The master cannot be satisfied, cannot have objective certainty of self, because the other for whom he is an object is not someone who he recognises as being human. Through his victory in the life-and-death struggle, then, the master has succeeded only in showing that he is unattached to life, that he transcends nature by valuing prestige above existence. Yet this 'humanity,' this unattachment to life, is still something abstract. The master is not actually satisfied, because he has not gained authentic recognition, and cannot do so until he in turn recognises the slave. But for this to happen, the slave will have to cease to be a slave, and

²⁸ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 116.

²⁹ Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 13.

so the master cease to be a master. Because mutual recognition is the complete satisfaction of human desires, or the end of the dialectic of consciousness, the 'moments' of master and slave must be overcome in history. Therefore, Kojève writes that "the historical 'dialectic' is the 'dialectic' of Master and Slave."³⁰

The way of the master is an impasse, for all he can do as a master is continually prove he is unattached to life by risking it in life-and-death struggles. The way of the slave is the way forward because at least he has an object, the master, whom he recognises as human. Hegel expresses this when he writes: "This moment of pure being-for-self is also explicit for the bondsman, for in the lord it exists for him as his object."³¹ Furthermore, unlike the master, the slave has experienced that he is in fact attached to life: he knows himself to be a part of natural given-being. The slave wants to live, and shows this by backing down when that life was at risk. The fear of death, which the master has shown he does not have, turns out to be essential to man as self-consciousness. The experience of dread, which for Hegel is "this pure universal movement, the absolute melting-away of everything stable, is the simple, essential nature of self-consciousness, absolute negativity, pure being-for-self, which consequently is implicit in this consciousness,"³² i.e., for the slave.

30 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 9.

31 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 117.

32 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 117.

The dialectic of history is the dialectic of the slave overcoming himself as such. He does not overcome the master as his object directly, because he has backed down in the life-and-death struggle. But in the service of the Master he works upon the natural world. Through work, the slave transforms nature, and gains, ultimately, objective recognition, because he works on something 'other' (the world) for another (the master; a recognised human consciousness). The slave will come to realise that the master needs his labour to transform the natural world for him. The need of the master is an implicit recognition of the slave; furthermore, this recognition is by someone whom the slave already recognises as being a human consciousness, as being an essential object. Also, the artifacts which emerge from the work of the slave endure as a lasting and objective confirmation of self. Kojève writes: "Therefore, it is by work, and only by work, that man realises himself objectively as man."³³ The slave gets rid of his attachment to life not by risking it, but by overcoming the natural world, by making it his object through work. It is in the service of the master, and not by confronting him, that the slave obtains the satisfaction of his desire for recognition. Work lifts the slave from his status as animal, and propels him towards freedom and self-consciousness. As Hegel writes: "Through his service he rids himself of his attachment to natural existence in

33 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 25.

every single detail; and gets rid of it by working on it."³⁴

The subsequent dialectic is concerned with the changes in that mode of self-consciousness which begins as the slave. The slavish consciousness's service to the master is nascent human recognition; the slave's view of the master as an essential other gives rise to the first view of the self as a being existent with reference to another human being. At first, the slave takes his own identity to be unessential, but his whole idea of 'I' at least involves another self which he does take to be essential. And the fact that the slave's notion of the self includes the other, the master, shows that human identity subsists in relation, that 'I' is only meaningful with reference to 'other.' Hegel's dialectic subsequent to that of the master and slave is the appearance of the notion that the self participates in that essentiality which was taken to belong to the master; one is a person only in a community. The master, with only the unessential slave as his other, can never develop real personality, never be 'this-person-and-not-any-other-person.' In his Science of Logic, Hegel writes: "What the slave is without, is the recognition that he is a person: and the principle of personality is universality. The master looks upon his slave not as a person, but as a selfless thing. The slave is not himself reckoned an 'I'--- his 'I' is his master."³⁵

³⁴ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 117.

³⁵ Hegel, Logic, pp. 227-228.

The slave does have a self, does have an 'I,' although in this incomplete mode of consciousness he takes it to be the master. The way in which the notion of the self necessarily involves the other is indicated in the use of the word 'I.' Hegel writes: "When I say 'I' I mean my single self to the exclusion of all others; but what I say, viz. 'I,' is just every 'I,' which in like manner excludes all others from itself."³⁶ This is what Hegel means when he says that the way forward is the way of the slave: inherent in his status is movement towards another, and this relatedness is always the 'engine' of the dialectic in Hegel---the experience of the movement from 'I' to 'other' and back to 'I' is the experience of developing selfhood, of a personality which is situated in its proper context.

Freedom

The developing selfhood of the slavish consciousness is the development of freedom. At first, this notion would appear at odds with the nature of the slave as a person wholly determined by the will of the master. But Hegel demonstrates how the freedom which pertains to the master is absolute, and therefore empty: it has no context without, no recognised social milieu, and therefore no content within, no objective certainty in the mind of the master. Only the slave can rise to objective freedom, because the slave does recognize an object in the master.

³⁶ Hegel, Logic, p. 31.

The entire dialectic subsequent to that of the master and slave can be seen as the slave finding himself in the master, realising concretely the freedom which the master has only abstractly. Thought and action, the substance of history, are the media through which the slave overcomes his unessential nature, and finds himself in the essential master. Developing freedom is a return to self, a movement towards free individuality which is situated through the individuality of others: mutual recognition. Hegel sketches this whole movement when he writes in the Logic:

For thinking means that, in the other, one meets with one's self. It means a liberation, which is not the flight of abstraction, but consists in that which is actual having itself not as something else, but as its own being and creation, in the other actuality with which it is bound up by the force of necessity. As existing in an individual form, this liberation is called I: as developed to its totality, it is free Spirit; as feeling, it is Love; and as enjoyment, it is Blessedness.³⁷

In this last sentence, Hegel is describing the dialectic from several perspectives. For the historical actor, the dialectic is liberation, whose end is free individuality: the situated self. From the universal perspective, the dialectic is Spirit, or Mind, or the True-as-Subject, realising itself completely. In the moment of mediation, of the relatedness of subjects and objects, the dialectic is mutual recognition or love. And finally, 'blessedness' describes that unity which is the end of history, the successful mediation between man and Spirit, bringing together the immanent and transcendent realms.

³⁷ Hegel, Logic, p. 222.

The end of history is the achievement of actual freedom. In his commentary on Hegel's philosophy of history, Burleigh Taylor Wilkins writes: "The ultimate purpose of the world is freedom, and the means of its realization are the actions and passions of men."³⁸ Developing freedom is the political face of the progressive appearance of self-consciousness in the world: the phenomenology of Spirit which is the content of history. Progress towards freedom is a commonplace framework for understanding history; as Cooper observes, "it is difficult to deny that we habitually and unthinkingly interpret our own history as the development of freedom."³⁹ So let us now turn to the development of freedom in Hegel's philosophy of history: of what does becoming free consist?

Hegel had a very positive, active idea of freedom. Any definition of freedom as merely a condition of the absence of restraints to action would be incomplete, and a false consciousness of what human being is like where it is free. Also unsatisfactory would be the idea that freedom is merely the expression of what man is, the outward showing of his inner self. The first notion of freedom, that of absolute autonomy, is devoid of any context in which free action can be meaningful. The second notion, which is the expression of self such that the outer world conforms wholly to the subjective ideal, is devoid of that

³⁸ Burleigh Taylor Wilkins, Hegel's Philosophy of History. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1974). pp. 52-53.

³⁹ Cooper, End of History, p. 7.

'otherness' or beyond which makes an action spontaneous (i.e., bringing forth something new that was not always there). Hegel's concept of freedom is a unity of these two notions; Charles Taylor calls Hegelian freedom "the fullest rational autonomy with the greatest expressive unity."⁴⁰ In its expressive aspect, this unity "points us towards a fulfilment of man in freedom, which is precisely a freedom of self-determination, and not simply independence from external impingement."⁴¹ At the same time, considered in its autonomous aspect, one who is free in this unified Hegelian way can say: "I am free in a radical sense, self-determining not as a natural being, but as a pure moral will."⁴² The self expresses itself by free action, but the self expressed is not the animal being rooted in nature, but a human being whose context is a community of similarly free individuals; a self in oneself, subjectively, and for others, objectively, through mutual recognition. The question now is what, for Hegel, is this 'moral will,' this 'free individuality' which is the human dimension of the dialectic? Hegel explains these notions most clearly in the Philosophy of Right.

Hegel sketches the dialectic of freedom in the Introduction of the Philosophy of Right. The human aspect, which is the immanent moment of self-consciousness, or the self, is what is meant by the term 'will'; the universal

40 Charles Taylor, Hegel and Modern Society. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). p. 12.

41 Taylor, Hegel and Modern Society, p. 5.

42 Taylor, Hegel and Modern Society, p. 4.

aspect---Spirit, or Mind, or realised Reason---is indicated in its political dimension by the term 'system of right.' Hegel writes: "The basis of right is, in general, mind; its precise place and point of origin is the will. The will is free, so that freedom is both the substance of right and its goal, while the system of right is the realm of freedom made actual, the world of mind brought forth out of itself like a second nature."⁴³ Freedom is the 'substance' of actual, realised reason---or 'right'---as the liberation of the slave, as his overcoming of his apparent other-determination. Freedom is the 'goal' of this liberation as the unity of the ideal and the real, the unity of the kind of life projected by aspiring to freedom, and the actual kind of life being led.

Hegel considers first the dialectical moment of the self, or the will, and then turns to the moment of universality, or the State. The freedom of the will in turn is composed of two aspects, what Charles Taylor has described as 'moral autonomy' and 'expressive unity.' Hegel begins with autonomous freedom because the first moment of any dialectical progression for Hegel is always the universal moment, albeit that empty, abstract universality which does not yet comprehend itself as a unity of discrete instantiations of itself. Hegel describes this moment, or element, of freedom as follows:

⁴³ G. W. F. Hegel, Philosophy of Right. Translated by T. M. Knox. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967). p. 20.

The will contains the element of pure indeterminacy or that pure reflection of the ego into itself which involves the dissipation of every restriction and every content either immediately presented by nature, by needs, desires, and impulses, or given and determined by any means whatever. This is the unrestricted infinity of absolute abstraction or universality, the pure thought of oneself.⁴⁴

This is a pure reflection because it is not a reflection against anything else, anything other than itself. The absence of any other means the absence of any limits to the self; therefore, its freedom is absolute. However, this freedom is still abstract---determination is yet needed to make this freedom actual.

Freedom as the absence of constraints is negative freedom. The only 'content' of such freedom consists in eliminating obstacles; as Hegel writes, "only in destroying something does this negative will possess the feeling of itself as existent."⁴⁵ Freedom is believed to lie in whatever is left after any kind of determining structure is destroyed, although, in fact, all that remains is a void. Overcoming obstacles, and not eliminating them, is the substance of freedom for Hegel. For now, in this aspect of 'moral autonomy,' freedom is abstract, i.e., nothing in itself. The negative activity of this kind of freedom is not what Hegel would call negation, which is overcoming the other to develop the self, but what he would call sheer negativity, which is destroying the other. This moment of freedom is precisely that enjoyed by the master, but, as

44 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 21.

45 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 22.

Hegel observes, "what negative freedom intends to will can never be anything in itself but an abstract idea, and giving effect to this idea can only be the fury of destruction."⁴⁶ This kind of freedom is not wrong, but incomplete. What is missing is the self, a will with a content, with concrete determinations. So now we turn to the second moment of freedom, the 'singular' aspect of the dialectic, which is 'expressive unity.'

This aspect of freedom is the opposite extreme from the unessential self. Here, the self is all: the other is merely an outward-showing of the self. The self is a determinate will, but a wholly subjective one---it is sheer wilfulness. Hegel writes:

The ego is also the transition from undifferentiated indeterminacy to the differentiation, determination, and positing of a determination as a content and object. Now further, this content may either be given by nature or engendered by the concept of mind. Through this positing of itself as something determinate, the ego steps in principle into determinate existence. This is the absolute moment, the finitude or particularization of the ego.⁴⁷

This second moment of freedom is only a one-sided determination, because only the subject is deemed to be essential. The entire content of the object---of anything outside the self---is exhausted by the content imported into it by the self. The world outside the self is an immediate reflection, and thus an empty one, one which shows nothing besides what is already implicitly present.

⁴⁶ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 22.

⁴⁷ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 22.

The self is an unqualified particular.

The unity of both these moments, of moral autonomy, and expressive unity, expresses the truth of freedom for Hegel. Freedom is self-determination: content is 'given' to appear from without, but it in fact is an emergence of the self. Freedom describes this reflection of the self mediated by the apparently given nature of 'the world.' Actual freedom remains that of a 'moral' will because it is other-directed; and the relationship with the object (unity) remains an expression of self, albeit a self transformed by this unity. Hegel writes:

The will is the unity of both these moments. It is particularity reflected into itself and so brought back to universality, i.e. it is individuality. It is the self-determination of the ego, which means that at one and the same time the ego posits itself as its own negative, i.e. as restricted and determinate, and yet remains by itself, i.e. in its self-identity and universality. It determines itself and yet at the same time binds itself together with itself.⁴⁸

True self-consciousness is the awareness of one's difference from everything else, that part of being a self is not being another. It is also the awareness that one is not merely 'not-anything-else,' but something-in-particular: and that this content of the self is brought to light through its distinctiveness from what it is not. Hegel describes the experience of self-consciousness as follows: "Every self-consciousness knows itself (i) as universal, as the potentiality of abstracting from everything determinate, and (ii) as particular, with a

⁴⁸ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 23.

determinate object, content, and aim."⁴⁹ The actions of human beings rising to self-consciousness, realising their freedom, is to 'narrow the gap' between these two notions of freedom. The expression of self must become more than arbitrary wilfulness, and one's autonomy must be given a context. Hegel describes this kind of action when he writes: "The will's activity consists in annulling the contradiction between subjectivity and objectivity and giving its aims an objective instead of a subjective character, while at the same time remaining by itself even in objectivity."⁵⁰

The self-determining individual is a moral will because it is sustained through consideration of its relatedness to others. Awareness of one's context is both finding oneself in others and setting oneself apart from them---this, very simply, is the condition of the free individual in society. The enjoyment of freedom is a function of one's unity with and difference from others; in other words, freedom does not belong so much to a person, as a description of the self, but rather describes the relation between persons, as a description of self-consciousness (of 'I' and 'other'). Hegel writes: "This relation of will to will is the true and proper ground in which freedom is existent."⁵¹ A community of consciousnesses is essential to self-consciousness and

49 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 23.

50 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, pp. 32-33.

51 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 57.

freedom because the 'middle term' of relatedness, or recognition, is their very substance.

So freedom is a rational combination of self-expression and autonomy; the expression of self is a participation in unity, and the self is autonomous in a moral relation---hence 'expressive unity' and 'moral autonomy.' But how does freedom come about in 'the world,' that is, for man? First of all, it is essential that freedom does indeed 'come about,' that man becomes free. Becoming consist of a change over time. For Hegel, becoming consists of negation within Being, the process whereby 'what there is' rises to objective truth (which is self-consciousness, beholding itself as its own object). In the Logic, Hegel writes: "The truth of Being and of Nothing [Negation] is accordingly the unity of the two: and this unity is Becoming."⁵² 'Becoming' is then an overarching term for Hegel, circumscribing Being and that which stands against it (which is states of affairs not yet present to it). Becoming is more than mere Being--- it is 'what there is' and also 'that which what-there-is does.' The instantiation of Being is its dialectical rise to truth, so Hegel writes: "Becoming is only the explicit statement of what Being is in its truth."⁵³ In terms of freedom, the being of freedom can be considered to be the regime of actual freedom, that state of affairs where freedom is realised and enjoyed. The becoming of freedom

⁵² Hegel, Logic, p. 128.

⁵³ Hegel, Logic, p. 132.

is liberation, the process whereby man overcomes both his atomistic autonomy (pure subjectivity) and his immersion in monolithic unity (pure objectivity). The whole process of liberation and freedom, then, is a teleological one: the meaning of liberating action lies in its end, in its achievement, and the meaning of the state of freedom realised lies in the struggle to rise to this condition. In terms of the philosophy of history, liberation is the content of history, and freedom is the end to which it maintains. The essential mediating term in any case is man: the subject who liberates himself, and the object in whom freedom realises itself.

Either term in this process, either moment of the dialectic, considered in itself, is an incomplete understanding of freedom. Liberation in itself, or without the notion of what realised freedom is, is action without purpose, struggle without overcoming, and life without meaning. In itself, liberating action has no perspective, no from-to directedness. On the other hand, freedom in itself, without the notion of liberating action as its substance, is an ideal lacking realisation, an utopia unconnected to real politics.

Freedom as a completed goal, as the telos of liberation, is an end condition only as a reflection upon history. Becoming free (history) and being free (the end of history) are together the truth of freedom for Hegel. Barry Cooper writes: "The inseparability of freedom and historicity is obvious enough: there is history, properly

speaking, that is unforeseen creative evolution, only where there are free actors, and freedom can be actualised only by the creation of a historical world."⁵⁴

History is the process whereby man becomes free. Action---working, struggling, thinking---is the way man liberates himself, and the content of history. And satisfaction---having freely transformed oneself and the world---is the destination of this way. The truth of Being is completed becoming. As Alexandre Kojève writes: "Man is negating Action, which transforms given being and, by transforming it, transforms itself. Man is what he is only to the extent that he becomes what he is; his true Being (Sein) is Becoming (Werden), Time, History."⁵⁵ History is progressive because man becomes more and more human within it. To become free, in both the expressive and autonomous senses, is to become humane. Hegel defines the end of history in the Philosophy of Right as follows: "The good is thus freedom realized, the absolute end and aim of the world."⁵⁶ The 'good' is Hegel's Notion or Idea, which is unity of the universal with the particular. The unity of what is abstract, or potential, and what is real, or present, is the actual. In terms of freedom, the unity of realised freedom and realising liberation is the entire process: history. The end of history is "freedom realised," which is where one's ideal of free individuality matches one's actual condition in the world.

54 Cooper, End of History, p. 73.

55 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 38.

56 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 86.

Because of the inseparability of history and freedom, the end of liberation in freedom means the end of history. Cooper writes: "History, according to Hegel, was the process by which the principle of freedom actualized itself. Once the regime where all were free had been, in principle, established, no further historical action was possible."⁵⁷

Hegel is saying more than just that history is the progress of liberating action. Objectively, history is the action of freedom making itself actual in man. For Hegel, freedom is also a subject---considered in this way, man is the middle term, the 'carrier' of freedom's appearance. It is important to realise that the coming-to-be of freedom is only partly what man does. Freedom in history has a life of its own: it possesses logos. Man is a participant in, more than a creator of, history, and this allows the individual self to rise above sheer wilfulness and become creative. History transcends individual choice, yet it is nothing but the whole of human choices and their consequences in time. Only in the face of the determinate character of existence does man's freedom have substance. To perceive freedom as a subject is to make freedom real, and more than a wilfulness without context, or choices made in a vacuum. For Hegel, the determination and the freedom of the will are not opposing ideas, but rather each idea finds its truth in the other: freedom has substance by working upon the 'fixed character of existence, and mere

⁵⁷ Cooper, End of History, p. 122.

Being has life---has movement and becoming---through the freedom which works itself out in it. Hegel writes in the Logic:

A good man is aware that the tenor of his conduct is essentially obligatory and necessary. But this consciousness is so far from making any abatement from his freedom, that without it real and reasonable freedom could not be distinguished from arbitrary choice---a freedom which has no reality and is merely potential. . . . In short, man is most independent when he knows himself to be determined by the absolute idea throughout.⁵⁸

Man is the 'raw material' for something else---what Hegel calls Spirit, or Mind, or in some contexts Reason---to realise itself. For this other, the actions of man are wholly determined. But for man, his acts remain free, because all possibilities reside in this other, and these possibilities are made actual by man's raising this other to objective truth. 'Determination' and 'freedom' of the will are therefore descriptions of one's philosophical perspective within one and the same process---conflict between these notions is the work of the dialectic, of the shifting of perspectives, and not the clash of opposites. It is important to make this mental shift between freedom as a description of a quality in man and freedom as the name of a subject which uses man, both perspectives within the same framework, to understand Hegel's notion of freedom.

The perspective of freedom for man is history. Within history man is at first merely subjectively free, which means that he feels himself to be free, but does not yet

⁵⁸ Hegel, Logic, p. 220.

know it. For man's freedom to rise to objective truth, he must exist in relation to an object which confirms his freedom. Human beings objectify their freedom by acts of creation, by bringing forth the new out of the given. The possibility of freedom is made actual in the act; the human creator is proved essential to this process through the enduring product of his will. The object which emerges from human creativity is reappropriated, and so confirms, objectively, the freedom of human being. The kind of person who engages in history in this way appears first as the slave, as the person whose work in the service of the master produces essential objects: the natural world which he transforms, and the master for whom he works.

This slavish consciousness does not set out to know himself or to realise his freedom through his work: at first, his work is entirely for another, and is not yet reflected onto himself as his work, as evidence of his freedom of will. But this knowledge will come, as it is in the very nature of the slave's activity. Hegel writes in the Phenomenology: "Through work . . . the bondsman becomes conscious of what he truly is."⁵⁹ The evidence of work---which is, in fact, history itself---is the return to man as a confirmation of self. Cooper writes: "When man created History he revealed himself to himself by way of his creation."⁶⁰ Within history, man at first believed that his works were essential only in that they were exercised upon

59 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 118.

60 Cooper, End of History, p. 136.

a real world, for a recognised master. This proved, though, to also be an externalisation of self---man was in-forming his own consciousness. The knowledge which man gains through the transformation of given-being for another consciousness turns out to be knowledge of the self: consciousness has become self-consciousness. The slave finds his own essence in what he took to be merely external. So, Cooper writes: "To be fully Conscious of the world was to be fully Self-Conscious since the Self was a worldly being."⁶¹ Work, then, is the reflective proof of human freedom. This occurs because to regard the work of man is to regard man in the work: "By becoming conscious of their works, human beings became conscious of themselves, since they were what they did."⁶²

Work is a more specific term in Hegel's dialectic, a concrete manifestation of freedom. Work describes the relation between the slave and the master, and it will be remembered that both these 'moments' in the historical dialectic are essential to human being. But work transcends the persons it mediates by its generation of an enduring product. The proof of work in the object is a more enduring form of prestige than the fleeting triumph of the master over the slave in the life-and-death struggle. Endurance is a temporal projection of the self, positing a future context for life out of the present state of affairs. So the slave, through work, is the mode of

61 Cooper, End of History, p. 226.

62 Cooper, End of History, p. 175.

consciousness which is capable of satisfaction, of beholding an end which persists beyond the self, and which is not destroyed in its achievement. Hegel writes in the Phenomenology: "Work . . . is desire held in check, fleetingness staved off; in other words, work forms and shapes the thing. The negative relation to the object becomes its form and something permanent, because it is precisely for the worker that the object has independence."⁶³ The object has independence because it belongs to the master, and the master is an essential, recognised human consciousness. And desire held in check, or 'delayed gratification,' is the engine of history---the return to consciousness of its self, manifested in the products of work. The self mediates itself through the objects of the apparently external world and the future.

The truth of objective freedom is that it lies outside man himself. Freedom belongs to him as a quality of the self, but this does not exhaust its nature: freedom must be within Being for man to be free. So, subjective freedom is the experience of the freedom of the will, but objective freedom is the experience of the freedom with Being expressing itself through one's will. Freedom is the term of mediation between man and world, each moment the subject of freedom to itself, and the object of freedom to the other. The self-in-the-world, and the world-through-the-self, constitute the human dimension of the dialectic, what Hegel calls the individual, that 'moment' in whom and

⁶³ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 118.

through whom freedom appears. This appearance is history, which is the projection of the self through action, creation, and work, and the reflection to the self through knowledge and recognition. Projection and reflection are both what man does in the world, and what the world does through man. The real, other-directed nature of a human act transcends the individual---the wider context of 'world' is the community of similar selves and the continuity of human history: the consequences go beyond the act, and reflectively situate the actor in community and history. The knowledge of the self is real, then, because it is more than an empty reflection: it is a return-to-self through a wider context. Only in human community is the self truly human, truly an individual, both separate and belonging. Hegel makes it clear that man is only human through mutual recognition, through a realised community of his kind. In the Phenomenology, he writes: "For it is the nature of humanity to press onward to agreement with others; human nature only really exists in an achieved community of minds."⁶⁴ To make Hegel's notion of freedom more concrete, it is necessary to examine the kind of person in whom and through whom it manifests itself. Hegel's idea of the self is expressed by the term individual, which is both an abstract moment of the dialectic, and a very real kind of person which Hegel considers to be both the truth of human nature, and an ideal to which history aspires.

⁶⁴ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 43.

Individuality

In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel gives the following definition of individuality: "Individuality is awareness of one's existence as a unit in sharp distinction from others."⁶⁵ The unitary nature of the self is only apparent by its distinctiveness, so one's relation to others is essential to one's independence. One is independent only from other individuals.

"Individual" is a synthetic term for Hegel. In it are brought together the universal and singular character of the self. With regard to freedom, the political aspect of the dialectic, this universal character is 'expressive unity,' and this singular character is 'moral autonomy.' For Hegel, "everything that exists is a particular, which couples together the universal and the singular."⁶⁶ A person is a 'particular' through the coupling of both his social or species nature, and his discrete or autonomous nature. The latter proceeds to the former, and then returns again; a single consciousness is at first alone, it then confronts other consciousnesses, and then returns to itself as self-consciousness, as an individual. The result is neither loss in the whole nor isolation in the self. For Hegel, the individual compares to its constituent universality and singularity, its communal and autonomous nature, as a self raised to self-consciousness, higher yet the same. The ascent to individuality is described thus:

⁶⁵ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 208.

⁶⁶ Hegel, Logic, pp. 39-40.

By means of particularity the immediate [i.e., not defined in relation to something else] individual comes to lose its independence, and enters into an interconnection with something else. Man, as this man, is not this single man alone: he stands beside other men and becomes one in the crowd. Just by this means however he belongs to his universal [political community], and is consequently raised.⁶⁷

Reflection, or the return to self through the universal, makes apparent to the self that it is an individual, a self among selves. Just as the word 'I' means the discrete, autonomous person, but says all personality, so in the same way does the individual find in his self an element in common with all other individuals. This, in political terms, is the community or State, and in natural terms is the species; a man is both this man and also an instance of mankind. Hegel writes in the Logic: "Individuals are born and perish: the species abides and recurs in them all: and its existence is only visible to reflection."⁶⁸ The species, mankind, meets the discrete self, a man, in a middle term, which is individuality. In the rather technical language of the dialectic, this is what Hegel says in the Phenomenology, where he writes:

We have a syllogism in which one extreme is the universal life as a universal or as genus, the other extreme, however, being the same universal as a single individual, or as a universal individual; but the middle term [individuality] is composed of both: the first seems to fit itself into it as a determinate universality or as species, the other, however, as individuality proper or as a single individual [the autonomous self].⁶⁹

67 Hegel, Logic, p. 240.

68 Hegel, Logic, p. 34.

69 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 177.

Hegel calls the 'single individual' or autonomous self a 'universal' because the 'I,' as this 'I,' is merely any other 'I' until it is situated in a context, until it rises to individuality. A person is only an individual with respect to other individuals, only then does the particular emerge from these extreme moments of universality.

In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel is concerned not so much with individuality as the result of abstract dialectical determinations, as he is with it as a working dynamic within this framework. Here, his concern is with individuality as personality, or as moral will. Personality is essentially a tension between the extremes of the autonomous self and the universal community, or State. Hegel writes: "The will is the unity of both these moments. It is particularity reflected into itself and so brought back to universality, i.e. it is individuality."⁷⁰ A person's nature partakes of both these extremes: he is both an instantiation of species (the universal), and an autonomous unit (the singular). He is an individual through these other moments: apart from others, and belonging to others. What he is, as this person, is known only through other persons, as the way he is both different and the same. In the Logic, Hegel writes: "A subject as Individual is coupled (concluded) with a Universal character by means of a (Particular) quality."⁷¹ A quality is a measure of character, and its value as a reference

⁷⁰ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 23.

⁷¹ Hegel, Logic, p. 247.

derives from other qualities: what it is not, and how it is similar. A quality makes a person distinct---the word "distinct" itself implies its opposite: a thing is distinct from all that is not itself. This separation is not absolute, though, and so one's very differences allow one's participation in a unity. The unity of personality is common humanity. Though it appears contradictory, one can be unique only in a group of similar individuals.

Hegel does emphasise the communal nature of man, stressing the universal aspect of individuality over its autonomous aspect. But for him, universality is the origin of man's independence: through the universal, one's individuality is made concrete. In the Logic, Hegel states: "The universal is the ground and foundation, the root and substance of the individual."⁷² Thus, man's humanity, his nature in general, is not something he has over and above his particular qualities. Rather, these qualities derive solely his universal character. It is this that makes these qualities meaningful references, and not empty, unconnected states of being. Reflection, or the rising to consciousness of Reason, gives the knowledge that one's very identity is tied inextricably with that of other individuals: one is what one is in particular only through what one is in general. Through Hegel's communitarianism, the self comes to be seen as a situated self, and this is the real meaning of individuality. The emphasis on the universal is essential to this understanding. Again in

⁷² Hegel, Logic, p. 240.

the Logic, Hegel writes:

The individual man is what he is in particular, only in so far as he is before all things a man as man and in general. And that generality is not something external to, or something in addition to, other abstract qualities, or to mere features discovered by reflection. It is what permeates and includes in it everything particular.⁷³

The Dialectic

Reason, mastery and slavery, freedom, and individuality are tied together by the way in which they appear and the way in which they are known: this is the dialectic. The dialectic sustains the whole of Hegel's philosophy; it is the substance or inner working of each of his concepts, the connectedness between aspects of his philosophy, and it is also the manner of the understanding of these things. The dialectic is the motive force within things, it is the life, the 'Spirit' within Being. Hegel writes in the Logic: "Wherever there is movement, wherever there is life, wherever anything is carried into effect in the actual world, there Dialectic is at work."⁷⁴ Without movement, Being is pure or 'mere' Being---it has no negation, no becoming, no constituents other than a monolithic oneness. Dialectic describes the distancing within Being, both spatially as subject and object and temporally as history, which raises it to the level of Spirit, to Being-with-life. Hegel writes in the Logic: "In its true and proper character, Dialectic is the very nature and essence of

⁷³ Hegel, Logic, p. 240.

⁷⁴ Hegel, Logic, p. 116.

everything predicated by mere understanding---the law of things and of the finite as a whole."⁷⁵ 'Mere understanding' is man's one-sided appropriation of the substance of Reason, his own apprehension of the dialectic. The 'true and proper character' of the dialectic includes the wider consideration of the dialectic as objective structure.

The dialectic is both a movement in thought and a movement in 'reality,' or 'the world.' The movement in thought is a change in perspective, altering the focus of thought for the sake of understanding. The movement in the world is the progress of history, where the in posse of thought is made the in esse of reality. The world is a unity, a whole-composed-of-parts, thus allowing variegation of perspective between thinking and acting subjects and the objective horizons of life. The dialectic separates and brings together; the concrete result is, as Nietzsche will observe, something higher yet the same: nothing other than what was there before, but now something in particular, something brought home to consciousness. Hegel writes in the Logic: "To mediate is to take something as a beginning and to go onward to a second thing; so that the existence of this second thing depends on our having reached it from something else contra-distinguished from it."⁷⁶ These shifting perspectives change not only the thing observed, but also the observer himself, because a perspective is wholly dependent on both its moments, having a quasi-

⁷⁵ Hegel, Logic, p. 116.

⁷⁶ Hegel, Logic, p. 17.

existence only between them both. An observer is no more the 'cause' of his perspective than is that which he observes. Understanding shifts between the apparently opposite moments of mediation, taking each subject-moment to be the 'cause' only as a distortion for the sake of perspective. In this way, the dialectic teaches a higher truth to Reason. The result of following the dialectic, as Hegel writes, is that "the relation of the two things is reversed; and what came as a consequence being shown to be an antecedent, the original antecedent is reduced to a consequence. This is always the way, moreover, whenever reason demonstrates."⁷⁷ The end of an action not just its result, but actually its 'cause' as the principle which guided it in the first place. Hegelian circularity finds the origin of a desire in its satisfaction, but at first present only negatively, as the lack of the condition of satisfaction within the desiring subject.

For Hegel, the realm of thought is not divorced from the realm of action, where Being is Becoming, which is the realm of the dialectic. In fact, thought is the very structure of reality, and so the dialectic of thought follows the dialectic of reality. Thought is abstract because it is coincidentally removed from and essential to the object. The dialectic is at work in this two-fold nature of thought. Hegel explores this theme in the Logic, where he writes: "To see that thought in its very nature

⁷⁷ Hegel, Logic, p. 58.

is dialectical, and that, as understanding, it must fall into contradiction---the negative of itself---will form one of the main lessons of logic."⁷⁸ Contradiction is necessary to stir thought from the lethargy of its fixed determinations. For Hegel, thought is in motion towards an ever more complete appropriation of the Idea. Spirit fully manifested is a living, comprehensible whole which is a unity. To hold conflicting ideas in mind at the same time, mediated by an overarching understanding of their essential unity, is the result of dialectical thinking. Thus, for Hegel, "to know, or, in other words, to comprehend an object is equivalent to being conscious of it as a concrete unity of opposed determinations."⁷⁹ The dialectic of thought parallels that of the object: the tension of which the latter consists is made apparent to the former.

In the Phenomenology and the Logic, Hegel asks his reader to follow the dialectic without 'proving' this method. His reason is that 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating.' The text is ultimately self-referential, just like its subject-matter. The method of dialectic is as much a 'result' of world-history as this object is 'categorised' by the method. In the Logic, Hegel writes: "It thus appears that the method is not an extraneous form, but the soul and notion of the content."⁸⁰ If thinking beings are a part of Being, and if that Being is

78 Hegel, Logic, p. 15.

79 Hegel, Logic, p. 78.

80 Hegel, Logic, p. 296.

dialectical, then the proper form of thought is dialectic. By this congruence, reason in mind appropriates the Reason in Mind; Understanding rises to wisdom, and consciousness rises to Self-Consciousness. As Alexandre Kojève observes in his commentary on Hegel, "there is a dialectic of 'scientific' thought only because there is a dialectic of the Being which that thought reveals."⁸¹

Thinking and Being meet in the movement of Being: its becoming, its history, and for man, his experience. Thought moves dialectically and changes the world; the world moves dialectically and changes thought. The unity of both is Spirit, Reason, or the Idea worked out completely. In the Phenomenology, Hegel writes: "Inasmuch as the new true object issues from it, this dialectical movement which consciousness exercises on itself and which affects both its knowledge and its object, is precisely what is called experience."⁸² Experience teaches the lesson of the dialectic: that the subject finds its essence in its object; that the self finds its identity in others. Thus, the thinking person, the consciousness rising to self-consciousness, casts off the seeming nature of existence for an awareness of his true situation. The mask removed is the appearance that the object is either unessential or that it is everything, or that the self fits these extremes. The dialectic moves between these oppositions in appearance, which is experienced by many as history.

⁸¹ Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 172.

⁸² Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 55.

The goal, for Hegel, is where thought and reality coincide: "In pressing forward to its true existence, consciousness will arrive at a point at which it gets rid of its semblance of being burdened with something alien, with what is only for it, and some sort of 'other' at a point where appearance becomes identical with essence."⁸³

Dialectical determinations in thought match these determinations in action stage by stage, so that it is impossible to say that one sphere has primacy over the other. But Hegel does emphasise thought over action, because he argues that 'thought rules the world,' that Reason is Mind, and so the 'actual world' is nothing but concrete determinations of thought. And indeed, without thought the world does not exist as such. It would have no nature, for qualities are only given to thinking. Hegel is an unapologetic idealist; in the Logic, he writes: "Thought and thought alone has eyes for the essence, substance, universal power, and ultimate design of the world."⁸⁴ Man's Understanding allows him to gain this perception, and Reason in history allows Spirit to introduce this perception in and through man. There is nothing not given to thought: the dialectic is Becoming, which Hegel writes is the unity of Being and Nothing;⁸⁵ beyond this thinking cannot go. Thinking takes on the confidence of this universal power when it exhausts all possibility, when the

⁸³ Hegel, Phenomenology, pp. 56-57.

⁸⁴ Hegel, Logic, p. 81.

⁸⁵ Hegel, Logic, p. 128.

barriers of seeming are overcome, but not eliminated, through the exercise of reason and the experience of history. In the Phenomenology, Hegel writes:

Action alters nothing and opposes nothing. It is the pure form of a transition from a state of not being seen to one of being seen, and the content which is brought out into the daylight and displayed, is nothing else but what this action already is in itself. It is implicit: this is its form as a unity in thought; and it is actual--- this is its form as an existent unity.⁸⁶

What is important here is the movement from 'not being seen' to 'being seen,' and this, precisely, is the dialectic of thought. Action alters nothing because nothing is added: Being is self-identical regardless of history. Within Being, though, action introduces mediation: the monolithic whole becomes a whole composed of parts. This introduction of relation is the dialectic. In itself, it is nothing; but its 'working out' within Being makes the implicit explicit, and the seeming actual.

The resolution of the dialectic is, for man, an overcoming of the alienation of the object: in his case, other human beings and the world. Man's experience, the movement of the dialectic in his thoughts and in his acts, is a recovery of self, a situated self, a self understood as a definite relation to other selves and the world. To become self-conscious is to become at home in the world. Hegel writes in the Logic: "The aim of knowledge is to divest the objective world that stands opposed to us of its strangeness, and, as the phrase is, to find ourselves at

⁸⁶ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 237.

home in it: which means no more than to trace the objective world back to the notion---to our innermost self."⁸⁷ The world as the object of our inquiry, which we thought was remote, turns out to be essential to ourselves. This revelation raises our thinking from being a technique applied to reality, to being its very structure or logos. This is what it means to be 'at home.'

The dialectic is the irresistible power of movement at work in a living world. Thought is dialectical because it is the faculty of a living being at work in this dynamic. It is also the structure of the living whole of Being, which is Spirit. The universal is also a subject, the whole is an agent, contradicting the hubris of modern subjectivity. Thought elevates humanity to the level of individuality situated in substantial community, which transcends its mortality by partaking of, and not just making, a living world. Because, as Hegel writes, "all things, we say---that is, the finite world as such---are doomed; and in saying so, we have a vision of Dialectic as the universal and irresistible power before which nothing can stay, however secure and stable it may deem itself."⁸⁸ Each moment of the dialectic is an end. An end is both a conclusion, and so the origin and meaning of an action, and a termination, the loss of the experience of acting authentically in precisely the same way as before.

⁸⁷ Hegel, Logic, p. 261.

⁸⁸ Hegel, Logic, p. 118.

Chapter Two
The End of History

The Sage

In this discussion of what history is for Hegel, the end of history has always been within sight. The end of history is not simply the termination, but the meaning of history: what its constituent events are for. History is meaningful only in light of its end. So, if history is the development of freedom, or liberation, then the end of history must be the regime of actual freedom. If history is the awakening of self-consciousness, then the end of history must be where human being is fully self-conscious. That Being which becomes through history is the True-as-Subject, or Spirit, or Reason. The end of history is where this universal concept has become, or is actual, and therefore has lost its 'potential' or 'not-yet-realised' nature. History is the transformation of pure (unmediated) Being to Being-in-and-for-itself. At the end of history, what there is exists as a true outward-seeming, and a true reflecting-back. Hegel, in the Logic, calls this great synthesis the Idea: "The Idea is truth in itself and for itself--the absolute unity of the notion and objectivity."¹ In others words, pure Being, or what-there-is implicitly, is united with its object, which is itself. This unity is Being made explicit, made 'in and for itself.' History is the mediating process, through which this dialectical movement occurs.

Inextricably bound up with history is the way in which it is known. This is because man does history in two ways.

¹ Hegel, Logic, p. 274.

First, he is the agent within history, the subject who acts. Second, he is the philosopher reflecting upon history, the subject who thinks and speaks. Hegel does not oppose the knower and the known, rather, he distances them so that in mediating the gap the truth of consciousness emerges. His philosophical stance avoids the perversion of perspective afforded by pure objectivity, or radical subjectivity. The merit of having a dialectical philosophy to elucidate a history which itself is dialectical is obvious. Barry Cooper writes: "A philosophy of the concrete was a repudiation of abstract thought (philosophical form without concrete content) on the one hand, and common sense (concrete content without philosophical form) on the other."² And so, in Hegel's philosophy, particularly the Phenomenology, we follow a story told from two perspectives. First, there is the knower, which is the standpoint of Hegel, or his reader, or the 'Sage,' who knows the end of the story, and so can place each event in its proper context, in light of its end. Second, there is the known, which is human being within its world, within the context of historical action. Because man within history is immersed in dialectically incomplete 'moments' of the whole, or Spirit, his perspective is a defective vision of his place in the larger story. The phenomenological observer looks at the whole---at what Being is, and what Being does---objectively, and this is Being for itself: a distanced

² Cooper, End of History, p. 105.

perspective. The historical actor looks at the whole from within, from the perspective of active engagement. This involvement is the subjective moment of the historical dialectic, which is Being in itself. It would be incorrect to say that the truth lies in either perspective. Only the whole is the True, and it is a unity achieved by the interaction, or dynamic mediation, of these two perspectives. The culmination of this interaction is the end of history.

Hegel does not just ask what the True is, but also how it could come to be that he knows what this is. His account must account for itself. Both knower and known, subject and object, are essential to wisdom. Hegel shifts the locus of truth from the object, to the space between subjects and objects---herein lies his advance over previous philosophy: "All pre-Hegelian philosophy exclusively identified the True with Substance, the unchanging object of discourse, while forgetting that the subject who articulated the discourse was equally primordial."³ In the Logic, Hegel dismisses pure objectivity as the realm of truth as follows:

The Thing-in-itself (and under 'thing' is embraced even Mind and God) expresses the object when we leave out of sight all that consciousness makes of it, all its emotional aspects, and all specific thoughts of it. It is easy to see what is left--- utter abstraction, total emptiness, only described still as an 'other-world'---the negative of every image, feeling, and definite thought.⁴

In other words, pure objectivity is nihilism. This idea,

³ Cooper, End of History, p. 53.

⁴ Hegel, Logic, p. 72.

and that of the 'other world,' will be returned to in the discussion of Nietzsche. For now, it is essential to recognise the importance for Hegel of the subject to truth. That subject is the philosopher, and ultimately the Sage. The connection Hegel makes between wisdom and Spirit is a logical progression of the connection Hegel makes between the dialectic and history. Both are connections between subject and object, both are perspectives. For Hegel, reality and thinking about reality are separate and connected, and to bridge the gap between them is the goal or end of history: to achieve wisdom. Wisdom is related to philosophy as Reason is related to the understanding: Wisdom appropriates Reason, the completed whole of Being-having-become, while philosophy articulates that becoming, as the involvement through speech within history.

It will be recalled that "Reason" describes both thought and reality; it is the logos of Being. Hans-Georg Gadamer brings out this confluence when he writes: "Reason is not only in thought. Hegel defines reason as the unity of thought and reality. Thus, implied in the concept of reason is that reality is not the other of thought and, hence that the opposition of appearance and understanding is not a valid one."⁵ The word and the thing to which it applies only seem to be opposed to that consciousness which is within history, but not to completed self-consciousness. In fact, apart from its articulation, apart, as Hegel

⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer, Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976). p. 56.

says, from one's 'image, feeling, and definite thought' about it, the thing has no reality. So one cannot give primacy to the 'thing-in-itself.' The perspective of wisdom, that of the Sage, says, according to Gadamer, that "ontologically, the difference between idea and appearance is as invalid as that between the understanding and what it explains."⁶ Phenomenology, then, does history in both its senses: as a philosophical method it thinks through events (the in-itself) and it thinks about events (the for-itself). Experience is both the act and its recollection, and both these things follow a dialectical movement. But here a problem arises. If one is truly immersed in history, in process, then one can never rise above the immediacy of events. One's thinking would always be historicist: conditioned by one's times. The only way the philosopher can put an historical moment in perspective, to fit it into a pattern, into a context, is for him to know the whole. To talk about the importance of an historical 'moment,' which is a level of consciousness, one must stand, not outside, but 'above' that moment, in a wider, more self-conscious framework. This more all-embracing moment is always the next epoch of history. To talk about the whole historical movement, one must in a similar way, stand beyond the whole of history, and this is the perspective of the end of history. There can be no such thing as an observer who is completely outside history,

⁶ Gadamer, Hegel's Dialectic, p. 56.

though, no witness who is utterly autonomous of the act. The end of history is a beyond within time, not an outside of time. This 'beyond-within-time' is both 'having experienced' as well as 'having thought through'---action and thinking do not cease, but they do complete their essential movement, which is total self-manifestation, or making all possibilities actual. If one cannot see the whole from 'outside,' one can gain the perspective of beyond-within-time by experiencing the whole from within, by running the course of the dialectic in thought, recollecting the action of history to oneself. The holistic standpoint is made concrete, it is given content, by history, by action-in-time. It is not an empty idealisation, but a realised ideal. For Hegel, the person who does this is the Sage. The Sage is the philosopher who has become wise, who lives at the end of history; the one for whom each successive moment of history has appeared.

The Sage is the philosopher who has appropriated the object of philosophy, who has ceased to approach wisdom, and who has achieved it. To articulate the end of philosophy in wisdom is Hegel's goal in the Phenomenology: "To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title 'love of knowing' and be actual knowing---that is what I have set myself to do."⁷ This is in fact a dilemma about history, that its meaning is its end. To know the meaning within history, the end of that process must be present to one. This puts

⁷ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 3.

one beyond the possibility of involvement. Barry Cooper writes: "Historical existence is a problem, a dilemma, a predicament. On the one hand one must act 'in' history, but on the other one must rise above the stream of events in order to understand the sense and direction of one's action."⁸ Wisdom is hindsight: one knows what history was for. Comprehension is the result of experience: only when all possibilities are realised is understanding complete. The realisation of all possibilities does not end all experiences as such, but it does signal the end of all new experiences. The word "new" is used here in its most radical sense: as meaning 'unique,' 'unprecedented,' a substantial addition to a life being led. The kind of experiences which are possible at the end of history are novel ones, rather than new. Novel experiences are merely different configurations of already present things. It must be pointed out that this radical sense of "new" is one of seeming, or appearance---something is new for man in his developing self-consciousness. For Spirit, the dialectic is the configuration of what was already present in the Idea, immediately, or potentially. Hegel writes in the Logic that "in its beginning the thing is not yet, but it is more than merely nothing, for its Being is already in the beginning."⁹ For man, though, limited by perspective and temporality, this distinction between "new" and "novel" is very important, because it illuminates the way in which

⁸ Cooper, End of History, p. 46.

⁹ Hegel, Logic, p. 130.

the end of history is unlike history itself, how post-historical action is not action in the strong sense, but mere activity.

The distance necessary to make sense of the whole of one's actions unfortunately puts one entirely out of the sphere where that action is possible. But one thereby replaces the seeming truth of an enclosed mode of historicist thinking with the revealed truth of hindsight: one knows what one's actions meant. Thus, Hegel's claims about history are not subject to the attack that he himself was immersed in history, with his truths as changeable as the process of which he was a part. Cooper writes: "Hegel's answer [to historicism; to the claim that truth changes with the world], restated most emphatically by Kojève, was that the philosopher can understand history only if history is over, if all historical human possibilities have been achieved, and all interpretive discourse has been completed."¹⁰

The end of history argument is essential to Hegel because he wants to maintain coincidentally the propositions that history is an exhaustive whole and that the True is revealed in and by it. He forecloses the possibility of claiming that the True underlies history, and is gradually revealed by experience and knowledge, or that the True imposes its nature upon otherwise formless Being. Therefore, Hegel posits the end of history as a beyond within life. This is the 'destination reached' of

¹⁰ Cooper, End of History, p. 49.

the dialectic, one which is 'metaphysical' in appearance, yet nothing but mediated reflection in actuality.

The end of history is within the temporal realm inhabited by human being, within the same context as history. But man's experience of time at the end of history is of changelessness: the end of history has the same character as eternity. If all possibilities are made actual, then nothing can be truly added, no new thing can be introduced which will alter the character of experience. For Hegel, the end of history marks the coming together of the eternal, transcendent realm and the temporal, immanent realm. Time at the end of history is the post-historical epoch: like any period in history, it is defined by what has gone before, but the post-historical epoch looks back to a completed whole, to a metaphysical journey ended.

The post-historical epoch is still a temporal one, and still a human one. It is temporal because there are changes in states of Being from moment to moment, there are varying experiences. But these experiences may be described as novel, rather than new, being the consequence of mere activity, rather than creative action. The ongoing dialectic is sustained by the persistence of natural desires; strictly human desires, on the other hand---the desire for the non-natural object, the recognition of another, or prestige---no longer give rise to new moments of history, as their realisation is at hand. The temporality of the end of history consists of shifts in perspectives within realised Being; these changes do not

involve a wider perspective, though, as the widest possible perspective---that of Spirit, or everything-there-is-as-subject---has been reached.

The post-historical epoch is a human one, because freedom is present to man in it: he continues to make himself what he is, but now in the widest, most radical way. But no manifestation of freedom in this epoch can change the realised potential of freedom: no new state of affairs can be brought to be such that the freedom man now enjoys is diminished; one cannot leave behind one's experience, one's remembrance of things past. The exercise of freedom is no longer liberation, but the manipulation of perspective, the wilful placing of the self into a context. The consequences of such activity may be novel in themselves, but they add nothing to the possibilities of freedom. The Sage is the type of humanity who embodies this post-historical epoch, in whose faculty of reason is incarnate the nature of Reason.

What is made complete by the end of history is the whole of man and world, action and thought, history and Spirit, all made manifest in a unity, one which is mediated and therefore differentiated. And because this whole is greater than the sum of its parts, because there is a universal perspective which transcends any particular perspective (but not in the dualist manner), the moment of realisation and completion is eternal, whilst each moment in history was as fleeting as the human lives engages in struggle and labour within them. Barry Cooper comments:

The moment of completion was a moment for which there was no future; anything that happened 'later' would simply repeat what had already been said. Absolute knowledge was, then, eternal. Or better, it was eternity. Yet it had been engendered by or 'in' time.¹¹

Hegel writes in the Logic: "The history of philosophy, in its true meaning, deals not with a past, but with an eternal and veritable present: and, in its results, resembles not a museum of the aberrations of the human intellect, but a Pantheon of godlike figures."¹² Each of the moments of history is recollected by philosophy, and made present in one, universal moment, which is the end of history.

If history, the progressive chain of action is ended, then so too is history, the comprehension of action, ended. The first kind of history is ended because there is nothing left to do, because everything has been done or the potential of its realisation is actual or made present to consciousness. The second kind of history is ended because there is nothing left to know, because everything is known or at least graspable by means of fully realised Reason. Man can no longer become free if he is free, and he can no longer seek wisdom if he has found it. A free man cannot do anything genuinely new, just as a wise man cannot truly learn anything he already knows. Cooper writes: "The end of history, then, is also the end of philosophy: wisdom has been actualized."¹³ The end of history is not merely the

¹¹ Cooper, End of History, p. 234.

¹² Hegel, Logic, p. 126.

¹³ Cooper, End of History, p. 49.

completed whole of action, but also the completed whole of speech and thought. Wisdom is the complete discourse, the dialectic in speech, and to give a fully rational account is the goal of philosophy. As Hegel says in the Preface to the Phenomenology, philosophy must give up its love of wisdom in order to become actual wisdom. The philosopher is the one who becomes wise, while the Sage is wise. The story which the Sage is able to tell is the true one because it is the completed one. Therefore, the Sage lives at the end of history, where no deeds can add to the tale being told, nor any words embellish the account conveyed: "If the description is indeed exhaustive, nothing can possibly be added, and it is 'eternal.'"¹⁴

One can see what Hegel means when he says that the philosophy of history is the history of philosophy. To understand history is to undergo in oneself the successive comprehensions of history which came about in that history. Each successive account marked the dénouement of its historical moment. Hegel writes in the Philosophy of Right: "As the thought of the world, it [philosophy] appears only when actuality is already there cut and dried after its process of formation has been completed."¹⁵ So the end of history is marked by the end of thought-of-the-world, by the all-inclusive account. This completed speech encompasses or supersedes all previous accounts, just as each moment of history, or experience, was a wider one

¹⁴ Cooper, End of History, p. 68.

¹⁵ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, pp. 12-13.

than the one previous. If the succession of historical accounts is philosophy, then the end of history account is wisdom: speech articulated by the Sage. Cooper writes: "Wisdom, in other words, was a singular discourse that included all historical philosophies as its own elements and co-ordinated them as the total revelation of Being."¹⁶

The Universal and Homogeneous State

The regime of actual freedom is the end of history from the perspective of action, just as wisdom is the end of history from the perspective of speech and thought. This is the political face of reason when it has fully revealed itself within Being. The condition of man where he is free is, in Hegelian terms, the rational political order: the State. In Reason in History, Hegel writes: "The state is the more specific object of world history in general, in which freedom attains its objectivity and enjoys the fruits of this objectivity."¹⁷ He means much more than just the institutional state; Hegel means also the spiritual nation whose condition is ethical life, which is freedom and mutual recognition existing within a unified and rational whole. "State" describes the living reality of free individuals: this is the particular consciousness from the vantage point of universality, or a person in community. Alexandre Kojève, in order to convey this meaning of "State," gives the term more substance by

¹⁶ Cooper, End of History, p. 218.

¹⁷ Hegel, Reason in History, p. 97.

describing the regime of actual freedom as the "universal and homogeneous State." This, for Hegel, is the true political order, which is to say that it is the end to which political action---the manifestation of liberation ---within history was directed. Spirit, as subject, 'uses' man to rise to this objective state---"state" meant both politically and existentially. Cooper writes: "The goal to be actually attained by Spirit, which cunningly used the World-historical Individuals for its own rational purposes, was the State and, eventually, the universal and homogeneous State."¹⁸

Hegel gives the clearest definition of the State in the Philosophy of Right. "State" describes free individuality from the objective point of view. Hegel writes: "Since the state is mind [Spirit] objectified, it is only as one of its members that the individual himself has objectivity, genuine individuality, and an ethical life."¹⁹ An ethical life is the enjoyment of genuine recognition---one is a person through others, hence the necessity of community to self-consciousness. For Hegel ethical life, or ethical substance, "as containing independent self-consciousness united with its concept, is the actual mind of a family and a nation."²⁰ In an addition to the section of the Philosophy of Right on the State as the objective realm of Spirit, Hegel writes: "The state in and by itself is the ethical whole, the actualization of

18 Cooper, End of History, p. 108.

19 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 156.

20 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 110.

freedom; and it is an absolute end of reason that freedom should be actual. The state is mind on earth and consciously realizing itself there."²¹ So individuality is commensurate with citizenship in the state, to belonging to the regime of actual freedom. The end of reason is the actualisation of freedom, which is the State.

Hegel makes clear that the State is universal, and he means both that it fits the aspect of universality within the dialectic, and also that it is ubiquitous and all-embracing. In the Philosophy of Right he writes: "The state is universal in form, a form whose essential principle is thought."²² The 'thought' which guides the State is the 'mind of the nation': the universal aspect of self-consciousness, or, quite simply, a culture. To be a citizen of the State is to participate in a unity. The citizen is individual, a discrete consciousness, only by its involvement with other, similar consciousnesses. By this means, the individual is self-conscious. The State is 'above and beyond' the autonomous person, but nothing other than the universal aspect of all persons en masse. Hegel writes that "Mind [Spirit] is the nature of human beings en masse and their nature is therefore twofold: (i) at one extreme, explicit individuality of consciousness and will, and (ii) at the other extreme, universality which knows and wills what is substantive."²³ The State is this second

21 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 279.

22 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 172.

23 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 163.

extreme. It is the effect of the willing of discrete individuals, but, more than this, it is an affect: a subject which embodies the universal aspect of their natures. Hegel writes: "The state, as the mind of a nation, is both the law permeating all relationships within the state and also at the same time the manners and consciousness of its citizens."²⁴

The State at the end of history is universal because the aspect of transcendence and eternity has been brought home to man by history. What was taken to be essentially other is, by the end of history, known to belong to humanity, as an aspect of itself within Being. Transcendence is not, ultimately, a reference to another realm, but mediation within the whole of reality; it is not merely an abstract beyond, nor is it an indistinguishable identity. Eternity is endurance: it is fame and prestige which lasts beyond mortality. Universality is an aspect of humanity: it is its wider context. It is beyond the individual self, yet it is nothing other than the cumulative projections of the whole of selves. Kojève justifies calling the Hegelian State universal thus: "The transcendent Universal (God), who recognizes the Particular, must be replaced by a Universal that is immanent in the World. And for Hegel this immanent for Hegel this immanent Universal can only be the State."²⁵

Hegel describes this 'meeting of realms' in the

²⁴ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, pp. 178-179.

²⁵ Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 67.

conclusion to the Philosophy of Right. The aspects of transcendence and immanence within Being---the distancing and the involvement there is in everything, and every thought of a thing---come together in the end of history. The free individual, the citizen, is the human dimension of this dialectical confluence. The State is the immanent, human, and historical moment 'rising up' to truth, which is, and must be, universal. Hegel writes:

These two realms stand distinguished from one another though at the same time they are rooted in a single unity and Idea. Here their distinction is intensified to absolute opposition and a stern struggle ensues in the course of which the realm of mind lowers the place of its heaven to an earthly here and now, to a common worldliness of fact and idea. The mundane realm, on the other hand, builds up its abstract independence into thought and the principle of rational being and knowing, i.e. into the rationality of right and law. In this way their opposition implicitly loses its marrow and disappears.²⁶

The 'stern struggle' of which Hegel speaks is the dialectic; the opposition 'losing its marrow and disappearing' is the resolution of this dialectic. This is the homogeneity of the State: not a collapse into sameness or monolithic oneness, but certainly the loss of struggle, the loss of action in the strong sense. Tensions persist, but they are now comprehended within a unifying framework ---the universal State must be a homogeneous State.

The state at the end of history is homogenous because it is a condition of mutual recognition. The desire for the desire of another can only be fully satisfied when it

²⁶ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 222.

is met by all individuals. Only the State, as the living embodiment of the whole of free individuality, can meet this need: "Man can be satisfied only by being universally recognized."²⁷ In history, the aspect of universality from which man sought this recognition was the transcendent, eternal realm: from 'true' Being. It would not be facetious to say that man wanted to be recognised by God. By the end of history, though, man goes about satisfying his desire to be recognised universally by making immanent his object. Instead of God, man embodies the State with universality: it is the 'beyond' of humanity, entirely of individuals, yet transcending the life of each individual. Kojève writes: "Man can be truly 'satisfied,' History can end, only in and by the formation of a Society, of a State, in which the strictly particular, personal, individual value of each is recognized as such, in its very particularity, by all, by Universality incarnated in the State as such."²⁸ Homogeneity is essential to the State for freedom to be actual and for recognition to be genuine (i.e., to be from similarly free individuals). This state is Being at the end of history, the reality of what was experienced and known as the manifestation of reason in man and in the world. As Kojève writes, the universal and homogeneous State is the substance of the Sage's knowledge, the reality that corresponds to his words: "Given that the Wise Man's knowledge reveals nothing other than Man in the

27 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 80.

28 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 58.

World, the reality that transforms this total and circular knowledge into truth is the universal and homogeneous State ('homogeneous' here means free from internal contradictions: from class strife, and so on)"²⁹

Hegel makes it clear that the overcoming of contradictions is the resolution of the dialectic, and thus the 'homogeneity' of the State. An example in the Philosophy of Right is given in Hegel's note to the text discussing the refusal of certain religious sects to perform duties to the State. It is clear that such anomalies are tolerated rather than accepted---the rational principles which guide the State, because they are universal truths, require that the State be not only over all (universal), but also throughout (homogeneous). Hegel writes: "Only if the state is otherwise strong can it overlook and suffer such anomalies, because it can then rely principally on the strength of custom and the inner rationality of its institutions to diminish and close the gap between the existence of anomalies and the full assertion of its own strict rights."³⁰ 'Closing the gap' is the resolution of the dialectic: the end of history. Homogeneity means pure mediation: no truly external element enters into the relation between the two things. Apparent or seeming contradictions persist, but now comprehended in a unity.

The resolution of dialectical tension was present in the opposite moments all along, but it was implicit. The

29 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 90.

30 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, pp. 168-169.

end of history means that the overcoming of opposition is anticipated through knowledge: the awareness that the subject will find itself in the object, or that a person will be an individual in a community, precedes any act to put such a state of affairs into effect. This framework of resolution will not change, no matter what concrete steps are taken within it. The end of history means the disappearance of strong actions which introduce new consequences: what persists is 'mere activity' and 'novel experiences.' Man enjoys real freedom, freedom-in-context, by being 'wholly determined by the Idea,' to return to a Hegelian phrase: this all-pervading embodiment of Reason is the State.

The State is universal because there can be no addition to it, because it is complete. The State is homogenous because there can be no change made to it, because it is fully rational, and therefore perfect with respect to the process (history) for which it is the end and meaning. Reason appears at the end of history in the person of the Sage and in the condition of the universal and homogeneous State: "The Wise Man must necessarily be Citizen of the universal (i.e., nonexpandable) and homogeneous (i.e., nontransformable) State."³¹ It does not matter that this state does not exist, merely that it is not impossible in principle: "If we see that Hegel's system actually is circular, we must conclude in spite of appearances (and perhaps even in spite of common sense)

31 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 96.

that History is completed and consequently that the State in which this system could be realized is the perfect State."³²

The state in history was any political order; the State at the end of history is the rational political order. The beginning of the end of history was, according to Hegel, the French Revolution. It was the first attempt to construct a state based solely on rational principles. The French Revolution was not just different in degree from previous political progress, it was different in kind---a difference which puts its influence outside the continuum of change, outside history: "The significance of the French Revolution was greater than its empirical aftermath, Liberalism. Its World-historical significance lay in the establishment, in principle, of a rational political order."³³

That this political order has become, in principle, universal and homogeneous is shown by the obvious fact that "so far as the state itself is concerned, no one dares deny that the slogan of the French revolutionaries is the highest practical wisdom in public affairs."³⁴ We are all revolutionaries for liberation of one sort or another: it is not practically possible to be other than modern in this respect. Whether one lives within the terms of reference of the universal and homogeneous State, or whether one

32 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 98.

33 Cooper, End of History, p. 120.

34 Cooper, End of History, p. 285.

rebels against this fate, one cannot choose to live without this manifest reality. This is what living in the post-historical epoch is all about: "If we refuse to take refuge in the discourses of the past, if we refuse to pretend, for example, that we are polis-dwelling pagans or subjects of the sacrum imperium, then we must come to understand the truth of our existence by way of our modernity."³⁵ But if history was essentially the coming-to-be of the universal and homogenous State, the question remains of what this State is for. What do free men do, think, and talk about at the end of history?

The end of history is freedom and self-consciousness fully realised within humanity. Freedom, which is the goal of liberating action within history, is realised in the end of history as an actual condition. The beyond has returned to man; the transcendent is made immanent. Hegel writes: "In the Christian age, the divine spirit has come into the world and taken up its abode in the individual, who is now completely free and endowed with substantial freedom."³⁶ Freedom and self-consciousness meet in mutual recognition (i.e., in the condition of the universal and homogeneous State). To be self-conscious, the self must be objectively certain of itself and not just subjectively so. To achieve objective certainty, the self must be for another; it must be confirmed as an object in the eyes of another subject. For this to happen genuinely, all of history must take

³⁵ Cooper, End of History, pp. 11-12.

³⁶ Hegel, Reason in History, p. 131.

place, for a regime of mutual recognition to come about. In order for the recognition of the self by the other to be genuine, that other must in turn be recognised by the self as human; and the recognition which is given by the other must be given freely. Genuine, fully-realised self-consciousness depends, therefore, on freedom.

History can be seen as a sequence of unsatisfying recognitions---either by non-human objects (Nature or God) or by un-free objects (slaves). The human and free object is another self-consciousness like oneself, so the regime in which true recognition takes place is a community of self-consciousnesses, a regime of mutual recognition. Cooper writes: "Love, or recognition, could exist only among or between equals. So long as History existed there was no equality but rather only various forms of inequality that resulted from struggle and labour. Until the advent of the universal and homogeneous State, therefore, there could be no mutual recognition or true love."³⁷ Self-consciousness is not simply a particular, autonomous state of a human being. Real awareness of 'I' is an awareness of the world and all human beings. Human being is a social condition, so self-consciousness is a unity of 'I' and 'other,' of self and world, of man and mankind: "Self-consciousness, then, if it is to exist in its proper form, implies mutual recognition, a regime that Kojève identified as the universal and homogeneous State."³⁸

37 Cooper, End of History, p. 189.

38 Cooper, End of History, p. 284.

Furthermore, the universal and homogeneous State is the regime where wisdom is possible. This State is reason completely elaborated in human time, and wisdom is the completed discourse about reason, or about the state, or about history (all aspects of Being which converge at the end of history). Cooper quoted Hegel's famous phrase from the Philosophy of Right to illustrate the nature history in its end: "'The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.' Rational political principles of the state, Hegel's political wisdom, could be elaborated only with the end of history."³⁹ The history of philosophy, whose end is wisdom, and the history of action, whose end is freedom, come together in the Sage, who is the fully self-conscious citizen of the universal and homogeneous State. Completed thought is actualised, and completed action is rationalised: "The historical, actual, worldly reality that transformed the universal, total, and circular Knowledge of the Sage into a homogeneous truth, that is a truth revealed, in principle, to everybody, was the universal and homogeneous State, which came into existence at the end of history."⁴⁰

Technology

The outstanding feature of the post-historical epoch, the essence of the universal and homogeneous State, is technology. Hegel describes the end of history as Being-

39 Cooper, End of history, p. 245.

40 Cooper, End of history, p. 215.

in-and-for-itself, which is Being that is purely mediated. Mediation is the between of subjects and objects: it is the 'across,' the 'from-to,' the via, which is the real nature or 'substance' of meaning itself. Pure mediation is fully rational mediation. In the realm of activity, such pure mediation is means which are wholly efficient. Efficiency of means is the essence of technology. "Technology," in this broad sense, is descriptive of the kind of mediation that takes place at the end of history, the 'valuing' that is the nature of free and wise action. Technic is the activity of the understanding when the rational political order is made actual. Reason as an ideal becomes rational structure in reality through its appropriation by the understanding. The way in which it does so is through pure mediation, through means which are efficient, which inject no external substance into the terms of mediation.

Technology is not, essentially, a method which organises nature, just as dialectic is not a method which interprets reality. It is not behind the working of things, not logically prior to their actual relation. Technology is pure mediation, a relation of means and ends without distortion, without inefficiency. That it has been taken to be a guiding principle, an end in itself, is a result of nihilism: of the loss of ends which is the practical effect of the end of history, as we shall see later.

Properly considered, technology is simply a means, and

it is directed towards the achievement of certain ends by desires which are not strictly a part of its structure. Efficiency of means is pure mediation: Hegel's idea of the relatedness of parts within the realised whole of Being at the end of history. In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel writes: "The means is precisely that which is nothing in itself but is for the sake of something else, and therein, i.e. in the end, has its purpose and worth---provided of course to be truly a means."⁴² At the end of history, though, it is the nature of ends which has changed. No longer are ends unanticipated, not potentially realised in their very formulation. It still takes activity on the part of the desiring creature, man, to satisfy his desire, but the structure of the means to that satisfaction---technology---is already in place, waiting to be applied. The end is clearly anticipated in the origin, since the means add nothing unessential along the way. The means to the achievement of ends do not have to be devised by a creative act, all that is required is reaffirming activity: the application of technology. "Technology" is used here in the broadest sense of any system of means which are wholly efficient: the word gives content to Hegel's idea of pure mediation.

The end of history means the absence of ends in the strong sense, in the sense of an unanticipated result. However, the unprecedented nature of ends was merely their appearance to man involved in history. In fact, or at the

⁴² Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 98.

end of history, all ends are known to be implicit in their origin: this is the self-conscious reflection upon the nature of goals. Ends at the end of history are now known to be aspects of activity occurring within a whole. Ends appear to be outside the whole, but the reflection of their satisfaction reveals that they are a beyond within the whole. The result of this transition is that ends---the outer-directedness of human acts---lose their compelling power, and means assume new importance. Technology, then, becomes a quasi-end in itself: the 'how' overcomes the 'why' in the political agenda of the post-historical epoch. Hegel perceives this danger at the end of history, a result of the success of Reason and Science as a way of knowing. In the Logic, Hegel describes logical, rule-based descriptions of relation as 'mechanism,' or the 'mechanical mode of inquiry.' In our parlance, we would call this technology: it is the absence of subjectivity, the absence of arbitrariness in an act, what Hegel describes as a man's behaviour when "his own mind and will are not in his actions, which in this way [by being mechanical] are extraneous to himself."⁴³ Hegel does not reject this formal mechanism absolutely, but only when it exceeds its reasonable bounds. Technology succeeds when it is a means of organisation, when it is a way of marshalling resources in a purely efficient manner towards some extraneous end. Technology exceeds its rightful function when it ceases to be a way, and becomes a destination, when the world is

⁴³ Hegel, Logic, p. 262.

organised for the sake of efficiency, and not efficiently organised for the sake of a human goal. Hegel writes: "But even in considering the formations in the world of Mind, the mechanical theory has been repeatedly invested with an authority which it has no right to."⁴⁴ Hegel's conclusion is stated as follows:

Thus decidedly must we reject the mechanical mode of inquiry when it comes forward and arrogates to itself the place of rational cognition in general, and seeks to get mechanism accepted as an absolute category. But we must not on that account forget expressly to vindicate for mechanism the right and import of a general logical category.⁴⁵

Instead of subserving itself to extraneous desires, technology becomes a system for domination and control, because of the relative weakness of human ends in the post-historical epoch. Technology itself recognises no ends---these must be provided by the human subject who applies its organising principle. Where these ends are not given, the only practical limits to technology are natural ones. Technology does not do only that which it is incapable of doing---or not yet able to do. Only man can supply the moral dimension to any form of mediation, and, at the end of history, the on-going dialectic is all that provides such directedness to technology: the continual presencing of the Idea. The historical dialectic, the coming-to-be of freedom, self-consciousness, etc., is ended in its realisation or satisfaction. The strong ends of progress

⁴⁴ Hegel, Logic, p. 262.

⁴⁵ Hegel, Logic, pp. 262-263.

disappear with it. And so, the constraints of belonging to a process fall away, and all that is left are the not-very- limiting constraints of the logically and physically impossible. Barry Cooper writes: "Technical man, in principle, is liberated from all natural constraints."⁴⁶ To the extent that man allows himself to be determined by his means, by technology, constraints to his activity disappear. There is no 'given,' no standing limit to activity, which is recognised by technology, by pure mediation, as such. However, as we shall see, Reason may be directed by a pre-rational urge, such as the urge to truth, or to life.

The absence of limits is a manifestation of nihilism. It is not argued that limits disappear with the end of history. It is true, though, that limits are no longer perceived as constitutive of an external reality, as the 'outside world' has been re-appropriated by realised Reason. And it is also true, that pure mediation of Being, in itself, recognises no limits. Only Being itself imposes limits on its mediation, or provides the bounds of possibility. It is when a means assumes more importance than its due that the problem of nihilism arises. Hegel writes in the Logic: "A thing is what it is, only in and by reason of its limit. We cannot therefore regard the limit as only external to being which is then and there. It rather goes through and through the whole of such

⁴⁶ Cooper, End of History, p. 324.

existence."⁴⁷ This is the conclusion reached by Spirit, by the universal perspective fully realised. The triumph of technic is a manifestation of the undue importance given to means, to the particular perspective within the dialectic. When the strong ends of the historical dialectic fall by the wayside, technology fills its place. It transforms nature into raw material: any impediment which arises in the consideration of nature as 'input' for rationalised processing appears, then, simply as an inefficiency to be overcome, and not as a limiting, meaning-giving horizon to that activity. The 'givens' of nature which used to condition our work upon it, and thereby condition ourselves, are no longer recognised. They are still there, though, but our distorted perspective is blind to them---this, in part, is felt as the crisis of modernity. A technological society is, according to Barry Cooper, one where "production and consumption are understood to result from the wilful imposition of rational form on otherwise formless and natural human being."⁴⁸ But, as Hegel shows, 'rational form' arises from the expression of the innermost nature of things, not placed upon things because they totally lack it. The ideology of technic is in fact a manifestation of nihilism because of its persistence in historically incomplete modes of thinking, such as the belief that mediation arises from the effect of an organising principle, imposed from without, upon given

⁴⁷ Hegel, Logic, p. 136.

⁴⁸ Cooper, End of History, p. 290.

reality. This ignores the rootedness of means in a context which is an exhaustive whole: a whole which is unified by its 'actualisation,' by its completed appearance, as it is, to itself.

The effect of the dominance of technology is that process overshadows result: "technology" describes both the structure and the activity of the universal and homogeneous State, and it is thoroughgoingly radical in its influence upon man and his world. Langdon Winner writes: "Absolutely fundamental is the view that modern technology is a way of organizing the world and that, potentially, there is no limit to the extent of this organization. In the end, literally everything within human reach can or will be rebuilt, resynthesized, reconstructed, and incorporated into the system of technical instrumentality."⁴⁹ This can be said to be the case in spite of Hegel, for he does not assign to mechanism the position of paramountcy which it has actually attained in the post-historical epoch. Hegel writes in the Philosophy of Right: "The state is not a mechanism but the rational life of self-conscious freedom."⁵⁰ In other words, the state ought not to become merely an organisation for the satisfaction of needs, but, more than this, the structure of ethical life. That it has not succeeded in this is a result of nihilism---the result of history which is coincidental with the greatest

49 Langdon Winner, Autonomous Technology: Technics-out-of-Control as a Theme in Political Thought. (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1977). p. 24.

50 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 170.

possible freedom and self-consciousness.

Now, at the end of history, man, being self-conscious, realises that he and his world are in fact a unity. So if technology transforms the world according to maximum efficiency, so too must it transform man in this way. Technic is no different in this respect than any other means of accomplishing desired ends within history: "human beings do make their world, but they are also made by it."⁵¹ But at the end of history, means other than rational ones are precluded: technology is the conditioning mediation. This is another aspect of the homogeneity of the post-historical State. Mankind---which is a realised whole at the end of history---is wholly rationalised by its instrumentality, by technic. The universal and homogeneous State, this self-and-world embodying reason, is "a technological society where production and consumption are understood to result from the wilful imposition of rational form on otherwise formless natural and human being."⁵²

Technology as an end, as a principle beyond its medium, nature, has no limits on what it can control, rationalise, or make efficient. Needless to say, a principle of efficiency works by eliminating the inefficient. To return to Hegelian terms, the end of history precludes historical moments because they are incomplete (i.e., not a full revelation of Reason within Being). The gain of manifest Reason seems to require the

⁵¹ Winner, Autonomous Technology, p. 88.

⁵² Cooper, End of history, p. 290.

loss of the irrational. Technology succeeds because of its essence: efficiency produces results most closely fulfilling those anticipated in the origin. But as an end, technology precludes results to which it could apply. It cannot overcome its nature as a means to project ends: reason cannot dictate what we ought to do, merely how we ought to do it.

Regardless of any other, non-rational merits, other aspects of human existence (i.e., historical ones) are eliminated or transformed to conform to technic. They become part of a system of inputs, processes, and outputs; effort, organisation, and results. Winner writes: "Science succeeds over rival ways of knowing---poetry, religion, art, philosophy, the occult---not by its ability to illuminate, not even by its ability to organize knowledge, but by its ability to produce solid results."⁵³ Science, or reason, is true because it works; technology is embraced because it produces results. The strongest affect, which produces the greatest effect, is taken to be the measure of value in the post-historical world of non-expanding truth. Hegel recognised the implicit nihilism of his time (which is our time: the end of history and the post-historical epoch) as the triumph of conviction over truth, of the feeling of power aroused by an idea over its rational completeness. Hegel writes in the Logic:

⁵³ Winner, Autonomous Technology, p. 25.

It marks the diseased state of the age when we see it adopt the despairing creed that our knowledge is only subjective, and that beyond this subjective we cannot go. Whereas, rightly understood, truth is objective, and ought so to regulate the conviction of everyone, that the conviction of the individual is stamped as wrong when it does not agree with this rule. Modern views, on the contrary, put great value on the mere fact of conviction, and hold that to be convinced is good for its own sake, whatever be the burden of our conviction---there being no standard by which we can measure its truth.⁵⁴

Nietzsche also recognised the danger in a form of mediation becoming an end in itself. An idea which embraces differentiation (the Hegelian ideal) becomes a projection of a world which is at first at odds with mankind, used as he is to the value-feelings of progress in history (the post-historical dilemma); in the post-historical epoch, the feelings aroused by an idea come first, and truth is secondary. In The Will to Power, Nietzsche writes: "The sudden feeling of power that an idea arouses in its originator is everywhere accounted proof of its value: --- and since one knows no way of honouring an idea other than by calling it true, the first predicate with which it is honoured is the predicate 'true.'"⁵⁵ Because reason in itself has no limits, it is the most powerful organising principle possible: Nietzsche would say that this feeling elevates it to truth; Hegel would argue that its completeness and circularity makes it the truth. In any case, technic, which is the practical activity of

⁵⁴ Hegel, Logic, p. 35.

⁵⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale. Edited by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Random House, 1967). p. 103.

the understanding aspiring to Reason at the end of history does eliminate less powerful, less complete forms of mediation---such as magic, or art---because it 'works' better. And when means become ends---as they first appear, with the realisation that ends are not given from without out actual experience---then they take their place as the focus of our attention. This has meant that, "the triumph of technique spells the silence, the death, of God."⁵⁶ This thought anticipates Nietzsche, and it expresses the idea that reference to a supersensible world is dispensed with because it is no longer needed, because such mediations are unsatisfying with respect to subjects who have aspired to an other-worldly beyond, but have instead discovered 'merely' their innermost nature writ large. Both Hegel and Nietzsche agree, in different ways, that the 'death of God,' is a truth for modernity, but neither dispenses with those aspects of Being which were taken to pertain to the transcendent realm. These very aspects, though, are ignored by triumphant technology, by means as ends, by neglect of fundamental human desires which project a human world through these terms of mediation. The end of history does mean the 'death of God,' the loss of ends in the other-worldly sense. But Hegel argues that these ends are now possible within our world, by and for us. Our experience, though, has been of loss only: the failure both of the other-worldly beyond and of our rising to the new task of projecting a context or 'beyond' out of the

⁵⁶ Cooper, End of History, p. 319.

'over-full' nature of life. Hence, our first reaction to the 'death of God' is the nihilism of the post-historical epoch.

The Post-Historical Epoch

Hegel's completed notion of 'end' clearly rejects the historically useful fiction of an 'other-world.' Attaching values to an independent beyond made them remote from that life which they measured. The dialectic shows that values as ends are values as results, profoundly present to the process which they measure, as the beyond within life. For Hegel, the True is amongst things, as their origin or positing, their mediation or dialectical movement, and their result or end. It is his belief that "apart from their interdependence and organic union, the truths of philosophy are valueless, and must then be treated as baseless hypotheses, or personal convictions."⁵⁷ Previously, we observed how Hegel condemns the 'mere fact of conviction' as the criterion of truth. Similarly, philosophical truth which refers to a true world independent of the knowing subject is valueless, and, in fact, a manifestation of nihilism.

Were the philosophical beyond of an other-world of truth to exist, then the substance of philosophy would be a perpetual succession of attempts to approximate this world, always falling short. Hegel blankly rejects such an open-ended dialectic for philosophy, or his 'system of

⁵⁷ Hegel, Logic, p. 20.

philosophical science.' He writes in the Logic: "The true infinite is more than a mere world beyond the finite, and . . . we, in order to become conscious of it, must renounce that progressus in infinitum."⁵⁸ For Hegel, the truth is, ultimately, radically present---all around us, plain to see for the observer who rejects mere subjectivity, and allows the objective realm to determine itself through him (i.e., rises to true self-consciousness and freedom). The task of reasoning man is to perceive the Reason which is the substance and subject of the world. Hegel writes in the Philosophy of Right: "Philosophy is the exploration of the rational, it is for that very reason the apprehension of the present and the actual, not the erection of a beyond, supposed to exist, God knows where, or rather which exists, and we can perfectly well say where, namely in the error of a one-sided, empty, ratiocination."⁵⁹ The result of the dialectic, the end of history, is for the 'realm of truth' to lose its false character of a beyond to life which is alienated from that life, and to be known as an actual, present, living reality. At the end of the Philosophy of Right, Hegel writes: "The realm of truth has abandoned the world of beyond and its arbitrary force."⁶⁰

The realm of truth takes up its home within Being. This is to say that mediation is introduced within what began as an undifferentiated unity. Mediation allows

58 Hegel, Logic, p. 154.

59 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 10.

60 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 222.

speech about Being, which means that through speech one distances oneself and at the same time participates in the world. Truth emerges from the dialectic, from the widening of perspective until it includes all possibilities. Hegel writes, in the Logic, that the overcoming of immediacy is Being rising to truth: "True Being is just the superseding of all that is immediate things, as they immediately are, have no truth."⁶¹ The overcoming of immediacy is the same thing as the negation of given-Being: eliminating the simple, undifferentiated character of existence by bringing to light oppositions within it. This is the dialectic. The end of the dialectic is completed negation, where all oppositions have worked themselves out ---not to disappear, but to lose their special, progressive force. Hegel defines the nature of 'end' as follows: "In the End the notion has entered on free existence and has a being of its own, by means of the negation of immediate objectivity."⁶² The 'notion' is the Idea: Hegel's all-embracing term of Being and its becoming, Reason and its realisation. He defines it, in the Logic, as follows:

The Notion is the principle of freedom, the power of substance self-realized. It is a systematic whole, in which each of its constituent functions is the very total which the notion is, and is put as indissolubly one with it. Thus in its self-identity it has original and complete determinations.⁶³

The whole is 'systematic,' i.e., mediated. The term 'self-identity' also describes the through-and-through mediation

⁶¹ Hegel, Logic, p. 164.

⁶² Hegel, Logic, p. 267.

⁶³ Hegel, Logic, p. 223.

which is the end of history: the 'complete determinations' of the Idea.

The nature of this mediation is to bring together subjects and objects within Being. The end of history is thus where the unity of the whole is made manifest or actual. Hegel writes: "The realized End is thus the overt unity of subjective and objective."⁶⁴ Subjective and objective were, from the beginning, an implicit unity, but at the end of history this unity is 'overt,' or explicit. The veil of seeming is removed, and the distinction between the 'is' and the 'ought to be' disappears. The post-historical epoch does not come unannounced: it was heralded by the whole of that history for which it is the essential result. Hegel writes in the Logic:

But, as a matter of fact, the object is the notion implicitly: and thus when the notion, in the shape of End, is realized in the object, we have but the manifestation of the inner nature of the object itself. Objectivity is thus, as it were, only a covering under which the notion lies concealed. Within the range of the finite we can never see or experience that the End has been really secured. The consummation of the infinite End, therefore, consists merely in removing the illusion which makes it seem yet unaccomplished. The Good, the absolutely Good, is eternally accomplishing itself in the world: and the result is that it need not wait upon us, but is already by implication, as well as in full actuality, accomplished.⁶⁵

The end of history is not merely an ideal but an actuality: it has already come about in the world. The result, the end secured, is the Good, 'eternally accomplishing itself':

⁶⁴ Hegel, Logic, p. 273.

⁶⁵ Hegel, Logic, p. 274.

a telling foreshadow of Nietzsche's doctrine of the eternal recurrence.

This unity is a very precise understanding of the identity of subject and object. Subject and object are, at the same time, identical and distinct. Only the dialectic, the movement of perspective, can show that Being consists of participation and distance, involvement and distinction. Hegel wishes to make clear that the end of history is not a simple return to pure Being: that the whole, through its realisation, is the same as a whole, but now elevated within itself: it is mediated. In the Logic, he writes: "If we say for example, that the absolute is the unity of subjective and objective, we are undoubtedly in the right, but so far one-sided, as we enunciate the unity only and lay accent upon it, forgetting that in reality the subjective and objective are not merely identical but also distinct."⁶⁶ This is a refinement on what has been called the 'on-going dialectic' of the end of history: it is the continuing tension within Being---the nature of its constituents as both identical and distinct.

The unity of the subjective and the objective is the unity of the immanent or human sphere, and the transcendent or divine sphere. Man, as subject, appropriates the realm of objective truth to himself. Spirit, as subject, manifests itself through man the object of Self-Consciousness. Although neither sphere can be said to disappear in the other, their reconciliation marks what Hegel calls the

⁶⁶ Hegel, Logic, p. 121.

'absolute turning point.' In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel writes: "This is the absolute turning point; mind rises out of this situation and grasps the infinite positivity of this its inward character, i.e. it grasps the principle of the unity of the divine nature and the human, the reconciliation of objective truth and freedom as the truth and freedom appearing within self-consciousness and subjectivity."⁶⁷ Mind, or Spirit, rises out of the situation of open-ended progress, which is to say it realises the end of history. The reconciliation of objective and subjective freedom is the unity of our abstract ideal, and our actual experience.

This 'overt unity,' the end of history, has, for Hegel, already come about. As he writes in the Phenomenology: "This unification has . . . already occurred in principle."⁶⁸ Hegel rejects the notion that the completion of the dialectic is merely potential, or abstract. Because, for him, thought is all, the all-embracing Idea is all reality: its realisation is an irresistible force. In the Logic, Hegel writes: "The object of philosophy is the Idea: and the Idea is not so impotent as merely to have a right or an obligation to exist without actually existing."⁶⁹ Far from being impotent, the Idea is omnipotent---the very breath and soul of existence. Hegel expands on the concrete and active nature of 'mere thought' later in the Logic: "For on the

⁶⁷ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 222.

⁶⁸ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 483.

⁶⁹ Hegel, Logic, p. 10.

one hand Ideas are not confined to our heads merely, nor is the Idea, on the whole, so feeble as to leave the question of its actualization or non-actualization dependent on our will. The Idea is rather the absolutely active as well as actual."⁷⁰

The 'absolutely active' and 'actual' Idea is fully present to end-of-history humanity. Its activity is the recollection of the historical moments: "This in fact means that the present world and the present form and self-consciousness of the spirit contain within them all the stages which appear to have occurred earlier in history."⁷¹ Any absolute distinction between appearance and reality disappears at the end of history. The world turns out to be a world inferred, which reveals that thought is ontological. Thus, there can be nothing to a thing apart from what is made of it by thought, and so, 'nothing' marks the bounds of sense. Nihilism is the horizon of thought or meaning, and therefore the context of all reality. Meaning must be an inherent quality of Being if it is to exist at all. Hegel's philosophy takes on the question of thought and what is present to thought, and situates it absolutely. The universal and eternal completion which is the achievement of the philosophy of history, marks any kind of external reference as being the manifestation of nihilism.

Man at the end of history cannot bring about anything authentically new, because all possibilities are realised.

⁷⁰ Hegel, Logic, p. 201.

⁷¹ Hegel, Reason in History, p. 150.

His speech, thought, and action, cannot be directed towards any state of Being which is not at least theoretically present. What happens at the end of history, therefore, is not action, the creation of what was not there before, but activity, the reconstitution in new forms of the old. The only thing which activity 'does' is to articulate the whole, to make actual what is already potentially present by the elevation of Reason as the truth of Being. The nature of activity is not to develop the whole: this was action---the historical dialectic. Activity is the reproduction and sustaining of the whole: it is the on-going, post-historical dialectic. The citizen of the universal and homogeneous State turns the 'in principle' to an 'in fact.' The last historical act, the act of men at the end of history, is to make themselves actually free, truly self-conscious, and completely wise.

'The new,' which was brought about by action in history, was not just an apparent creation, but an authentic move from incompleteness to completeness. This possibility is now removed from us, and even the refuge of ignorance is of no avail to the satisfaction of our desire to engage with our world in as vigorous a manner as before, because, as David Kolb writes: "The transcendental conditions Hegel deals with do not have to be known in order to be in force."⁷² This is because of the primacy of thought for Hegel: the end of history can only be realised

⁷² David Kolb, The Critique of Pure Modernity: Hegel, Heidegger, and After. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986). p. 78.

in the most radical sense. The effect of the 'force' of 'transcendental conditions' is to situate, and thus limit, the possibilities for human endeavour: "What becomes clear . . . is not an endless future of ever new forms for thought and action but the limited rational forms for human action."⁷³ I describe this end of history action as activity, and its limited rational forms as 'the novel.' Activity is the working out of the infinite mediations or perspectives within a limited whole. The novel is the changing configurations of that substance which is only now truly at hand. Kolb writes: "There may be infinite amounts of empirical detail to be studied, but there are no different overall structures of time and space or of history and the state. Otherwise the self-transparency of spirit would be compromised. In an important sense, Hegel's world is finite."⁷⁴ Action created the new which was other-directed; activity establishes the novel which is perspective-dependent. Hegel, as Kolb observes, "is elevating our awareness of our own existence to an awareness of our full necessary conditions and context. There is no move from inside to outside."⁷⁵ This is the essential difference between modernity and the progress of history.

The French Revolution was the vanguard, the first emergence into the post-historical epoch; all there is left

73 Kolb, Critique of Pure Modernity, p. 79.

74 Kolb, Critique of Pure Modernity, p. 91.

75 Kolb, Critique of Pure Modernity, p. 87.

to 'do,' from the Hegelian standpoint, is to bring the rest of the world into line with what was realised by it: the political order based solely on rational principles. Post-historical activity does not introduce unthought of freedom: it makes our theoretical freedom a reality. Barry Cooper writes: "Contemporary modes of human liberation are all historical successors to the emancipation of the European bourgeoisie."⁷⁶ French Revolutionary values become European values, become Western values, become universal values. Elaboration, not introduction, characterises the post-historical epoch. To elaborate Reason---in the case of politics, to install the universal and homogeneous State---is the activity of mankind at the end of history: "'From the authentically historical point of view' world wars and their accompanying revolutions simply brought peripheral and backward areas into line with the position that Europe in principle had achieved."⁷⁷

But each successive liberation---whether of slaves, of serfs, of the workers, or of women---is not, since the paradigmatic French Revolution, an historical change, not a real progress, not a creation of the new. If history has shown that all human beings are free, then the fact that groups of them realise and assert their freedom adds nothing to history. What actual liberation does is reaffirm history, authenticate the past, make the meaning of history real and obvious. But it takes place at the end

⁷⁶ Cooper, End of History, p. 283.

⁷⁷ Cooper, End of History, p. 280.

of history, when all possibilities have been realised, a time of reflection upon the whole of what has gone before.

The end of history is a model for understanding the intersection of many ideas in Hegel's philosophy. As it has been shown in several examples above, it is a 'coming together' of several key notions. Eternity and time converge in a curious condition which is temporal, yet in which there is no strong change, no transition which breaks the completed pattern---not unlike the cycles of nature. The world and man meet in self-consciousness, which pertains to both the individual and to humanity as a whole. Subject and object regard one another in pure Being-in-and-for-itself: a rationally complete objective and subjective certainty of self; which has revealed itself to itself.

It would be a mistake to conclude from these observations that everything simply disappears into the One. However, this mistake is one which the nihilist makes, as will be seen later. The reason that the unity at the end of history is not a 'simple' unity is because history itself was the introduction of mediation within Being. To 'natural' man is added historical experience. Hegel says that Spirit is this instillation of mediation: the life-force which transforms simple, pure Being into pure Being-in-and-for-itself. Spirit instilled in man is the quickening of his self-consciousness. In the final unity, the differentiation, or separation, or 'gap' between each of the concepts listed above is not destroyed. Rather, it is bridged, or overcome, in such a way that the

'access' of each to the other is pure, true, or direct. The whole--- Being---is differentiated, and the 'particulars,' or aspects of it, appear to themselves as they are in themselves. The end of history is a true reflection (meant in both senses as an accurate self-revelation of reality, and an undistorted contemplation of thought). What is involved here is not final destruction, but rather ultimate synthesis: "The final definition of the Concept of the Sage was that he (or she) was a Synthesis of the Particular and Universal, not an annihilation but a supersession."⁷⁸

Only the human world can have an end of history, because history is purely a human thing. What is not human ---what does not make itself---continues, because its 'movement' through time was not a progress which could have an end. Nature is not for anything (unless man makes it something for himself): "The end of history was not a natural or cosmic disruption. Nature, being independent of time, necessarily would 'survive' it."⁷⁹ History may end, the dialectic may be completed, but time does not stop, and life goes on: "The end of history was not the end of the cosmos. All that 'happened' was that there came into being a world without negativity."⁸⁰ A world without negativity is one in which there is no longer a radically opposed other to appropriate, to take into oneself. Negation, the overcoming of dialectical tension, persists, but there no

78 Cooper, End of History, p. 231.

79 Cooper, End of History, p. 241.

80 Cooper, End of History, p. 274.

longer persist incomplete moments, false consciousnesses of Spirit, which have not yet succumbed to relentless Reason. Nietzsche, as we shall see, knew himself to inhabit such a world, knew that his essential activity was, as he wrote, "to remove antitheses from things after comprehending that we have projected them there,"⁸¹ i.e., to eliminate residual outside-directedness. The 'survival' of nature, of time, and of life beyond the end of history is that aspect of the post-historical epoch to which Nietzsche would direct his attention.

Hegel shows that the dialectic, in its historical form, as the overcoming of unsatisfactory moments of Being towards that state of self-consciousness which is both recognised and recognising, is complete. What is left is the ongoing, ahistorical dialectic: the continuing tension of subject and object within Being that is purely mediated. All that 'happens' is the continual positing and resolution of the dialectical tensions which have already been resolved in principle. Hegel writes: "The goal, Absolute Knowing, or Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, has for its path the recollection of the Spirits as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm."⁸² The 'in themselves' of the Spirits are the moments of the dialectic as comprehended by the Sage. The 'organization' of their realm is history. History is recollected by wisdom. It cannot resume in the same way as

⁸¹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 76.

⁸² Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 493.

before, because it is now, through the realisation of reason, a spent force.

It would seem that the end of history, being complete, rational, free and so on, is a desirable state of affairs. Why, then, should our experience of it be unsatisfactory? Why is the end of history the context for widespread nihilism? The answer begins with the recognition that the post-historical epoch is meaningful only as the end of history, with reference to that process for which it is the essential result. Freedom and recognition are desirable states of affairs only to those who want them, i.e., do not already have them. If man is a desiring creature, then his essence has two 'moments': to desire and to be satisfied. To be satisfied, one must necessarily lose the experience of desire. The problem with the end of history is that it is a complete whole. Were one to be completely satisfied, one would lose all desire. To not want to be anything other than what one is runs counter to the nature of humanity which started the dialectic in the first place. It is for these reasons that human beings come to experience their existence in the post-historical epoch with ambivalence.

Apart from affirming the freedom of the individual, the essential activity of the post-historical epoch is educating the individual to the standpoint of wisdom: to the subjective realisation of what is at hand, objectively. The speech of the Sage is a revelation to the unwise, although nothing changes from the standpoint of realised

Reason. Instead of repeating history, which we can never authentically do, its moments are recollected through education. Hegel writes in the Phenomenology: "In the child's progress through school, we shall recognize the history of the cultural development of the world traced, as it were, in a silhouette."⁸³ An awakening consciousness in the post-historical epoch does not have to wait upon events to progress to self-consciousness: history as thought is as real a dialectical development as history as action. The 'recollection of the Spirits' is, for the individual, the same as all of history was for mankind. Again in the Phenomenology, Hegel writes: "The series of configurations which consciousness goes through along this road is, in reality, the detailed history of the education of consciousness itself to the standpoint of Science."⁸⁴

What we sought to achieve by history we actually did achieve, but with this has come the loss of the experience of achieving. Because we have grasped the end of history, because we feel and know the unity of which we are a part, we cannot progress rationally to a next, higher step. We cannot let go of the end of history, once it is grasped, once it is realised. The end of history is not an event, but a condition into which we have entered. What we would like to do is to re-enter history, now that we know what it is about, but because we do know what it was about, in its entirety, we cannot return in the same way: we cannot

⁸³ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 16.

⁸⁴ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 50.

authentically re-engage in the same kind of process, we can only reconstitute its moments, we can only reflect. Our knowledge has taken us irrevocably beyond what we sought to know. To act within history, and to know the meaning of those actions, are two conditions we together want, but the latter always marks the decline of the former.

Also, the end of history as the projection of an ideal future from within history does not match the end of history as the realised reality of the post-historical epoch. What liberation was for does not match how freedom appears; what philosophy sought does not match what wisdom attains. Cooper writes: "What is indicated by the term 'crisis' . . . is the disproportion between the vision or model and the experienced reality of everyday modern life."⁸⁵ With the gain of completeness comes the loss of incompleteness: and this 'wanting' or 'lack' within the self turns out to be something essential to human being. Nietzsche describes this as 'life,' or as 'will to power,' or as 'the urge for increase.' That this does not go away as a result of completed reason shows that there is something not grasped by history, something pre-rational, something pre- (and post-) Hegelian.

The end of history is meaningful only to history. In itself, the end of history does not mean anything: there is no necessary consequence which proceeds rationally out of the end of history; it is a moment for which there is no future. Because the end of history does not project a

⁸⁵ Cooper, End of History, p. 13.

future, does not provide a temporal beyond as a reference for present action, it is the context for widespread nihilism. Actions lose their vital force, their outer-directedness, their widening, expanding power. All that is left is activity, the life of a reflective consciousness: "With the end of history has come the end of action in the strong sense of the term, namely the introduction of new consequences."⁸⁶ The end of history can be the context for nihilism, but it cannot be said to be the cause of nihilism, for nothing comes---rationally---of the end of history.

Reason dictates that the opposite of nihilism should be the result of the end of history. Meaning has come home, out of a distant future, out of an other-worldly beyond, into man's own consciousness. Meaning is made apparent as characteristic of a living, human world. Meaning belongs to man: we are ultimately responsible for the 'for what' of our lives. Cooper writes: "When one no longer understands oneself as dependent upon God or nature or any sublimated substitute, one necessarily understands oneself as responsible for whatever meanings actually exist."⁸⁷

So how can it be that essential meaningfulness is existentially nihilistic? How can meaning depart at the moment it is realised? The Sage is wholly and rationally satisfied, yet nihilism is a condition of profound

⁸⁶ Cooper, End of History, p. 299.

⁸⁷ Cooper, End of History, p. 284.

dissatisfaction. To be satisfied means that one is no longer alienated from the object of one's desires. Overcoming of alienation means elimination of the object's otherness, its characteristic as a given. What at first appeared as the other is taken into oneself by negating action: it becomes a moment in oneself, for oneself. Satisfied man has no 'outside' beyond, and no 'lack' within. Any context for action by such an individual must necessarily proceed from out of his own being: the value of absolute freedom, which such an individual enjoys, is purely self-referential. Hegel avoids the pitfall of simple identity by showing that the self is a wider thing, that what it is essentially is what it is for another. In other words, a human being is an individual only in a human community. What it enjoys is a situated freedom, both subjective and objective, not absolute freedom. But existentially, the post-historical epoch has abolished the 'outside' and the 'lack' which pertained to historical individuality, but has not yet evolved the consciousness of the situated self which pertains to end of history individuality. What we have is not 'actual' freedom, but 'absolute' freedom---a distortion of Hegel's ideal. Charles Taylor writes: "Now this freedom without situation is what Hegel called 'absolute freedom.' It was a conception of freedom which was sterile and empty in his eyes in that it left us with no reason to act in one way rather than another; and it was destructive, since in its emptiness it drives us to tear down any other positive work

as a hindrance to freedom."⁸⁸ Paradoxically, absolute freedom, the unrestricted power to act and to define the value of action by oneself, leaves one incapable of exercising this freedom in any genuine way: "Complete freedom would be a void in which nothing would be worth doing, nothing would deserve to count for anything."⁸⁹

Absolute freedom is not post-historical freedom. For Hegel, it is the penultimate moment, the form of freedom which, by its appearance, "has removed the antithesis between the universal and the individual will."⁹⁰ This is the same as saying that it marks the appearance of the particular will; the situated self; the individual in community. Hegel identifies absolute freedom with the Terror of the French Revolution: the wiping away of all horizons, and the feeling of absolute dread, which, by its experience, returns consciousness to its proper sphere, to where it "knows this being which is enclosed within self-consciousness to be essential being in its perfection and completeness."⁹¹ Hegel defines absolute freedom as follows:

It [absolute freedom] comes into existence in such a way that each individual consciousness raises itself out of its allotted sphere, no longer finds its essence and its work in this particular sphere, but grasps itself as the Notion of will, grasps all spheres as the essence of this will, and therefore can only realize itself in a work which is a work of the whole. In this absolute freedom, therefore, all social groups or classes which are the spiritual spheres into which the whole is articulated are abolished; the individual consciousness that

88 Taylor, Hegel and Modern Society, p. 153.

89 Taylor, Hegel and Modern Society, p. 157.

90 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 363.

91 Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 363.

belonged to any such sphere, and willed and fulfilled itself in it, has put aside its limitation; its purpose is the general purpose, its language universal law, its work the universal work.⁹²

So absolute freedom is a dialectical extreme, the return from which marks the appearance of the actual freedom of self-consciousness.

Man needs, therefore, a context, a community and a history, for him to act in a genuine way. This context is the material upon which freedom works: it is the originator of desires, and the forum in which accomplishments are revealed. The condition of humanity in such a context is an ambivalent one between satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Were man to be completely satisfied, then he would be absolutely free to do anything possible, since all possibilities would reside wholly within him. But in fact, this is only true of Absolute Spirit, of Being-as-subject, as it appears in itself, to itself. Man remains in a world of appearance, but he knows, objectively, that the nature of his activity is not relentless, not inaccessible to his actual freedom. Wisdom in itself (that is, without the capacity to enlighten the un-wise) is an impasse. As Alexandre Kojève writes: "The Wise man must reduce his existence to simple contemplation (reines Zusehen) of the Real and Being, and of their 'dialectical movement.' He looks at everything that is and verbally describes everything that he sees: therefore, he has nothing to do,

⁹² Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 357.

for he modifies nothing, adds nothing, and takes nothing away."⁹³ The Sage knows himself to be part of a unity where the Real, or the actual, fully comprehends the whole of Being. The truth which is now in the world is eternal, unchanging, and so too is the kind of man who knows it.

At the end of history, nothing really happens, because the appearance of things cannot be taken to be without precedent: "The Real . . . will remain eternally identical to itself, and its entire History will forever belong to the past."⁹⁴ Man's activity at the end of history should, according to Hegel be a cultural projection: given by the community of free individuals. If the post-historical epoch is characterised by nihilism, it is not because of Hegel, but in spite of him. Charles Taylor writes: "If the radical freedom of self-dependence is ultimately empty, then it risks ending in nihilism, that is, self-affirmation through the rejection of all 'values.' One after the other, the authoritative horizons of life, Christian and humanist, are cast off as shackles on the will."⁹⁵ In the case of this radical, or absolute freedom, with nothing outside of itself to 'negate' or overcome, the only thing left for it to affirm is the emptiness left behind. Situated freedom, on the other hand, begins with the realisation that there is no real 'outside': with the knowledge that Being, although infinite, is bounded.

Hegel recognises that with the completion of the

93 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 175.

94 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 194.

95 Taylor, Hegel and Modern Society, p. 159.

dialectic comes the disappearance of an 'outside,' of any situatedness of life which is fixed. There can be no external world for freedom to work upon and for thought to know. This is because the end of history is the realisation that the True is the whole, that self and world are one---moments in a unity which is differentiated. To experience the end of history, to know oneself and one's world in this way, is to become inward-looking. Hegel likens realised Spirit to a 'night of self-consciousness': "As its fulfilment consists in perfectly knowing what it is, in knowing its substance, this knowing is its withdrawal into itself in which it abandons its outer existence and gives its existential shape over to recollection. Thus absorbed in itself, it is sunk in the night of its self-consciousness."⁹⁶

As we shall see in the consideration of Nietzsche, man has realised his freedom, but does not exercise it except in historical, incomplete forms. He is wise (has appropriated Reason), but continues to speak of truth as a reference to a true world. He is responsible for the meaning of his life, but he continues to expect that meaning to emerge from beyond that life. In short, man is unprepared for the reality of the end of history. The beyond within life is the truth which both Hegel and Nietzsche teach, in different forms, yet it is a truth which the humanity to which it applies does not accept. Man persists in what Hegel has condemned as the progressus

⁹⁶ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 492.

in infinitum, and falsely projects a beyond outside of life, an 'ought to be' which is at odds with Being. The lesson of history, the end of history, is that the 'is' and the 'ought to be' are a harmony, encompassed by the dynamic whole of Being. Hegel writes, in the Logic:

But this harmony between the 'is' and the 'ought to be' is not torpid and rigidly stationary. Good, the final end of the world, has being, only while it constantly produces itself. And the world of spirit and the world of nature continue to have this distinction, that the latter moves only in a recurring cycle, while the former certainly also makes progress.⁹⁷

The end of history is the continual presencing of the Idea, at hand, everywhere, all the time. What it is taken to be, though, by dislocated post-historical humanity, is the emergence of things in the historical sense. This conflict, this dislocation, is the crisis of modernity.

Instead of seeking to re-engage in what is past, Hegel sees the completion of history as the opportunity for a new beginning. The wisdom which belongs to man at the end of history does not help him make new choices, because that wisdom is reflective: it does not project a new value, a new future. The only difference between man the natural being before history and man the self-conscious being at the end of history is the instillation of experience. Post-historical man starts afresh, but at a 'higher' level. This higher level is the 'eternal now,' the ongoing presencing of Spirit, which is the post-historical epoch. The end of history is a collapse into the present: all the

⁹⁷ Hegel, Logic, p. 291.

past moments are brought home to realised Reason, and there is no future which progresses rationally out of this state. Hegel writes, in Reason in History: "Whatever is true exists eternally in and for itself---not yesterday or tomorrow, but entirely in the present, 'now,' in the sense of an absolute present."⁹⁸ The end of history is higher, yet the same as the origin and process of its achievement. The whole has been elevated to the level of truth, by losing its character as 'mere' appearance. Hegel writes in the Logic: "We have now returned to the notion of the Idea with which we began. This return to the beginning is also an advance. We began with Being, abstract Being: where we now are we also have the Idea as Being: but this Idea which has Being is Nature."⁹⁹ The Idea is made actual, real, and obvious by history, and so the end of history is both a return and an advance. Now man knows himself as being self-conscious through mutual recognition, he knows himself as being free in the universal and homogeneous State. Hegel writes in the Phenomenology: "In the immediacy of this new existence the Spirit has to start afresh to bring itself to maturity as if, for it, all that preceded were lost and it had learned nothing from earlier Spirits. But recollection, the inwardizing, of that experience, has preserved it and is the inner being, and in fact the higher form of the substance."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Hegel, Reason in History, p. 150.

⁹⁹ Hegel, Logic, p. 296.

¹⁰⁰ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 492.

The end of history is a paradigm, a model. It should not be taken to be some physical world, a twilight zone beside the human world. Rather, it is a model for understanding our condition as modern---what we mean when we say that we are essentially different from our predecessors, that we are something they were not. We left history the realm of action in order to know what we were doing. Thus, we created history the discourse about action. To comprehend all of history (action) we had to create a completed history (discourse). But in doing this, we realised (both in the sense of 'made actual' and 'knew fully') history (both action and discourse), and so found ourselves at the end of history. We cannot re-engage in historical action as we knew it, because we cannot forget our historical know-ledge, and pretend that what we are doing will lead to anything we do not already have, or will put us into any state of human being which we have not already realised. So the problem is: how do we act, talk, and know, in a new, creative, spontaneous, and genuine way, without simply replaying the circle, articulating the whole of history as it was before Hegel? We begin, by understanding our real condition as post-historical humanity, and abandon any nostalgia for a now-impossible world. The paradigm of the end of history is the framework upon which we build the authentically new world: "End and beginning are not states of affairs but symbols that make less unintelligible our experience of wonder by providing a direction for our questioning to take as it is attracted to, or measured by,

the end."¹⁰¹

History is ended. The actions of human beings in time are the means to the satisfaction of desires. Actions realise that satisfaction in the end to which they are directed, in the object which they seek to obtain. The meaning of historical action, then, what it is for, lies in its end. And its end is present within history as its directedness, as its purpose. This is Hegel's teleological understanding of history. But what is true of each of the actions of individuals within history is true also of history as a whole: history, and not just its discreet moments, is ended. Hegel sees individual acts as evidence of particularity: as the movement of the self towards integration, towards becoming a self-consciousness. But self-consciousness as such is also a subject: this is the dialectic in its universal aspect. Self-consciousness seeks to articulate its own completeness, to make explicit its being, by manifesting itself upon humanity, which to it is the introduction of mediation within itself. Human history leads to individual freedom and individual wisdom. But history as the phenomenology of Spirit leads to universal freedom and universal wisdom. So while man's historical actions have ends, world history has an end. Being, the world and man together as subject, realises itself as something higher (but not other) than it was at the beginning. This realisation of the end of history is what Hegel's philosophy of history is all about. In

¹⁰¹ Cooper, End of History, p. 340.

articulating the moments of history through a phenomenology of Spirit, Hegel realises this end.

Modernity, the post-Hegelian epoch can---assuming Hegel to be correct---be also called the post-historical one. If Hegel's elaboration of history in word is complete, then history itself is completed in Hegel's discourse. Modern existence is, in this way, radically different from that of men who were immersed in history. The post-historical epoch is discontinuous with all previous, historical ones, yet it belongs to each of them as their meaning and end. The paradigm of the end of history constitutes the essence of modernity: it is the way we, as moderns are, in principle. We are participants in a dynamic whole, and aware of this as well. Our situation is realised: made actual and brought to consciousness.

The end of history is, essentially, an overcoming of the separation between subject and object, knower and known, thinking and reality. Overcoming means 'bridging the gap,' 'making the connections,' between ideality and reality, through thought, word, and deed, so that by this mediation the truth is revealed. That truth is the nature of the world-composed-of-selves, and of selves-in-the-world. But in this process, 'distance' is maintained, 'difference' is recognised. The end of history is the realisation that the tension, the balance, between 'world' and 'self' is wherein lies the essence of the whole: the overcoming is, in the end, pure, direct, and true.

For Hegel, the end of history means the possibility of

wisdom, but arising with this possibility, unforeseen by him, comes the spectre of nihilism. This real possibility, latent in the post-historical epoch, means that the attack on nihilism must issue from other than Hegelian grounds. The post-historical epoch is also the post-Hegelian one, because the Hegelian circle is closed with the end of history. Post-Hegelian thinkers have both the luxury of starting from the standpoint of self-consciousness, and the dilemma of being excluded from the development of it in the same way as before. Nietzsche is precisely such a thinker.

Chapter Three
Nietzsche and Nihilism

Nietzsche as Post-Historical Philosopher

Considered negatively, the conclusion of Hegel's philosophy of history is the destruction of the transcendent dualist world-view. This position is Nietzsche's starting-point. The combination of Hegel's critique of transcendent dualism and his retention of objective values means this world must be found to be meaningful, and we must put ourselves in a proper relation to it to bring this to light. Because he starts out from this perspective of self-consciousness, Nietzsche accepts the impossibility of the historical attempt to fix values as references to an other-world. But he, too, is interested in how one lives a meaningful life in the face of the seeming failure of the historical enterprise. For this reason, it is useful to perceive Nietzsche as a post-historical philosopher.

Nietzsche, starting out from the perspective of self-consciousness, proclaims the 'death of God,' but is thereby saying something much more interesting than 'God does not exist.' What Nietzsche implies is that God was once alive, but that He has somehow lost His vital and compelling power. Nietzsche cannot accept the easy Hegelian solution of adopting all the essential features of divine Being in a whole of which we are a part, while denying the absolute independence of this Being from the caprice and mutability of our actual lives. Nietzsche recognises that our reaction to the difficulty of acting as if something were the case, while at the same time knowing that it is really

not, is in fact going to be nihilism, not the satisfaction of an inherently meaningful existence.

Therefore, Nietzsche concentrates on the immanent, human perspective. This is justifiable in Hegelian terms, because the death of God means at the same time that man is made divine: self-consciousness appears in the individual ---he is a person, a mutually recognised self, a citizen in community. Continued reference to the 'Absolute Spirit'---once it has wholly appeared within Being, and exhausted its nature completely---is merely 'worship of the dead God.' This is what the 'last Pope' does in Book Four of Thus Spoke Zarathustra, and it sums up Nietzsche's attitude towards the Sage: purely reflective self-consciousness is admirable because wisdom is a type of the higher man, but because it projects no future, it can be no guide.

The motivations of both Hegel and Nietzsche are essentially religious. Both philosophers are concerned with beyonds, with the situatedness of life in a context greater than that in which it immediately appears. Hegel believes that he has given divine Spirit substance and Being by describing it as wholly appearing in the world and time as history, as our actual experience of life. Nietzsche cannot accept this conclusion as sustainable, but he is forced to accept the need for such a philosophy because of the effective disappearance of the other-worldly alternative. Nietzsche, then, begins with a recognition of the practical state of affairs which was observed by Hegel. He shows that, because of the decline in force of the

transcendent dualist world view, persistence in such views ---what Hegel would call incomplete or historical modes of consciousness---are effectively nihilistic. But 'man made divine' is the new potential of self-consciousness, of man's new-found freedom to make what he is. The projection of the self in this way, and the confrontation with results as a beyond similar to the process undergone in history, means that man is now responsible in a radical way. To affirm our actual condition is to find it inherently meaningful not because of anything behind or above it, but because the self is cast into a beyond within life: life's value is its 'fatefulness' with regard to the future and to the community of selves.

The end of history is essentially what was meant by human action, understood by Hegel as the becoming of freedom and the becoming of self-consciousness. The value of this completion, and the value of the wisdom that goes with it, lies in its nature as reflection. The end of history is realised in the world as the regime of actual freedom and the community of mutually recognising individuals, and in oneself as wisdom, or fully rational speech. But the end of history has no consequence. If the end of history is the dialectical completion of the phenomenology, then there can be no next step, no progressive continuation of the process. In the world, or politically, there can be no further realisation of freedom, or, more broadly, revelation of one's humanity. In oneself, or philosophically, there can be no expansion

of knowledge for the Sage, no dissatisfaction of reason which expresses itself in the need for further thought and speech. As an eternal moment within temporality, the end of history cannot act as a catalyst to action: there is nothing which one ought to do as a consequence of fully realised reason, and fully revealed Being.

The end of history is the value for history. To realise it is to affirm that history as a whole; for Hegel, each moment of history is essential to the True, to Being's complete self-knowledge. And because the end of history has no consequence, it does not necessarily lead to any one course of action, and cannot be a sure guide for the future.

For the person engaged in history, value is a projection of the present moment: the meaning of action lies in the end to which it is directed. For the person in the post-historical epoch, value is at first looked for in the same way, but does not emerge: one cannot project beyond the whole, beyond completion. With wisdom, then, comes the impossibility of acting in the same way as before, as if action were an outer-directedness. The only future possibility realised is reflection: inner-directedness. The disjunction between fully rational completion and the human desire to act expansively, to manifest oneself outwards, is one aspect of the phenomenon of nihilism. One wants to reengage in history, but the end of history has been realised. One expects that value will be outside oneself and the world, but finds that it is in

fact a term of mediation within this whole of self-consciousness. The experience of this dislocation, of this gap between ideality and reality, is the experience of the post-historical consciousness. Nihilism is the dominant theme of modernity---the problem of the source of values. This problem is a dominant theme in Friedrich Nietzsche's writings, and it connects all of his ideas. I argue that Nietzsche is grappling with a problem which is present to modernity as a practical consequence of Hegel's philosophy: the articulation of history as a whole which is ended. Nietzsche's attacks on 'traditional' philosophy are his objections to those who persist in historically incomplete moments of consciousness, and who perceive values as essentially 'other,' as fixed in a beyond outside the temporality of human consciousness. And further, his attacks on modern nihilism are his objections to those who only partially realise Hegel's turning-point, who acknowledge that this other world does not exist, but who persist in the belief that such a world ought to exist to be the source of values, and who therefore deny the possibility of any values at all. Nietzsche attempts to make real values possible, by exposing both these positions as being nihilistic. His attempt at a revaluation of all values is the first serious attempt to come to terms with the post-historical epoch of which Hegel was the harbinger.

The success of Hegel's philosophy leaves Nietzsche incapable of authentically directing his 'life-affirming' impulses in any ways similar to those which Hegel has so

exhaustively described. As Tom Darby writes, "it is this claim to absolute knowledge and the attendant end of history that Nietzsche railed against."¹ He 'rails against' this fate, but he does not deny it. The end of history is not erroneously described, rather it concludes, for Nietzsche, that the whole historical enterprise was in error in the first place. David Kolb points to the proof of this most radical condemnation as the failure of Hegelian closure: "There is a sense . . . in which our world results from failures in the reconciliation Hegel described as taking place."² These 'failures' I have illustrated as the reflective passivity of the Sage and the technology of the universal and homogeneous State. Thus, Nietzsche is at the same time enabled by Hegel's philosophy to realise the possibility of a grand reflection, and to direct the enormous immanent power of the post-historical individual.

In a sense, all of Nietzsche's philosophy 'rails against' Hegel. He condemns the modern types of humanity made possible by Hegel, the Sage and the Citizen, but he also accepts the 'new task' of making oneself and the world from out the most radically present substance of Being. But at first, one is left by Hegel only with nihilism. For both Hegel and Nietzsche, this is our necessary entrée into the post-historical epoch. Tom Darby writes: "Hegel said

1 Tom Darby, "Afterword: On the Coincidence of Our Pre-occupation With Nietzsche," in Nietzsche and the Rhetoric of Nihilism, edited by Tom Darby, Béla Egyed and Ben Jones. (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989). p. 195.

2 Kolb, Critique of Pure Modernity, p. 118.

in the Preface to his Phenomenology that the appearance of the 'New World' engenders two attitudes: boredom and frivolity. Boredom arises because one concludes that there is nothing left to do, and the frivolous attitude is adopted when it is further concluded that nothing really matters."³ It is no accident that Nietzsche's adopts aesthetics as his clarion-call to philosophy for modernity: it is a serious criticism of Hegel that the end of history is boring. The combination of boredom and the absence of a worthy, i.e. non-arbitrary, object for endeavour leads to nihilism.

The capacity for complete reflection with which we are now enabled, and the condition of nihilism from which we engage in such a reflection, leads to the condemnation of all of history as unworthy. But it also allows one to step 'behind' the whole of history, or into a wider perspective: not in an Hegelian, dialectical way, because this possibility is not now open to us, but in Nietzsche's perspectival, even partisan, mode of philosophising. Nietzsche is able to trace the origin of the desire which 'prompted' history, and the way in which history actually sought to satisfy that desire, by engaging in a genealogy of morals. Just like Hegel, he finds the origin of history, that is history-as-progress, in the conflict between the master and the slave. The end of history is 'true' with respect to its origins, but its origins lie in the slavish consciousness. And for Nietzsche, the slave

3 Darby, "Afterword," Rhetoric of Nihilism, p. 199.

does not ultimately succeed in appropriating the 'moment' of the master: this is the essential 'failure' of Hegelian closure. Tom Darby writes:

The history of metaphysics, presented as a phenomenology of freedom, turns out to be a genealogy of slavishness. And as a result, what was presented as absolute truth---wisdom---is seen to be a ruse. It is a ruse because the whole truth turns out to be only the truth of the slave. Thus, the discourse about freedom that supposedly culminates in wisdom is mere rhetoric. It is rhetoric because like all rhetoric, it is a form of work: it is a means that anticipates an end. But when the end---freedom and wisdom---is reached, it is shown to be just that which provided the means itself, the negative. And in this nothing, it culminates: in nihilism.⁴

Nietzsche's stance with respect to Hegel is revealed in his tracing of the genealogy of nihilism. He is Hegel's ally in the attack on the transcendence of values in the dualist tradition; he is Hegel's enemy in the attack on the actual, non-metaphysical beyond which is projected as the end of history. Nietzsche finds his opening against his predecessor on the very Hegelian ground of completeness: he takes Hegel at his word and engages in the task of post-historical philosophy, which is affirmation, rather than description. Nietzsche affirms master morality and the eternal recurrence, not because these things are true, but because they are possible: these are the aspects of radically present Being to which Nietzsche directs his will to power as most authentic, as the most serendipitous to cure the malaise of nihilism at the end of history.

In reading Nietzsche, it is clear that he regards

⁴ Darby, "Afterword," Rhetoric of Nihilism, p. 199.

himself as standing at the end of an historical enterprise. In some guises this is Christianity, in others it is 'herd morality,' in others it is the Apollonian spirit. In any event, Nietzsche shows that he is able to engage in a thoroughly radical critique because preceding philosophical movements, even the course of history itself, is exhausted and spent. In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche writes: "The long, real tragedy is at an end, assuming that every philosophy was in its genesis a long tragedy."⁵ Philosophy is a 'long tragedy' because its object---wisdom---is that which destroys itself, destroys the dissatisfaction of the intellect which spurs it on. This tragedy is at an end because this object has been appropriated, as Hegel has shown. What was a transcendent ideal has become a realisable, historical and human goal; the 'kingdom of God' has been replaced by the end of history. Nietzsche recognises both movements, both goal-projections, as belonging essentially to the same movement. He writes, in The Will to Power: "The belief in progress towards the ideal is the only form in which a goal in history is thought of today. In summa: one has transferred the arrival of the 'kingdom of God' into the future, on earth, in human form---but fundamentally one has held fast to the belief in the old ideal."⁶ Nietzsche's critique, as we shall see, is of the whole process of achieving the old ideal, whether posited as a transcendent beyond, or as an

⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil. (New York: Random House, Inc., 1966). p. 37.

⁶ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 186.

immanent end of history.

Nietzsche also supports the Hegelian conclusion that the thought ends the action---that comprehension marks the decline of a movement of authentic change. And total comprehension necessarily marks the end of an entire movement: the content of history is 'wrapped up' in post-historical wisdom. Nietzsche argues: "Isn't now precisely the moment when, insofar as we comprehend this, it is all over?" And later in the same passage of Beyond Good and Evil: "The text finally disappeared under the interpretation."⁷ Such a momentous conclusion may be realised or achieved, but it is possible that this reality is not felt or lived. This is because, as Nietzsche writes: "The greatest events and thoughts---but the greatest thoughts are the greatest events---are comprehended last: the generations that are contemporaneous with them do not experience such events---they live right past them."⁸ This is how individuals in the post-historical epoch can cling to the old ideals, and hold fast to what Hegel called the progressus in infinitum, despite the 'great thought' of the end of history. For Nietzsche, it is essential to comprehend what has happened, to realise the end of history. With this realisation will come the rejection of values as projections to an unreachable beyond, or to an open-ended future. On this point, Hegel would agree with Nietzsche. But Nietzsche further argues that post-

7 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 49.

8 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 227.

historical wisdom will lead to the rejection of history itself, and of the world which has been, so far, wrongly inferred. The decline of strong action, of authentic change, is proof, for Nietzsche, of the unfitness of the historical and philosophical enterprise to date. The 'through and through' comprehension of the post-historical epoch leads to the reflection that the end falls short of the means, and the satisfaction does not meet the desire. In The Will to Power, Nietzsche writes:

But now we have reached the opposite point; indeed we wanted to reach it: the most extreme consciousness, man's ability to see through himself and history. With this we are practically as far as possible from perfection in being, doing, and willing: our desire, even our will for knowledge is a symptom of a tremendous decadence. We strive for the opposite of that which strong races, strong natures want--- understanding is an ending.⁹

There is nothing false about the end of history: it is true with respect to the desire which posited it in the first place, and man does achieve rational satisfaction in post-historical wisdom. But the end of history does allow a judgement to be made on the whole of history itself, and of the world which that history has projected. Hegel posited the origin of history in the existence of the desire for human recognition, and Nietzsche, from the post-historical 'beyond within life,' reflects on the way in which that desire was satisfied as being now a spent force, and therefore persistence in this mode to be an example of what Hegel would call false or incomplete consciousness.

⁹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 44.

Nietzsche also follows Hegel in the importance he attaches to the French Revolution as the concluding movement of history---as the most extreme attempt at liberation, and at founding a state based solely on rational principles. This historical event is a concrete realisation of what was an abstract ideal. Hegel argues that the French Revolution is freedom made actual through liberation; Nietzsche agrees, but does not view it in the same, positive light. He writes in The Will to Power: "The French Revolution is the daughter and continuation of Christianity---its instincts are against caste, against the noble, against the last privileges."¹⁰ Progressive liberation reaches a logical extreme in the French Revolution: in principle, no person is excluded from the regime of actual freedom. Nietzsche is far from approving of the historical movement whereby women, slaves, the poor and workers, and the 'vice addicts' and the sick realise objective freedom, where "all this is moved into the foreground."¹¹ But he does agree with the Hegelian argument that this is the consequence of the last historical moment, the French Revolution. Just as Hegel follows the slavish consciousness towards the development of fully human self-consciousness, so too does Nietzsche witness the triumph of liberation, of the slave overcoming himself as such. But again, Nietzsche condemns this state of affairs, and so the whole course of history as progress towards this goal. In

¹⁰ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 111.

¹¹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 58.

The Will to Power, Nietzsche writes:

Datum: the oppressed, the lowly, the great masses of slaves and semi-slaves desire power. First step: they make themselves free---they ransom themselves, in imagination at first, they recognize one another, they prevail. Second step: they enter into battle, they demand recognition, equal rights, 'justice.' Third step: they demand privileges (---they draw the representatives of power over to their side). Fourth step: they demand exclusive power, and they get it.¹²

One can easily find parallels to this passage in the Hegelian dialectic. The first step is the moment of Stoicism: the first, abstract, freedom of the slave. The second step is 'Reason as lawgiver,' or the establishment of the State and the implicit recognition of the slave. The third and fourth steps are the French Revolution and its consequence: the triumph of 'herd morality,' or the 'revolt of the masses.' Hegel believed that this was ethical life, raised by Reason to the level of self-consciousness. Nietzsche denies the presence of the ancient Greek ideal in the universal and homogeneous State, finding only the nihilism of triumphant slave morality.

Nietzsche often adopts the perspective of the post-historical philosopher, one who is able to articulate the past in ways not previously possible. In The Will to Power, he writes: "In my own way I attempt a justification of history."¹³ A speech of justification concludes the moment, as Hegel argued, and is the content of purely reflective wisdom. Like Hegel, Nietzsche argues that "a

¹² Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 126.

¹³ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 43.

matter that becomes clear ceases to concern us."¹⁴ This clarity with respect to the past cannot function as a guide to the future, because "everything of which we become conscious is a terminal phenomenon, an end---and causes nothing."¹⁵

The end of history, with its reflective wisdom, 'mere activity,' and novel configurations of already present things, leads to the decline of strong action, and new emergences of things into the world. Nietzsche clearly understood the nature of the end of history to be what Hegel called the 'night of self-consciousness': the absorption into self of Spirit. Nietzsche calls this the 'weakening of spontaneity,' and the cultivation of 'reactive talents':

A kind of adaptation to this flood of impressions takes place: men unlearn spontaneous action, they merely react to stimuli from outside. They spend their strength partly in assimilating things, partly in defense, partly in opposition. Profound weakening of spontaneity: the historian, critic, analyst, the interpreter, the observer, the collector, the reader---all of them reactive talents---all science!¹⁶

The substratum of human community, the on-going dialectic of human desires, no longer lifts that community beyond itself, to any state of Being which is not already present to it. Nietzsche writes in The Will to Power: "When one discovers the necessary conditions out of which alone [culture] can grow, one no longer wants it."¹⁷ The vital,

14 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 81.

15 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 265.

16 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 47.

17 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 95.

expanding force of the objective realm no longer widens or situates the individual if that individual has fully realised himself in it, and this is the case if he discovers the necessary conditions out of which his culture grew. Knowledge tells the inquirer how he belonged to his culture, but changes him into a person incapable of belonging in the same way again.

In learning about the world and one's place in it, man changes himself into a being no longer at home in that world. Nietzsche emphasises again and again the tragic nature of all knowledge; Section 277 of Beyond Good and Evil reads:

---Bad enough! The same old story! When one has finished building one's house, one suddenly realizes that in the process one has learned something that one really needed to know in the worst way---before one began. The eternal distasteful 'too late!' The melancholy of everything finished!¹⁸

The house to which Nietzsche refers is the edifice of Reason, the historical dialectic, or the satisfaction of the will to truth. What one needed to know was that the foundation of this or any other 'house of metaphysics' is a kind of life. Nietzsche argues that the kind of life which seeks its satisfaction in Reason is weakened by the attainment of this end, but also that from this decline will emerge a new kind of life, a 'joyous, exuberant, violent' kind of life. In The Will to Power, Nietzsche expresses the nature of the post-historical epoch as both a decline and a new emergence of a kind of life: "To

¹⁸ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 223.

distinguish in every movement (1) that it is in part exhaustion from a preceding movement (satiety from it, the malice of weakness toward it, sickness); (2) that it is in part newly-awakened, long slumbering, accumulated energy ---joyous, exuberant, violent: health."¹⁹

Nietzsche, like Hegel, views himself not merely as a subject engaging in philosophy, but also as an object through which philosophy expresses itself. Shifts of perspective of this kind are as important to an understanding of Nietzsche as they are of Hegel. In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche writes: "A thought comes when 'it' wishes, and not when 'I' wish."²⁰ For Nietzsche, as for Hegel, no thought is out of season, and every insight is more of a discovery than an invention. Concerning the task of philosophers, Nietzsche writes: "Their thinking [of philosophical concepts] is, in fact, far less a discovery than a recognition, a remembering, a return and a homecoming to a remote, primordial, and inclusive household of the soul, out of which those concepts grew originally."²¹ Martin Heidegger, in his essay on Nietzsche, states the following concerning Hegel and Nietzsche: "There exists between the two an essential connection that conceals itself in the essence of all metaphysics."²² 'Essence' is understood by Heidegger as the ongoing presence of a thing,

19 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 523.

20 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 24.

21 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 27.

22 Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead,'" in The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays. (New York: Harper and Row, 1977). p. 59.

the way in which it 'holds sway' and prevails as whatever it is. Metaphysics, or thought-as-subject, 'uses' philosophers, through their particular doctrines, to manifest itself: both Hegel and Nietzsche were conscious of themselves as moments of the destining of Being, as participants, and not merely instigators.

All individuals embody their culture, or history---this is the context out of which an individual is able to act, and speak, and be distinct. Just as, for Hegel, the education of the individual consists of the recollection of the spirits in him, so too, for Nietzsche, "every individual consists of the whole course of evolution (and not, as morality imagines, only of something that begins at birth)."²³ To affirm a moment, or to recognise a state of Being, is to affirm all that is necessary for one's condition; the interconnectedness of things which Hegel has shown means that to affirm a part is to affirm the whole---thus speaks post-historical wisdom. Nietzsche writes:

If we affirm one single moment, we thus affirm not only ourselves but all existence. For nothing is self-sufficient, neither in us ourselves nor in things; and if our soul has trembled with happiness and sounded like a harp string just once, all eternity was needed to produce this one event---and in this single moment of affirmation all eternity was called good, redeemed, justified, and affirmed.²⁴

In Nietzsche, the moment affirms eternity, so the relatedness of things is considered temporally. Hegel's view leads to a more 'spatial' consideration: although history

²³ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 200.

²⁴ Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 532-533.

is the temporal manifestation of the whole through instantiation in 'moments,' the essential thing is the Idea, which is the universally self-same unity of Being and Nothing through Becoming or Reason. For Nietzsche, the whole is eternally self-same---spatial considerations seem to imply for him the possibility of an overriding unity to things, which he specifically denies. But, as has been argued, this is not inconsistent with Hegel if one sees Reason as the effect of the working-out of the inner nature of things. And for both Hegel and Nietzsche, the potential expanding-outwards of primæval subjects---whether viewed as 'desire' or as 'will to power'---is ontological. To view Hegel's Spirit temporally---in appearance as history and 'in fact' as the end of history---allows one to consider Nietzsche as a post- historical philosopher, giving content to the 'eternal moment': what Hegel looks at abstractly as the ongoing dialectic, or continuing presence of Absolute Spirit, Nietzsche views from inside, for 'us' and for meaning in life, as the eternal recurrence.

The post-historical philosopher is, in Hegel's view, the Sage, and Nietzsche's writings echo many of the same characteristics of the philosopher-become-wise. He writes: "Today the man of knowledge might well feel like God become animal."²⁵ The reverse is also true: man as a merely natural being rises above himself, incorporating the transcendent beyond into himself. The Sage thus ends the history of his type, of the purely rational man. But, for

25 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 84.

Nietzsche, this is not a goal sufficient for humanity, and he cautions against choosing the Sage as the resting point.

In Beyond Good and Evil, he writes:

The objective man is an instrument, a precious, easily injured and clouded instrument for measuring and, as an arrangement of mirrors, an artistic triumph that deserves care and honour; but he is no goal, no conclusion and sunrise, no complementary man in whom the rest of existence is justified, no termination---and still less a beginning, a begetting and first cause, nothing tough, powerful, self-reliant that wants to be master.²⁶

The Sage projects no future because he is an effect, and not an affect. Nietzsche is concerned that we 'move on' from this type of humanity, that although the Sage is the crowning achievement of an age, that age is completed in him, and so has lost the vitality of emergence into new states of affairs. New goals, and a new end-type of humanity, is required, and this Nietzsche describes as the Overman. The perspective of self-consciousness, which is the perspective of the higher man, allows one to project this Overman: this perspective is our 'new height'---the standpoint at which we have arrived through our experience of time as history. By being self-conscious, we replay the 'eternally present things' in creative, expansive, and human ways. This means to project and confront an 'objective' world from out of the 'overabundance' of our mere subjectivity. These self-aware obstacles are the beyond within life. Nietzsche writes: "The highest man, if such a concept be allowed, would be the man who represented

²⁶ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 128.

the antithetical character of existence most strongly, as its glory and sole justification."²⁷ Nietzsche's philosophy can be said to be not so much against the Sage, against reflective wisdom, but against the possibility of contentment in this condition. We cannot choose to ignore the continual emergence of desires, of the need not merely to reaffirm our condition, but to do so in ever-changing ways: one must re-engage, but one can never repeat.

Finally, to conclude the parallels to Hegel's end of history which are found in Nietzsche, the latter also noted the homogeneity of the post-historical epoch: the influence of the State (or ethical life, or Reason embodied) in every aspect of life. Nietzsche is most interested in the cultural and moral implications of this homogeneity. In Beyond Good and Evil, he writes: "In all major moral judgments Europe is now of one mind, including even the countries dominated by the influence of Europe."²⁸ Nietzsche refers to this great levelling, to this applicability of one moral code to all spheres of life, as 'herd morality.' Herd morality is merely one type of morality among others, but it is, according to Nietzsche, the type that resists all others. This, precisely, is its homogenizing nature. The result of this moral universalism is to produce a kind of man who is at home everywhere, which is the Hegelian universal and homogeneous State. But, paradoxically, the man at home everywhere is at home

²⁷ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 470.

²⁸ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 115.

nowhere: he lacks what Nietzsche calls a 'determinate milieu': "The Europeans are becoming more similar to each other; they become more and more detached from the conditions under which races originate that are tied to some climate or class; they become increasingly independent of any determinate milieu that would like to inscribe itself for centuries in body and soul with the same demands."²⁹ Nietzsche argues that the lack of a determinate milieu leads to nihilism---to the most radical manifestation of homelessness, and so it is to this that we must now turn.

Other-Worldly Values

At the outset, a separation needs to be made between the traditional definition of "nihilism," and the special sense in which Nietzsche also uses this term. A difference exists between these two types of nihilism because each is based on a different view of what ought to be the source of values. I shall call the 'traditional' form of nihilism "philosophical nihilism," and the stronger, 'end of history' kind of moral subjectivism, "radical nihilism."

Philosophical nihilism originates in a belief in other-worldly values. A conventional definition is given by Richard Schacht as follows: "'Nihilism' in the philosophical sense of the term may be defined . . . as the doctrine that normative and evaluative principles have no

²⁹ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 176.

objective basis in reality."³⁰ In other words, to be a nihilist is to say that there are no objective values. The key word in this definition is "objective." Traditionally, the objectivity of values lay in their external and alien character compared to whatever they measure. Now, the nature of values as 'objective' is the crux of the disagreement between Nietzsche and traditional philosophy. The dispute centres on the existence or non-existence of an objective world. The key question is: Are values objective because they are a reference to a true, transcendent, and eternal world? For Nietzsche, the answer is an emphatic "no"; for the kind of philosophy which Nietzsche criticises, the answer is "yes." Hegel is the turning-point, for, contrary to traditional philosophy, he posits objectivity within Being, as being an attribute of mediation within a whole. Values are objective for Hegel, but they are not a reference to an objective realm. For Hegel, previous philosophies, which posited objectivity in a realm apart from the changeable human world, were necessary moments in the revelation of Being---it was important that man think and behave as if there were such a world. But, with the end of history, such incomplete moments are superseded. Nietzsche's criticisms of these philosophers are based on his recognition that their time is past, their 'as if' is out of tune with the truth about Being made manifest in modernity. Because Nietzsche denies

30 Richard Schacht, Hegel and After: Studies in Continental Philosophy Between Kant and Sartre. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1975). p. 177.

the existence of objective values as references to an objective world, he has been called a nihilist. But the Hegelian revolution, taken most seriously by Nietzsche, results in the realisation that values are not in fact this kind of reference. So, before we can properly consider the question of nihilism, we must consider the question of the source of values: in what sense they are, or can be, objective.

In light of previous philosophy, Nietzsche is a nihilist because he denies value in a true, essential world apart from the human world of appearances. But Nietzsche charges this philosophy with nihilism, the effect of which is to deny value in human life. The question of the source of values can therefore be put as follows: Are values a reference to ideal essence or to actual existence, to an objective world or to the actual human world? And Nietzsche puts these further questions: Which source ought values to have, if such a choice can be made? Are we to choose truth-affirming values, or life-affirming values? And does either choice thwart the problem of nihilism?

The view of philosophy up until Hegel has been that values must have their source in an objective world in order for the activities of measuring, of evaluating, and of judging to be even possible. Values are references, guides, and most importantly according to this view, fixed principles which stand against, or object to human thought, speech, and action. Values are true by merit of belonging to an objective realm; this in distinction to Hegel's idea

that values ultimately reveal the True through their nature as mediation within a whole, as that which objectifies Being. Objectivity is an effect of evaluation, and not the other way around. Previous philosophy would have it that the measurement is secondary to the hard reality of the logically and temporally prior objective ideal. Nietzsche's 'grand reflection' is that this view arose because of the way in which man chose to know the world: he made it his maxim that truth must be eternal, and that because the human world is radically temporal, defined by its rootedness in history and mortality, the truth cannot belong in it. If truth is eternal, then it cannot originate in so ephemeral a subject as human being, and so it was posited in a world beyond temporality, a world beyond our human one. And further, truth was made a value above human being. The human world is not only unessential, but judged worse by making truth a value, the goal for which human being obtains.

The truth, as fixed principles of value, was taken to be essential, as articulating the real nature of things. And the enquiring mind quickly discovers that the human world is indeed a world of appearance, a tableau, or representation. There must be something hidden which is appearing, which is presenting itself to us, so the argument goes. This essential, in-itself quality of things is veiled by the merely apparent, by the phenomenological. The truth must, by this argument, lie beyond the existential world in an essential world. This is what is

meant by saying that the truth is transcendent. And so the urge for truth which impels philosophy has led to the discovery of an eternal, transcendent world. But Nietzsche argues that this world was not discovered, but rather was invented by philosophy, in order to satisfy its pre-rational desire for truth. The philosophers wanted to preserve their notion of truth when they discovered that the human world was a world of appearance. Nietzsche points out that in light of this eternal world's existence, the human world is by definition transitory and merely apparent. The value of our world subsists solely by reference to a remote, alienated and alienating true world. In itself, the human world is valueless. Not only is this traditional view wrong, in Nietzsche's view, but it is a terrible slander against humanity. What is its crime? The existence of the true world devalues life. Nietzsche asserts that life in itself is the source of values. This is why he attacks traditional philosophy: its urge for truth is revealed as being nihilistic in the very moment of its triumph. Its actual incompleteness in the face of its proclaimed completeness is felt in the diminishment of pre-rational and pre-historical 'life.'

Nietzsche himself used the term "nihilism" in several ways, but when he discusses traditional philosophy, with its objective world system of values, he basically is conveying two senses. In the first sense, he says that he himself is a nihilist, in that he denies the values posited by 'other-worldly' religion and philosophy. In the Preface

to The Will to Power, Nietzsche describes himself as a nihilist, and also clearly outlines his own character as a Sage, as the reflective philosopher, at sea with regard to the future, with only the 'recollection of the spirits'---to use the Hegelian phrase---for a guide. Section 3 reads:

He that speaks here, conversely, has done nothing so far but reflect: a philosopher and solitary by instinct, who has found his advantage in standing aside and outside, in patience, in procrastination, in staying behind; as a spirit of daring and experiment that has already lost its way once in every labyrinth of the future; as a soothsayer bird-spirit who looks back when relating what will come; as the first perfect nihilist of Europe who, however, has even now lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind, outside himself.³¹

By the terms of reference of traditional philosophy, Nietzsche is correct in his self-appellation, because he denies that values are objective in the sense of being references to a true, external world. But the second sense in which Nietzsche uses the term "nihilism" is to call those same transcendental thinkers nihilists, because their truth-centred values actively deny what he considers to be real, life-centred values. Nihilism, in this sense of denying truth-centred values is not, according to Nietzsche, sheer negativity, because it makes possible the emergence of life-affirming values. Nietzsche's target is philosophy in the service of the truth, which for him is simple negativity.

The apparent nihilism of Nietzsche is a necessary first step, an attack on 'true' values so that 'life'

³¹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 3.

values can emerge. Much of Nietzsche's work consists of a sustained critique of the philosophy of transcendence, on 'ideal,' 'other-worldly' positors of value. For him, as Stanley Rosen writes in his book Nihilism: "The projection of an ideal, supersensible world as the locus of value serves to drain the physical or physiological world of its creativity."³² Nietzsche does not abandon the notion of 'ideal,' but he does condemn its use throughout history. In Will to Power, he writes: "The ideal has hitherto been the actual force for disparaging the world and man the poisonous vapour over reality, the great seduction to nothingness."³³ This 'nothingness' is nihilism: not just a philosophical outlook, but also a feeling of pessimism, of decline, of the ebb of life. Nietzsche writes: "The declining instincts have become master over the ascending instincts---The will to nothingness has become master over the will to life!"³⁴

For Nietzsche, wisdom begins with the rejection of a beyond of truth removed from the life of the individual. This is no objection to Hegel, and in fact reinforces the 'beyond within life' which is the object of thought in the post-historical epoch. Nietzsche writes: "The sage as astronomer.---As long as you still experience the stars as something 'above you' you lack the eye of knowledge;"³⁵ this passage could easily have been written by Hegel. Nihilism

32 Rosen, Nihilism, p. 144.

33 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 210.

34 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 217.

35 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 80.

is caused by the belief in a remote world of truth, and the failure of reason to fix its categories by reference to it. If philosophy has discovered that such a world is a fiction, then the categories of reason cannot be such references---otherwise they are anchored to nothing, and persistence in belief in them is nihilism. It is reason as reference to the remote beyond that Nietzsche attacks, not reason itself. In Will to Power, he writes: "The faith in the categories of reason is the cause of nihilism. We have measured the value of the world according to categories that refer to a purely fictitious world."³⁶ The goal which was given by superhuman authority is replaced by what Nietzsche calls conscience, or reason, or the social instinct, or history; but the goal is still taken to be removed from one's life, and not yet given for oneself.³⁷ On the other hand, all goals are given from out of a kind of life being led, even remote, alienating ones. This realisation, though, makes impossible an authentic belief in a fixed objective realm, so we are left with trying to project sustainable goals from out ourselves, and our actual life.

The result of this realisation is that the objective realm disappears in the remote, autonomous sense, but one is left with the need for an object, the need to project horizons of meaning, to situate the self in context. To know that the objective realm is an invention is less

³⁶ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 13.

³⁷ Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 16-17.

satisfying, less stable, than the belief that it was detached from the life of the individual. The Hegelian revolution is inescapable for modernity, as Nietzsche fully realised. He writes, in Will to Power:

. . . moral judgements are torn from their conditionality, in which they have grown and alone possess any meaning The great concepts 'good' and 'just' are severed from the presuppositions to which they belong and, as liberated 'ideas,' become objects of dialectic. One looks for truth in them, one takes them for entities or signs of entities: one invents a world where they are at home, where they originate---38

Thought, as Hegel realised, is a term of mediation within a whole; it is the variegation of Being. Thought is not a value; rather it is the means of valuation, the way in which a kind of life projects itself beyond its immediacy. Again, Nietzsche takes to heart the Hegelian conclusion: "The fundamental mistake is simply that, instead of understanding consciousness as a tool and particular aspect of the total life, we posit it as the standard and the condition of life that is of supreme value: it is the erroneous perspective of a parte ad totum [from a part to the whole]."39

The starting point for Nietzsche is Hegel's conclusion: nothing exists besides the whole; values are distinctions within; the objective realm is a beyond within life. For Nietzsche, this is only cause for nihilism for the backward-looking mind, for one only at home in

38 Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 234-235.

39 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 376.

reflective wisdom; he sees it, rather, as a new beginning (Hegel's 'higher yet the same'), and a return to man's primæval life-force, his will to increase, or 'innocence of becoming.' He writes:

There is no place, no purpose, no meaning, on which we can shift responsibility for our being, for our being thus and thus. Above all: no one could do it; one cannot judge, measure, compare the whole, to say nothing of denying it! Why not?--- . . . because nothing exists besides the whole---And, to say it again, this is a tremendous restorative; this constitutes the innocence of all existence.⁴⁰

Nietzsche does not reject an external world of meaning because he believes that meaning can be easily found in this world. The world may be 'apparent,' but that does not mean that values are. Values are not, nor can they be, immediate between things and man. In fact, values are this very mediation. In this, Nietzsche and other philosophers do not disagree. But for transcendental philosophers, the important mediation is between the essential world of truth or values (or Forms, or Ideas, etc.) and the world where these things appear, our world. For Nietzsche, the important mediation is between man himself and his world. "World" is to be understood here both spatially and temporally: man's 'space' is his social context, human community; man's 'time' is his temporality and his mortality. The mediation between man and world takes the form of speech and action. Speech and action are themselves meaning-creating, value-positing, or horizon-building. Man goes beyond appearances when he sets about

⁴⁰ Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 402-403.

exploring the dynamic relationship between himself and his world, between subject and object---a continuing dialectic between desire and its satisfaction which is mediated by speech and action. Nietzsche, like traditional philosophers, sought beyond appearances. But unlike them, he believed that one does not escape, nor can one escape, the merely apparent by creating a fixed, eternal world of value. Johan Goudsblom writes:

Nietzsche concurred unequivocally with the view that the world in which we live is a world of appearances and that its true meaning remains hidden from us. But, he wondered, did that necessarily imply the existence of another world, on which we can know, an objective world capable of releasing us from all the constraints of this one? Right from the start his reply was negative.⁴¹

According to Nietzsche, the history of philosophy has been succeeding perceptions of truth as homage to this idea of the true world. But if truth were to reside in this true world, then it would be irrevocably alienated from this one; the value of this world would exist only insofar as it is a reflection of the true one. Life becomes, in this view, of secondary importance and unessential. In itself, life would be false: there would be no truth in it, only of it. And if truth is affirmed as a positive good, then life is not only false, but unworthy. How can mortal life compare to immortality? History to eternity? The phenomenal to the essential? It can only compare negatively: life is depreciated by the existence of a

⁴¹ Johan Goudsblom, Nihilism and Culture. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980). p. 25.

transcendental true world. To search for objective value is itself a denial that value lies within, is rooted, in actual human life. If, as Nietzsche argues, the only world is this one, the world of living men, and if values are possible, then those values must exist within, be a quality of as well as for this world.

Nietzsche sees his task as turning man's perspective towards himself and his world, and away from the other-world of truth. This is in many ways a return to the beginning of Hegel's dialectic: for Hegel, what is different now is man's self-consciousness, and his appropriation of Reason. Man now has a past, the experience of the dialectic, recollected for him now in its entirety. Nietzsche, as well, sees man on the threshold of a new beginning, of re-engagement with himself and his actual life, but this time 'hardened in the discipline of science':

To translate man back into nature . . . to see to it that man henceforth stands before man as even today, hardened in the discipline of science, he stands before the rest of nature, with intrepid Oedipus eyes and sealed Odysseus ears, deaf to the siren songs of old metaphysical bird catchers who have been piping at him all too long, 'you are more, you are higher, you are of a different origin!'---that may be a strange and insane task, but it is a task.⁴²

If humanity goes about seeking a higher world of values as the measure of this life, without recognising this construct as a sometimes useful invention, then this search is not only hopeless, but detrimental to the

42 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, pp. 161-162.

searcher himself. As Hegel argued, such a search was the 'as if' of history, which led ultimately to the realisation of truth as a quality within the whole of man and his world. But with the end of history, the will to truth, solely as a seeking elsewhither, is superseded. In Nietzsche's eyes, to persist in the other-worldly view is to turn away from the challenge of modernity: philosophical nostalgia which runs counter to creativity, and thereby life. The insight of wisdom is that what man asserts when he asserts value in a higher, true world is the precise opposite of what he intends: he asserts nothing, the null value. And this is what nihilism is: as Nietzsche says, it is "when the highest values devalue themselves." He continues this thought, in The Twilight of the Idols, thus: "The criteria which have been bestowed on the 'true being' of things are the criteria of not-being, of naught."⁴³ Nietzsche believed, as Gilles Deleuze writes, that "life takes on a value of nil insofar as it is denied and depreciated."⁴⁴ Nietzsche perceives the 'depreciation of life' to be evidence of the falsity of all evaluations hitherto, but this is an objection he can make only by establishing a new kind of meaning-giving horizon. Again, Nietzsche is both limited and liberated by the claim to completeness of the Hegelian revolution.

The defence against nihilism is made by establishing

⁴³ Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, in The Portable Nietzsche, edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1954). p. 484.

⁴⁴ Gilles Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson. (London: The Athlone Press, 1983). p. 147.

a world-view in competition with the other-worldly view. Nietzsche believes that the 'truth' of his view is its timeliness: the force it gains by its felt merits for disillusioned modernity. The intuitive appeal of an immanent beyond seems to provide the ability to forestall nihilism: "The world might be far more valuable than we used to believe; we must see through the naïveté of our ideals, and while we thought that we accorded it the highest interpretation, we may not even have given our human existence a moderately fair value."⁴⁵ Nature, in itself, has value and dignity for Nietzsche: man's natural being is nothing to be despised, yet this precisely is the result of measuring man's humanity solely with reference to a remote beyond. In Will to Power, Nietzsche writes:

Consider the damage all human institutions sustain if a divine and transcendent higher sphere is postulated that must first sanction these institutions. By then growing accustomed to seeing their value in this sanction (e.g., in the case of marriage), one has reduced their natural dignity, in certain circumstances denied it--- Nature has been ill-judged to the extent to which one has brought into honour the anti-naturalness of a God. 'Natural' has come to mean the same as 'contemptible,' 'bad'---46

Nietzsche argues that the other-world of truth does not exist, and so reference to it is reference to nothing. This is so even on the Hegelian view: we are saved from nihilism only by the limitation of our historical incompleteness, but this refuge no longer avails us. Nietzsche's objection is that other-worldly evaluation is

45 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 22.

46 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 141.

an unauthentic projection: to believe in such an object, in view of what he believes to be its patent disappearance, is to find false comfort, which can shield one from nihilism only so long as one's ignorance remains unenlightened. The embodiment of values in nothing cannot long stand: this is the source both of Nietzsche's confidence, and his annoyance at the persistence of these kinds of projections. He writes: "Very few are clear as to what the standpoint of desirability, every 'thus it should be but is not' or even 'thus it should have been,' comprises: a condemnation of the total course of things."⁴⁷ Nietzsche, like Hegel, affirms the total course of things: to desire otherwise, particularly with reference to the whole of Being, is to reach for nothing, and effectively succumb to nihilism. Nietzsche writes, in Will to Power: "It is a miserable story: man seeks a principle through which he can despise men---he invents a world so as to be able to slander and bespatter this world: in reality, he reaches every time for nothingness and construes nothingness as 'God,' as 'truth,' and in any case as judge and condemner of this state of being."⁴⁸

The insight of the end of history, which is open and taken by Nietzsche, is that other-worldly philosophy is nihilistic. Nietzsche writes: "The antithesis of the apparent world and the true world is reduced to the antithesis 'world' and 'nothing.'"⁴⁹ Nevertheless,

47 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 180.

48 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 253.

49 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 306.

Nietzsche recognises that some kind of reaching beyond the self is essential to life and knowledge. But such projections are 'as ifs': they are distortions which are necessary for the intelligibility of Being. They were not distortions for Hegel, because the dialectic persistently revealed a wider, and hence 'truer' level of reality. But this possibility is not open to Nietzsche: the legacy of Hegel is that all projections now are self-conscious: in a sense, they are wilful illusions, adopted and discarded to reveal aspects of a radically present world. Awareness of the 'as if' nature of objective knowledge distinguishes post-historical knowledge from the other-worldly kind: one is aware of one's own manipulation in the wider context of the self. Hence, as Nietzsche writes, "all ideals are dangerous: because they debase and brand the actual; all are poisons, but indispensable as temporary cures."⁵⁰

Other-worldly philosophy not only believes in the existence of a fixed world of value, but further believes that values ought to be references to such a world. And if such a world cannot be found, and if one despairs of finding it, then one despairs of values altogether. This is radical nihilism, and it is the most extreme result of the failure of the desire to situate life by reference to an other-world of value. Against this, Nietzsche affirms the will to power, an all-embracing affirmation of life.

⁵⁰ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 130.

Radical Nihilism

How, then, are we to choose between these two notions of the source of value? To choose either seems to leave open the charge of nihilism. If we choose life-affirming values then we ignore the urge for truth, for the eternal, for the transcendent. But if we choose truth-affirming values we thereby ignore the spontaneity, the creativity, the vitality of human life. Neither choice---if this stark contrast actually obtains---seems satisfying. But Nietzsche's critique of philosophy is more thorough-going than this, and he does not simply assert a new choice of values. According to Nietzsche, other-worldly objective values denigrate human life, which is the only 'real' source of values. Because this perspective devalues value, it is nihilistic. But a stronger attack which Nietzsche makes on his predecessors is that their assertion of a true world of value has in fact led to the most radical form of nihilism: not just to the belief that there are no objective values, but to the view that there are and can be no values at all. Philosophy has trodden the path of reason to its fullest extent---this is the conclusion of the end of history argument. But if philosophy persists in the true world view, despite Hegel's elaboration of the nature of wisdom as a quality within Being, then reason is not only complete, but totally removed from man. The demands of reason become impossible to meet if it is a perfected ideal alienated from the mutable reality of human being. The extent to which the notion of a true world has

persisted in philosophy is the extent to which wisdom, as completed reason, has been thought to be an unreachable beyond, something approachable but not realisable. Paradoxically, the triumph of the urge for truth, what ought to be the final revelation of meaning for man, has in fact made possible the most complete form of nihilism.

This radical nihilism may be stated as follows: Nihilism is "a consciousness that there is no meaning or truth to be found at all."⁵¹ Meaning cannot be found quite simply because it is not there. It is the nature of the world as valueless which dictates the impossibility of making true statements about it: "There is and can be no such thing as 'truth' where reality is concerned, since reality is such that nothing whatsoever---except this fact is true about it."⁵²

Nietzsche defines "nihilism," in The Will to Power, as follows: "What does nihilism mean? That the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking; 'why?' finds no answer."⁵³ The aim is lacking in both of its historical senses: the supersensible beyond has lost its effective power, and also the temporal end of history has faded in the moment of its realisation. Both the 'kingdom of God' and the progressus in infinitum no longer satisfy the inquiring mind---it has already found its satisfaction in them, and so they are no longer the object of desire. But because the whole enterprise of meaning was interwoven with

51 Strong, Friedrich Nietzsche, p. 22.

52 Schacht, Hegel and After, p. 177.

53 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 9.

these objects, it appears, at first, as if meaning itself has disappeared with them. This is the radical nihilism observed by Nietzsche: "One interpretation has collapsed; but because it was considered the interpretation it now seems as if there were no meaning at all in existence, as if everything were in vain."⁵⁴ The failure of the old interpretation gives Nietzsche the opportunity to turn the activity of evaluation towards a new object, towards life itself. Not to take this opportunity, in fact, leads to the devaluation of this life: "A nihilist is a man who judges of the world as it is that it ought not to be, and of the world as it ought to be that it does not exist."⁵⁵ This is the practical consequence of persistence in historically incomplete moments of consciousness, in holding to the other-worldly view, despite its failure, and, as Hegel argues, its supersession in the post-historical epoch.

It is one of the key demands of philosophy that "we must be prepared to discuss and examine the reasons why we act the way we do."⁵⁶ Yet it is increasingly our experience that no arguments by which we may wish to justify our judgements and decisions can withstand critical analysis. Radical criticism undermines not just a particular judgement but the possibility of any judgement at all, because the very basis of judging is discredited, and so we cannot even begin to go about doing it. No measures can

54 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 35.

55 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 318.

56 Goudsblom, Nihilism and Culture, p. x.

therefore be rationally applied to human conduct, so values collapse and nihilism is the result. The dogged attempt to ground the whole of human experience in principles which are purely rational has led to the complete disillusionment which is nihilism. Johan Goudsblom writes:

For him all existing values, whether orthodox or revolutionary, are defunct. He knows that everything is in vain, that life has no objective, that any purpose which we attribute to existence is no more than our interpretation of it, false and untenable. The realization that reality is completely pointless is paralysing.⁵⁷

Why should this realisation be paralysing rather than liberating? Is this not the actual freedom of which Hegel was speaking, where the act counts for all because it is what generates the object, the goal to which it is directed? No, it is merely absolute freedom, lacking the necessary determination of self by Spirit, the putting-into-context of the act by a wider human community and history, which makes freedom meaningful. Our experience of 'pointless reality,' is the realisation merely of absolute freedom, and it is paralysing because we are unable to make distinctions between courses of action on purely rational grounds. Affects, the desires which lead to action, continue to be the motor of history: reason, meanwhile, cannot lose its character of reflection to become a cause of new states of human being.

Nietzsche's particular discovery or invention, his position within metaphysics, is in part the elaboration of radical nihilism: "Nietzsche defines nihilism as the

⁵⁷ Goudsblom, Nihilism and Culture, p. 11.

situation which obtains when 'everything is permitted.' If everything is permitted then it makes no difference what we do, and so nothing is worth anything."⁵⁸ If nothing is worth anything, then any so-called reasons for something---which purport to be statements of the worth of the thing---are meaningless. Because any reason is worthless, all reasons are equivalent: there can be no difference between ascribing one reason to ascribing another. But speech, in order to be meaningful, must make discriminations, it must separate a thing from its significance, an act from its reasons. To the nihilist, speech does not make distinctions, and it cannot do so. Effectively, then, the language of justification is, in the ears of the nihilist, the same as noise or silence, and "speech that is indistinguishable from silence is nihilism."⁵⁹

It is worth noting that nihilism emerges from considerations of speech, of the reasons or justification for action. The purpose of meaningful speech is to make distinctions, to demonstrate the value of things. Where speech fails to evaluate, where it fails to separate a specific act from all other acts, then the result is nihilism. A collapse in meaning is just that: Meaning, the demonstration of value, fails to be rationally compelling. What is involved is not some failure of reality, but the loss of the perceived ground of reality: "Nihilism emerges not because the problem of existence generates greater

58 Rosen, Nihilism, p. xiii.

59 Rosen, Nihilism, p. xix.

unease than before, but because all justification for existence has been discredited.⁶⁰ So nihilism is not an existential predicament, not a product of the nature of things. What is involved is the perceived failure of reason to provide a foundation for reality, to be the truth of the world. Nihilism is not a thing discovered in the world, it is a thing invented in the process of exploring the world. The genesis of nihilism is in man, not in the world.

If nihilism is not a 'given' problem, but one arising from the dynamic of man and world, then it follows that the source of values must also be this dynamic. Real values can only come through evaluation, through the placing-in-context of human being. They are not so much within things, in-themselves, as they are between things, for-themselves and for-others. But the realisation that value is not a 'substance' within things themselves---which realisation is the end of history---has led to nihilism. Nietzsche agrees with the conclusion of Hegelian wisdom: things-in-themselves have no value, but he goes on to point out the error of saying that because this is the case there can be no values at all. The error lies in the failure to properly perceive value as being a quality descriptive of the dynamic relation between humanity and its context, human being within the horizons of meaning. Specifically, this means man within political culture and within history. Radical nihilists have tried and failed to fix meaning in

⁶⁰ Goudsblom, Nihilism and Culture, p. 29.

an unchangeable object, the supersensible, eternal realm which transcends our perceived, historical one. Because values fail to emerge from where they ought to appear, the radical nihilists conclude that no values are possible at all. While the radical nihilists have tried and failed, philosophical nihilists persists in a search for meaning in the same way. For Nietzsche, both perspectives effectively devalue life, and this, for him, is the essence of nihilism. Furthermore, the consciousness of the failure of this 'as if' of meaning has extended well beyond the debates of philosophers: the malaise spreads because the possibility of a cure is denied. According to Nietzsche, hitherto all ascriptions of meaning have been nihilistic. The world is a world inferred---Nietzsche is firmly in the metaphysical tradition in the primacy he attaches to thought; but thought directed towards the objective realm, away from life, is thought which is unauthentic and false. He writes, in Beyond Good and Evil: "Whoever takes this world, along with space, time, form, movement, to be falsely inferred---anyone like that [e.g., Nietzsche himself!] would at least have ample reason to learn to be suspicious at long last of all thinking."⁶¹ His attack on the transcendental view of values is, from the perspective of that thinking which has hitherto falsely inferred the world, the destruction wrought by a nihilist. But for Nietzsche, it is the first authentic attempt to bring meaning back into the world. In his terms, it is the

⁶¹ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, pp. 45-46.

renewal of the Dionysian spirit, when the Apollonian spirit is weakened and spent.

Nietzsche's rejection of metaphysical dualism plus a desire to affirm values in life is a revolutionary turn to philosophy, but a necessary one in order to rise above modern, radical nihilism. He begins by recognising that objective values are impossible in the other-worldly sense: such concepts as the true, the real or being are not 'given' outside our experience; they are descriptions of and part of actual human life. It is these concepts, not human life, which are contingent or secondary. To assert these concepts as being fixed in any sense is nihilistic: "Being, the true and the real are the avatars of nihilism Nietzsche has no more belief in the self-sufficiency of the real than he has in that of the true: he thinks of them as the manifestation of a will, a will to depreciate life, to oppose life to life."⁶² Nietzsche says as much when he writes in The Twilight of the Idols: "Any distinction between a 'true' and an 'apparent' world---whether in the Christian manner or in the manner of Kant (in the end, an underhanded Christian)---is only a suggestion of decadence, a symptom of the decline of life."⁶³

It was an error to believe that truth exists independently of the knowing subject: an error expressed by Hegel as 'moments of incompleteness.' Truth ought to be way

⁶² Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, p. 184.

⁶³ Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, p. 484.

of considering the outcome of the process of man revealing the world and the world revealing man through thinking and speech. It is not something which is waiting to be discovered, some entity like an island, fixed in the sea whether man has sailed to it and put it on a map or not. Nietzsche recognises that thinking is a two-fold process, that the exploration of the world is also the introspection of man. These two are inseparable: the binding, the connection, the mediation between them is what values are. The belief that values rest on a fixed point is a vain hope, and a destructive, life-depreciating, nihilistic one at that: "Before any steps away from nihilism can be taken, one must first escape the error that there is a stopping point which can be found and occupied by means of investigation; truth does not rest on anything."⁶⁴ The failure to find meaning 'out there,' 'in the world,' is thus the failure of man to also look for meaning within himself, or, more precisely, to reveal the meaning which is the relation between himself and the world. The traditional search for value is itself nihilistic because it erroneously focuses on the object of the search, without paying attention to its subject, man the searcher engaged in this quest.

For Nietzsche, this problem of radical nihilism does not arise from not having pushed far enough along the road of reason. This road has been followed and its destination reached: the idea that man ought to give a rational account

⁶⁴ Strong, Friedrich Nietzsche, p. 39.

of himself and his world has triumphed. Reason finds, in the end, that the realm of truth projected by history is in fact a nothingness. Reason has succeeded: it has completely realised itself. But the urge for truth which impelled reason has failed: the place to which it directed reason was void. In Nietzsche's metaphorical language, where it sought God, reason found a corpse. To continue in the perspective directed towards transcendent, other-worldly Being (and not towards transcendent aspects within Being) is to manifest the 'will to nothingness': nihilism. Nietzsche writes: "To sacrifice God for the nothing---this paradoxical mystery of the final cruelty was reserved for the generation that is now coming up."⁶⁵ This is a 'paradoxical mystery' because man now has a more worthy object at hand: his own life, raised to the level of self-consciousness, as Hegel has shown. Martin Heidegger writes: "The pronouncement 'God is dead' means: The suprasensory world is without effective power. It bestows no life. Metaphysics, i.e., for Nietzsche Western philosophy understood as Platonism, is at an end."⁶⁶ This destination has simply turned out not to satisfy the desire which prompted the journey in the first place. That desire was to find the truth, the value, the essence, or the reality within things themselves, but the process of satisfying this desire, the road of reason, has in fact led to ontological nihilism, to the realisation that value does

⁶⁵ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 67.

⁶⁶ Heidegger, "Word of Nietzsche," in Question Concerning Technology, p. 61.

not reside within things at all. And this has also led to transcendental nihilism: the failure of the attempt to relate things to an unchanging beyond. Briefly, the development of nihilism may be stated as follows: At first, man seeks to satisfy his desire to know the essence of things; by attempting to do so (by developing reason) he soon discovers that things-in-themselves have no value---this is ontological nihilism. So then he looks to relate things to the desired essence in an external world; and the result of this development of reason is either to discover that such a world does not exist, or that it is hopelessly remote and unknowable---this is objective nihilism. Finally, with the realisation that essence is not subjective, not within things, and not objective, not independent of things, we get modern, radical nihilism: the belief that there is no essence at all. Nothing is worth anything.

The cause of this whole metaphysical journey was the pre-rational urge for truth. And Nietzsche himself followed this process to logical extremes, to the extent of questioning the value of this urge in the first place. Nietzsche came to realise that the origin of reason lies in this desire, that, at its root, there is no reason for reason. His relentlessness in taking seriously the demand of philosophy to give a wholly rational account of the world can lead one to plausibly claim that "Nietzsche invented nihilism."⁶⁷ By this, one means that Nietzsche

⁶⁷ Goudsblom, Nihilism and Culture, p. 138.

brought together those elements already present in culture to show how they culminate in nihilism, much as a physical inventor brings together principles which have always existed, but which only come together in his act of invention. Hegel would describe this coming-together of elements present in culture as a "world-historical moment." It is an 'instantiation of Being' or 'presencing of Spirit' which is apprehended by the philosopher through whom it occurs. Heidegger writes: "In every phase of metaphysics there has been visible at any particular time a portion of a way that the destining of Being prepares as a path for itself over and beyond whatever is, in sudden epoch of truth."⁶⁸ Just as Hegel articulates the whole of history, Nietzsche articulates the 'eternal moment' which is its end. He recognised that the movement which Hegel described has been accomplished, that what was truth as a goal is now truth as a manifest reality---a truth which has turned out to be very different as a result than it appeared as a projection, as a reality than a dream. Again to quote Heidegger: "Nietzsche's thinking sees itself as belonging under the heading 'nihilism.' That is the name for a historical movement, recognized by Nietzsche, already ruling throughout preceding centuries, and now determining this century. Nietzsche sums up his interpretation of it in the brief statement: 'God is dead.'"⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Heidegger, "Word of Nietzsche," in Question Concerning Technology, p. 54.

⁶⁹ Heidegger, "Word of Nietzsche," in Question Concerning Technology, p. 57.

To realise the nihilism inherent in the other-worldly view is the necessary first step to authentic valuation in the post-historical epoch. According to Nietzsche, "we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these 'values' really had."⁷⁰ I argue that what we realise is the Hegelian revolution, that we come to the understanding that values are projections within Being, a whole which is divided into subjects and objects by this very activity. With this realisation comes the decline of strong mediation or negation, since their resolution is already present to them. The post-historical epoch is the 'twilight of the idols,' but also a new beginning, since we now know what we are about when we engage in valuation, when we speak, act, and think. The end of history is therefore a period of profound nihilism, but only out of this can 'crucial and most essential growth' begin anew. Nietzsche writes:

Actually, every major growth is accompanied by a tremendous crumbling and passing away: suffering, the symptoms of decline belong in the times of tremendous advances; every fruitful and powerful movement of humanity has also created at the same time a nihilistic movement. It could be the sign of a crucial and most essential growth, of the transition to new conditions of existence, that the most extreme form of pessimism, genuine nihilism, would come into the world.⁷¹

From the transcendent dualist world-view, Nietzsche is a nihilist. But in the face of the collapse of this view, and the need for objective values, Nietzsche is an 'arrow of longing for the Overman,' making real values possible.

⁷⁰ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 4.

⁷¹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 69.

Chapter Four
The Affirmation of Life

The Will to Power

Nietzsche's critical philosophy is his attack on existing values. His positive philosophy is concerned with how nihilism is overcome, or how real values assert themselves, which is the same thing. Nietzsche believes that real values arise from the 'affirmation of life', that life is 'will to power', and that affirmation is the result of 'perspective': the act of a human individual within a determinate milieu. Nietzsche's positive philosophy, as it concerns nihilism, is summarised by Heidegger as follows: "Value [is] . . . the condition---having the character of point-of-view---of the preservation and enhancement of life, and also . . . life [is] grounded in becoming as the will to power, the will to power is revealed as that which posits that point of view."¹ To will is, implicitly, to put into relation one's immediate self and one's wider self, a desire and its satisfaction. The mutual 'regard' of each aspect of individuality is 'recognition,' and so is bound up with the notion of perspective.

The will to power, for Nietzsche, ontological. He states: "life simply is will to power."² Life takes pride of place in Nietzsche's philosophy because of his rejection of a transcendent world of Being. Being is therefore becoming; as Stephen Houlgate writes, "what is real for Nietzsche is 'becoming'---flux, multiplicity, change."³

¹ Heidegger, "Word of Nietzsche," Question Concerning Technology, p. 74.

² Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 203.

³ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 49.

Life is our real and concrete experience of the rather abstract notion of 'becoming.' If life is will to power, then, Nietzsche writes, "as a reality it is the primordial fact of all history."⁴ Life, as will to power, is primordial: it is Nietzsche's step back from history into a wider tableau. The will to power, considered alongside the amor fati expressed in the doctrine of eternal recurrence, is for Nietzsche as the Idea is for Hegel. And, if Hegel is right about the coincidence of wisdom with the end of history, then will to power is Nietzsche's particular understanding of the Idea: it is a mode of the on-going presence of Spirit, no longer understood in the old metaphysical sense, but now as an immanent beyond.

If we look at the idea of the 'origin' of values in an Hegelian way, as a somewhat arbitrary starting-point for the understanding, then the source of values is will to power. Life, as will to power, is the foundation of perspective, the grounding of the 'from-to' directedness that is the content of evaluation. Nietzsche writes: "There is nothing to life that has value, except the degree of power---assuming that life itself is the will to power."⁵ If there are no values apart from consideration of the 'degree of power,' then the intelligible character of the world is simply a determination of this: the world is a world inferred, and can be said, therefore, to be the effect of the will to power. Nietzsche writes: "The world

4 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 204.

5 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 37.

viewed from inside, the world defined and determined according to its 'intelligible character'---it would be 'will to power' and nothing else."⁶ The world is a world viewed from inside: the conclusion of Hegelian wisdom is that Being is Being perceived, hence intelligibility is the result of perspective. Perspective is the logos of Being, the structure and utterance of a differentiated whole.

The term "will to power" isolates that aspect of life which Nietzsche most admires. This is the tendency of living beings to exert their strength, to make their presence felt in the world, to impose their singular character upon a wider tableau, to be greater than what they are. In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche writes: "A living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength---life itself is will to power; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results."⁷ Will to power is more fundamental than the instinct for survival, for Nietzsche. Mere endurance is a consequence of the drive of life, but not that drive itself.

Value consists of mediation, of turning one's attention from one thing to another thing, and making a comparison. What is essential to evaluation is not either of these things in themselves (i.e., not an objective realm, or a self-sufficient subject), but the middle term. The middle term is the 'life' or 'force' or 'power' which exists between things, holding them together and keeping

⁶ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 48.

⁷ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 21.

them apart. For Hegel, this was Spirit as Reason. For Nietzsche, this is will to power. And so, Nietzsche writes, in Will to Power: "What is the objective measure of value? Solely the quantum of enhanced and organized power."⁸ 'Objective' is to be understood here as the post-historical object, as a beyond within life. 'Life' encompasses what posits and what is posited. The tendency of all things to 'manifest themselves' is will to power. Because origins are implied in ends, life is re-confirmed by its 'outer-directedness,' and no longer denigrated by a beyond thought to be outside actual life. According to Nietzsche: "'Willing': means willing an end. 'An end' includes an evaluation."⁹ An end includes an evaluation because it only has meaning with reference to its origin, to the desire (or manifestation of the will to power) which projected it in the first place.

The inseparability of the notion of 'end' from the notion of 'willing' means that Nietzsche's will to power is much more than merely a drive, or a natural force. Nietzsche states clearly that the essence of will is not craving, instinct, or desire.¹⁰ However, it is desire in the special Hegelian sense: the desire which projects a future, which anticipates its satisfaction in a state of affairs not yet at hand, which seeks to expand the self to encompass the desired object, and so engage in the dialectic, or in negation. If we introduce the notion of end to

⁸ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 356.

⁹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 150.

'mere' desire, then we understand Nietzsche's will to power. He writes, in Will to Power: "'Willing' is not 'desiring,' striving, demanding: it is distinguished from these by the affect of commanding. There is no such thing as 'willing,' but only a willing something: one must not remove the aim from the total condition."¹¹ Willing is commanding, and so it is an affect. An affect is a desire which leads to action. Action directs the self towards an end, towards a rapprochement with its goal. The goal is the effect which completes or satisfies the affect, and thereby enhances the self in whom that affect occurred. Will to power is the self-enhancing expansion of life.

Will to power is not mere wilfulness. Nietzsche avoids the charge of radical subjectivity by insisting on the importance of ends to willing, of the apparent outer-directedness of the act of the individual. So when Nietzsche talks about the 'feeling' of the enhancement of power, this feeling depends upon a reference to an object. The feeling itself is important merely as the reflective proof of authentic engagement with the world, and with life. This is how Nietzsche can write that "the criterion of truth resides in the enhancement of the feeling of power,"¹² because this feeling can only be 'enhanced' when the self acts authentically, when it involves itself in a wider context, when it directs itself to real objects

10 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 52.

11 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 353.

12 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 290.

beyond its singular existence, albeit within the realised whole of Being, or 'life.'

So the subjective experience of the individual is only part of the equation of the will to power. The beyond within life surrounds the individual, situating it, making it a determinate self, or a person, or someone-in-particular. To look for meaning solely in the desire, in the origin, is to miss the fatefulness of every act: the myriad of consequences extending beyond the individual into the future and into the community or culture. Indeed, as Nietzsche comments, the contribution of the thinking, feeling self to the matrix of meaning is relatively small: "Sensations and thoughts are something extremely insignificant and rare in relation to the countless number of events that occur every moment."¹³ Each event is a manifestation of the will to power, and is therefore an end-directed occasion, or moment, or destining of Being. Nietzsche writes: "The will to power [is] not a being, not a becoming, but a pathos."¹⁴ Walter Kaufmann, in his note to this passage of Will to Power, writes the following on the meaning of "pathos": "Occasion, event, passion, suffering, destiny are among the meanings of this Greek word."¹⁵ Will to power, therefore, is enhancing or expansive because it reaches beyond the singular self in this way. It is not 'being' because it is not static; it is not 'becoming'

¹³ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 357.

¹⁴ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 339.

¹⁵ Walter Kaufmann, ed., Nietzsche's Will to Power, p. 339.

because it is not mere wilfulness. It is not the standard, but the logos of evaluation: the substance of the projection of the self into its wider situation, and the description of the fatefulness or destining of the post-historical Being-as-becoming. Nietzsche writes: "The will to power interprets . . . it defines limits, determines degrees, variation of power."¹⁶ Will to power is the 'correct' post-historical concentration on the moment of mediation, rather than the 'becoming-other' which was the old metaphysical notion of values.

Like Hegel, Nietzsche emphasises the importance of the experience of desiring over the desire itself, and over its satisfaction. Will to power is concerned with 'feeling' or 'experience' or 'consciousness.' Will to power is a way, or as Nietzsche sometimes puts it, an across. Ends, or 'effects,' and origins, or 'affects,' are essential as anchors to its appearance, but the mind's eye must focus on the moment of mediation to find perspective, or the truth about Being. Nietzsche writes: "Pleasure is only a symptom of the feeling of power attained, a consciousness of a difference (---there is no striving for pleasure: but pleasure supervenes when that which is being striven for is attained: pleasure is an accompaniment, pleasure is not the motive---)." ¹⁷ In fact, man does not desire happiness. What he desires is to manifest his will to power: he wants to engage himself in the wider world, to come up against

¹⁶ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 342.

¹⁷ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 366.

things which object to his subjectivity, and to overcome them. The experience of desire as a lack within is not the lack of the feeling of pleasure. Rather, it is the dissatisfaction of being merely a self, and this is overcome by engagement, by acting, and thereby finding oneself in a context, as being not merely alive, but a part of life. Nietzsche writes: "The feeling of pleasure lies precisely in the dissatisfaction of the will, in the fact that the will is never satisfied unless it has opponents and resistance.---'The happy man': a herd ideal."¹⁸ The 'herd ideal' is the other-worldly beyond---in this case, the man who is happy, and who therefore is the condemnation of the man who relies upon his dissatisfaction of the will to be truly alive, and truly human.

Finally, will to power is the measure of freedom. Freedom is to be understood here in the Hegelian sense. A person is only free when he is a situated self, an individual, or a particular self-consciousness. Implied in all this is the situation, or the community, or Self-Consciousness as such. The will to power consists of such a shining forth, and such a reflecting back. In Will to Power, Nietzsche writes: "The degree of resistance that must be continually overcome in order to remain on top is the measure of freedom, whether for individuals or for societies---freedom understood, that is, as positive power, as will to power."¹⁹ The degree of resistance overcome is

¹⁸ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 370.

¹⁹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 404.

the measure of will to power, a test of the exuberance of life. The sense in which will to power is a standard can be found only in the difference of degrees of power, in the amount of strength: values, it will be recalled, reside in comparisons. Truth is found 'in the enhancement of the feeling of power,' and so truth is a function of one's contact with reality, or one's engagement with life, or one's meeting with and overcoming of obstacles. Stephen Houlgate writes: "Nietzschean strength, therefore, is measured both by how much reality and life one can endure, and by the extent to which one can give diversified and creative interpretations of that life."²⁰ To reject reality and life in favour of an other-worldly beyond is, in Nietzsche's eyes, to betray weakness, and the poverty of one's will to power. The end of history has shown that 'reality and life' is the whole of existence, and so, as Heidegger writes: "The reality of the real, now explicitly experienced, i.e., the will to power, becomes the origin and norm of a new value-positing."²¹

Life-Centred Values

Nietzsche's positive philosophy explicitly criticises traditional philosophy for the untimeliness of its metaphysical dualism. Implicit in it also is a condemnation of the Hegelian solution of contentment in rational completeness. Nietzsche finds the refutation of the former, and an on-going impediment to the latter, in life:

²⁰ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 72.

Life itself is to my mind the instinct for growth, for durability, for an accumulation of forces, for power: where the will to power is lacking there is decline. It is my contention that all the supreme values of mankind lack this will---that the values which are symptomatic of decline, nihilistic values, are lording it under the holiest names.²²

The 'holiest names' are 'truth' and 'reason,' which, when they are attached to the notion of a fixed, other-world, are in fact the means to devalue life, to depreciate our actual existence. Life is a force against this fixity of purpose: it is a force for variation and dynamism. Growth implies a change in the subject, but towards a result which is not a condemnation of the original, but an enhancement of it. Growth is a projection of the beyond within life. As Nietzsche writes in Will to Power: "Life is only a means to something; it is the expression of forms of the growth of power."²³

Gilles Deleuze writes that, for Nietzsche, "the world is neither true nor real but living."²⁴ The flow of life affects even the attempt to separate oneself from it in order to assess it. This does not mean that some separation is not possible; in fact, it is entirely necessary for knowledge to be even possible. But to separate oneself completely, to be an independent observer, to attain purely objective knowledge, is impossible. Therefore, nihilism in

21 Heidegger, "Word of Nietzsche," Question Concerning Technology, p. 95.

22 Friedrich Nietzsche, The Antichrist, in The Portable Nietzsche, translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1954). p. 572.

23 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 375.

24 Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, p. 184.

its historical manifestation was correct: there are no objective, other-worldly values. But modern, radical nihilism will only be avoided if values attached to life, connected to that which they measure, can be created by man. Man must turn away from values superior to life, what Nietzsche has called above 'superior values,' and undertake the task of transvaluation, or changing the grounds of evaluation, changing what man perceives himself as doing when he ascribes values. Rather than believing he is comparing an image to its original, comparing life to the truth, man must create values of life within life. These life-affirming values are within life because life is the subject: man is the meaning-creator. They are of life because life is the object: the living world which is meaningful. The kind of meaning creation grounded in life-affirming values is the way of Nietzschean transvaluation, embodying his desire to affirm standards without succumbing to the nihilism which results from the metaphysics of transcendence and dualism. An absolute distinction between values and human life is impossible, and undesirable even if it were not. Yet distinctions must be made through thinking and speech, and this is how real values come about.

Real values are of life, and are from life: the flow of human thoughts and actions in a living world is the well-spring of its own measure. Life is its own answer. This ground of values, while not 'fixed' or 'independent' like historical, other-worldly values, is nevertheless

fundamental in Nietzsche's philosophy. Richard Schacht writes: "He holds that there is a single, ultimate, absolute value, by reference to which the value of everything else can and should be determined: namely, the quantitative and qualitative enhancement of life."²⁵ This absolute can only be understood non-metaphysically if it is taken in an Hegelian sense: as the all which, when pushed to its limits, cannot be distinguished from nothing; the whole grounded in a context of nihilism; the articulation of the inarticulable. Life is absolute because it is primordial: an ontological substance which is beyond metaphysics only because it is essentially negation. The ultimate failure of the attempt to separate the force of life from its manifestation as the pathos of history---to separate the dancer from the dance---is the only 'proof' Nietzsche offers for his ontological postulate. Any separations which are made are, in Nietzsche's universe, distortions which serve intelligibility, and only by this are they accorded the epithet 'true.' Like Hegel, Nietzsche hopes by his exhaustive affirmation to escape the 'charge' of engaging in metaphysics. Through Hegel, we can understand the possibility, and indeed necessity, of Nietzsche's claim to a non-metaphysical ontology; again to quote Richard Schacht: "This absolute value is grounded in the very nature of things. It is not divinely ordained but neither is it a mere human convention or invention. It derives directly from a consideration of the very essence of life

²⁵ Schacht, Hegel and After, p. 192.

as Nietzsche conceives it, namely, as 'will to power.'"²⁶ Will to power is the means of evaluation which arises out of and reflects back upon life. Schacht writes: "This standard is not external to life and the world, deriving instead from a consideration of what they fundamentally are."²⁷

Nietzsche cautions against over-reliance upon the objective spirit as a guide to value-creation. His emphasis upon the individual, upon the 'affects,' and upon the feeling of the increase of life, or will to power, is his attempt to redress the balance, to undertake transvaluation, or the restoration of perspective to evaluation. Complete reliance upon the objective spirit is, in fact, other-worldly transcendence. Nietzsche emphasises the self in the process of evaluation, the subject which reflects upon the object, or the living person considering his living community and history. Nietzsche writes in Beyond Good and Evil: "However gratefully we may welcome an objective spirit . . . in the end we also have to learn caution against our gratitude and put a halt to the exaggerated manner in which the 'unselfing' and depersonalization of the spirit is being celebrated nowadays as if it were the goal itself and redemption and transfiguration."²⁸ In Hegelian terms, we must not become blinded by the realised universal of the end of history: the participating subject is equally essential. Offsetting the will to unity

²⁶ Schacht, Hegel and After, p. 192.

²⁷ Richard Schacht, Nietzsche. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983). p. 396.

must be the will to difference: coming together and falling apart is the essence of the 'recollection of the spirits' in the post-historical epoch. Nietzsche recognises the life-force, or will to power, to be most manifest in the will to difference, hence the emphasis of his writings: "The greater the impulse toward unity, the greater the impulse towards variety, differentiation, inner decay, the more force is present."²⁹ Hegel himself realised that the great synthesis of the end of history was a moment of the decline of strong action; Nietzsche carries on this thought by stating that all great movements of this kind are accompanied by profound nihilism. In Twilight of the Idols, Nietzsche writes: "The danger that lies in great men and ages is extraordinary; exhaustion of every kind, sterility, follow in their wake. The great human being is a finale; the great age---the Renaissance, for example---is a finale."³⁰ The realisation of objective spirit, which is found in Hegelian wisdom, is such a great age. To emphasise the will to power, the force of the living subject, is Nietzsche's tonic to the malaise of nihilism which is our first reaction to the post-historical epoch.

The value which is from life is the following: The measure of an act or thought or speech is the extent to which it enhances life, the extent to which it affirms life. This is what is 'true,' this is what there is: the enhancement and affirmation of life. Affirmation is not

28 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 126.

29 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 346.

30 Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, p. 548.

simply 'yea-saying' to the vicissitudes of life; it should not be thought of as blind acceptance. Rather, it is what man does when he separates himself from the flow of life through thinking about it and speaking about it. To affirm is to evaluate, to force an excess into an aspect of one's experience of life. All acts distinguish man from life, but will not alienate him from it only if they are rightly perceived to be ultimately self-referential. Evaluation---not truth-allocating or reality-ascribing---is the way of the value revealer. Nietzsche writes in Beyond Good and Evil: "Is not living---estimating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different."³¹ In other words, evaluation is differentiation: in Hegelian terms, Being is a whole, but it is only made intelligible by making distortions within it, by taking one part and excluding others. Evaluation is the appreciation of difference within life; where the seeking elsewhere of perspective is directed outside its context, there is nihilism. Gilles Deleuze writes: "To affirm is still to evaluate, but to evaluate from the perspective of a will which enjoys its own difference in life instead of suffering the pains of the opposition to this life that it has itself inspired."³²

To affirm life is to recognise that values originate in the living subject. Values must still project an object beyond the immediate self, but this mediation or evaluation

31 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 15.

32 Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, p. 185.

is thereby reflective proof of the essentiality of the human self. Nietzsche writes: "We have to realize to what degree we are the creators of our value feelings---and thus capable of projecting 'meaning' into history."³³ Our 'value feelings' are not wholly subjective, nor are they wholly objective: hence the 'degree' of which Nietzsche speaks is the self-as-origin, as the vantage-point of perspective in the task of evaluation. 'Feeling' is our experience of evaluation---of our engagement in mediation, to use Hegelian terms. Nietzsche writes: "Value words are banners raised where a new bliss has been found---a new feeling."³⁴ The phrase 'new bliss' expresses the awareness of the 'increase of power,' or of a greater intensity of life, or of a wider self. The act where such a feeling occurs is the act which posits values, the act which affirms life.

Affirmation is not merely acceptance, but, for Nietzsche, this was the essential nihilism of consciousness alienated from its 'higher' nature by metaphysical dualism. From the perspective of the consciousness which fixes its values in a transcendent beyond, the truth is a 'brute fact,' reality 'simply is,' and values are 'fixed measures.' Nietzsche says this divided world of life and values is nihilism because its object is a chimera. Hegel's success exposes the failure of the metaphysical enterprise to 'enhance life.' All life is affirmation, but what was affirmed historically was merely self-reference,

33 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 523.

34 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 380.

and this amounts to mere acceptance for Nietzsche. Like Hegel, Nietzsche seeks the beyond within life, but unlike him he does not believe this can be done by 'completing' transcendent dualism through an exhaustive non-metaphysical account. But Nietzsche's conception of life as will to power adopts Hegel's negative conclusion: life is not an unalterable fact, but a comprehensive process of thinking about and ascribing value to, or speaking about, action. "Affirmation conceived of as acceptance, as affirmation of that which is, as truthfulness of the true or positivity of the real, is a false affirmation,"³⁵ as Gilles Deleuze writes, but affirmation as will to power, as the enhancement of life is the way to overcoming nihilism, to asserting real values. There is nothing static about affirmation. Because it is evaluative, it is essentially the appreciation that life is creative. To affirm life is therefore not to observe a fact, but to will a change, to become a creator. And this is Nietzsche's will to power. But affirmation includes acceptance as amor fati, as a selective test of the health of will to power. This is why Nietzsche's philosophy is a refutation of metaphysical dualism, but a much more subtle challenge to Hegel: for Nietzsche, history may have been a terrible mistake, but it happened, and its legacy is to establish the limits of possibility in nihilism. Nietzsche must overcome his resentment of Hegel for being right: he must make more of being imbued with absolute Spirit than the will to nothing

35 Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, p. 184.

he perceives in the reflectivity of the end of history.

The act of overcoming nihilism begins with the rejection of the historical search for meaning in a true world alienated from life. With this change not only in perspective but the ground of perspective, life ceases to be merely the effect of principles which are more real than itself. Human life, human history, becomes a different thing for us in the light of this transvaluation: it was not just the manifestation of reason, but the development of a kind of life. For Nietzsche, history describes a life driven by the urge for truth, a slavish consciousness which transcended rather than defeated the master by changing the rules of the struggle. Hegel provides the slave's ultimate triumph, but precludes a future for him by the destruction of transcendent dualism. The 'true world' confounded the master, but its disappearance-by-immersion takes with it the slavish consciousness as such. What is left for Nietzsche is to authentically realise the Hegelian possibility. Hegel's 'what' provides no answer for Nietzsche; but he effectively follows Hegel's 'how' of emphasising Being as becoming: the life which makes radically present Being more than an empty field of limitless possibility. Excess, rather than accurate description, is the nature of transvalued values. Only thus do appearances reach 'beyond' themselves: not outside to nothing, but back to themselves as something more, something 'higher yet the same.' Schacht writes: "With the abolition of the idea of a 'true world' apart from the actual world, the actual

world ceases to seem merely to be an apparent world and comes to be recognised as reality; for it was only by contrast to the fictitious other world which was regarded as the 'true world' that the actual world was taken to be merely apparent."³⁶

To perceive all values as emerging from the flow of life involves not just a change in values, choosing better, 'truer' ones to replace inadequate, false ones. It involves a change in the ground from which value judgements are made: transvaluation. One not only evaluates anew, but even does so backwards, changing the meaning of history for life. Historical, dualist, alienated and alienating valuations could not have been simply wrong, for even these must have emerged from life, though they falsely posited their activity beyond that life. If will to power is ontological, then all statements of value, even truth-affirming ones, take on the nature of the actual life being led. Positing the truth of the world in a beyond must therefore emerge from a decaying, declining life. For man to change the ground of his valuations now would therefore be more than a new beginning: history itself will thereby change its character, it will have been a different process in light of Nietzschean transvaluation. This is because all values, whether affirmative, creative ones, or depreciative, nihilistic ones, spring from life. Nietzsche writes, in Twilight of the Idols:

³⁶ Schacht, Hegel and After, p. 190.

When we speak of values, we speak with the inspiration, with the way of looking at things, which is part of life: life itself forces us to posit values; life itself values through us when we posit values. From this it follows that even that anti-natural morality which conceives of God as the counter-concept and condemnation of life is only a value judgement of life---but of what life? of what kind of life? I have already given the answer: of declining, weakened, weary, condemned life.³⁷

Nietzsche's project is therefore more radical than replacing insufficient values with 'better' ones. Man is incapable of perceiving values in the way he expects. Nihilism cannot be seen merely to be a failure by man, because it is constitutive of reality. Man must therefore change himself, not just his thinking (falsely perceived as a function external to living), for meaning to be even possible. Nihilism cannot be overcome by progress, by man reaching for higher, truer values: man is fundamentally incapable of achieving what he perceived to be his goal within history, which was to find the truth of his life elsewhere, and to find his true home in removed from his actual life. A change in man himself, and not merely the orientation of his thinking, is needed to overcome nihilism. Tracy Strong writes: "The present structure of human understanding forces men to continue searching for that which their understanding tells them is not to be found."³⁸ This is the epistemology of nihilism. The error which is nihilism is in man, and not in the nature of values themselves: Strong continues: "That men continue to believe

³⁷ Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, p. 490.

³⁸ Strong, Friedrich Nietzsche, p. 77.

that the world should be meaningful, though unable to discover anything they might recognize as a satisfactory meaning, is the consequence of their inability to admit that the problem lies in themselves."³⁹

The 'fatal flaw' in man is his tendency to depreciate life, which he does by searching for the meaning of that life elsewhere. Deleuze writes: "Ressentiment and bad conscience are constitutive of the humanity of man, nihilism is the a priori concept of universal history. This is why conquering nihilism, liberating thought from bad conscience and resentment means the overcoming and destruction of even the best men."⁴⁰ The tendency to depreciate life, decadent will to power, resentment and bad conscience---this kind of life is what is behind history as the manifestation of reason directed towards the other-worldly beyond, according to Nietzsche. This is why he attacks history itself---the direction we have taken---and not the nihilistic reaction to the end of history. This reaction is correct, because history hitherto has been the development of nihilism: Nietzsche thinks of it as a wrong turning which never had the possibility of reaching its destination. Reason was developed to satisfy the urge for truth, and it did do so: as Hegel shows, modernity is the outcome for which history was necessary. But Nietzsche follows the Hegelian road to a greater extent, and perceives nihilism as the reflective proof of the unworthiness

39 Strong, Friedrich Nietzsche, p. 77.

40 Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, p. 166.

of the will to truth for life. Historical perceptions of value were, as Hegel says, incomplete, and not really engagements of the kind they thought themselves to be, i.e. with an other-world of truth. But Nietzsche further argues that the whole of such perceptions, even when seen correctly as affirmative, reflective, beyonds within life, do not meet the test which even Hegel sets for them. History's ultimate recovery of its object succeeds, but still man fails to find himself 'at home' in the world: his rise to self-consciousness has not satisfied his desire to belong, 'at a higher level.' Reason leaves nothing out of account, and this is precisely why it both meets and fails the need set for it: the nothing at the edge of the whole elevates it in Hegel's view, and is its condemnation for Nietzsche.

Nietzsche is far from being an anti-rationalist, though. In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche refers to "reason, meaning 'good Europeanism;'"⁴¹ he considered himself a 'good European,' and into this we can read a consciousness of the more universal character of his and our times---what Hegel called the State. For Hegel, the false consciousness of truth-seeking Reason is overcome by history, when the opposition between the apparent world and the true world is resolved by the realisation of the whole, of differentiated Being. A return to self, but moreover the elevation to a situated self, is the result of the dialectic. Nietzsche also looks for the concrete result of

⁴¹ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 174.

reason, even reason which was set to the fool's task of discovering the true world, and finds it in our becoming more humane. Section 115 of The Will to Power reads:

If anything signifies our humanization---a genuine and actual progress---it is the fact that we no longer require excessive oppositions, indeed no opposites at all---we may love the senses, we have spiritualized and made them artistic in every degree; we have a right to all those things which were most maligned until now.⁴²

In his note to this section, Walter Kaufmann writes: "Our becoming more humane, is the only thing worthy of being considered genuine progress, and it consists in spiritualizing . . . the senses instead of condemning them as evil. The naïveté of postulating opposites where in fact there are only differences in degree is also condemned in Nietzsche's books."⁴³ The disappearance of opposites and the recognition of differences in degree is the precise nature of the post-historical epoch: the historical dialectic of apparently absolute oppositions is complete, and only the on-going dialectic persists. In Will to Power, Nietzsche writes: "There is no struggle for existence between ideas and perceptions, but a struggle for dominion: the idea that is overcome is not annihilated, only driven back or subordinated. There is no annihilation in the sphere of spirit."⁴⁴ The parallels to Hegel are obvious in this passage. The elevation of man, or the way in which he is 'higher yet the same,' is, for Hegel, his self-

⁴² Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 70-71.

⁴³ Walter Kaufmann, ed., Nietzsche's Will to Power, p. 71.

⁴⁴ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 323.

consciousness; for Nietzsche, who is concerned more with will to power as the kind of life being led, man's elevation consists in his becoming more humane.

The premise of the history of philosophy has been that the progress of reason will reveal the true world, but the effect of progressing towards this unrealisable goal has been to imply that life is false, and to effectively devalue it. Nietzsche, in contrast, condemns the notion that life is a process which is directed towards the realisation of anything other than itself. Life is a forum in which reason appears: reason can manifest itself progressively, but the primordial life which is its medium cannot do so. Life is like Spirit in that there is no real change for it; it remains self-same regardless of any changes within. Historically, reason influenced its medium so as to depreciate it by directing it outside itself to a nothing, to the true world. It is Nietzsche's hope that reason in the service of life can affirm its context, can appreciate human life. Life must no longer be devalued, must no longer be identified indissolubly with the effect of its activity, with the object which the exercise of reason projects. The failure to make this distinction is precisely what nihilism is. Reason as the search for truth was thought to be the meaning of life, but in fact it was the effect of a particular kind of life, a depreciated, depreciating kind. Nietzsche laments: "The 'beyond'---why a beyond, if not as a means for besmirching this world?"⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, p. 535.

As long as meaning is thought to reside in ends---like the true world---rather than towards ends---like life-affirming goals---then an irremovable artificiality will persist about the very prospect of evaluation. Such evaluations are antithetical to life itself. As Nietzsche writes: "We have invented the concept of 'end': in reality there is no end."⁴⁶ To invent an end is to project a future, to will a change: this is the reality of ends, of values, not a remote true world. So the triumph of reason in history has turned out to be unsatisfying with respect to the desire which brought it about in the first place, the desire to know the real, essential nature of things. Deleuze writes: "The goal itself is missed, fallen short of, not because of insufficient means, but because of its nature, because of the kind of goal that it is. If it is missed it is not insofar as it is not reached but rather insofar as it is reached it is also missed."⁴⁷

According to Hegel, the kind of goal which Reason projects is satisfaction in a fixed, true object. The kind of goal which Reason actually obtains by history is the purely rational satisfaction of the Idea, of the realisation of the mediated whole of Being. But, as Nietzsche points out, man remains emotionally dissatisfied because what he finds is not what he looked for. He has not yet changed his perspective to the enjoyment of the feeling of the increase of self by engagement in process, through the

46 Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, p. 500.

47 Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, p. 168.

projection a beyond within life. Nietzsche writes, in Will to Power:

In fact, man does not want 'happiness' [i.e., satisfaction]. Pleasure is a feeling of power: if one excludes the affects [i.e., desires which lead to action], then one excludes the states that give the highest feeling of power, consequently of pleasure. The highest rationality is a cold, clear state very far from giving that feeling of happiness that intoxication of any kind brings with it.⁴⁸

Reason fails us in the face of nihilism because nothing is beyond its grasp. Nietzsche's discussion of nihilism is post-Hegelian in that it is a consideration of two kinds of grasping at nothingness. The first is the 'true world,' which was at best an incomplete understanding of the situatedness of life. The second is the inarticulable excess, the beyond within life, of vibrant will to power. Hegel leaves us in the 'cold, clear state' of rational satisfaction which finishes the first kind of nihilism as anything 'healthy' or life enhancing, and Nietzsche circumscribes the second kind of nihilism as the way of directing the 'affects' away from the malaise of their post-historical ennui.

Nihilism is the limit of sense: the ultimate self-reference, and hence 'failure' of every act. Nietzsche, like Hegel, emphasised that to consider the moments or aspects within a whole of affects, action, and goals is to distort reality for the sake of intelligibility. In fact, the 'origin' of an act can be found in the 'end,' or in that which it anticipates; the 'means' are nothing without

⁴⁸ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 238.

reference to the before and after states of the self which acts. Nietzsche writes: "An action is never caused by a purpose; . . . purpose and means are interpretations whereby certain points in an event are emphasized and selected at the expense of other points."⁴⁹ "Event" describes the whole process, in Nietzsche's sense of pathos. Values emerge from the event: they do not cause the event. Nietzsche believes that the contrary belief is the result of a confusion of affect with effect: the affect is will to power, the effect is the evaluation after the fact. For him, values as causes is a metaphysical reversal.⁵⁰ The action is affirmed by the value; a kind of life shows itself through the values which emerge from its activity. Nietzsche writes: "'How should one act?' is not a cause but an effect. Morality follows, the ideal comes at the end."⁵¹ For Nietzsche, morality is the "becoming-conscious of the values by which one acts,"⁵² and, as Hegel observed, the moment of the rise to consciousness is the moment of the decline of the act. So values are the effect of action, the affirmation and not the cause of a kind of life.

Transvaluation

Transvaluation is, for Nietzsche, the re-founding of values in proper perspective. To perceive the real nature

49 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 351.

50 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 308.

51 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 228.

52 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 228.

of evaluation is to engage in movement between modes of existence as temporary resting points for the mind's eye. For Nietzsche, perspective is the rootedness and also the 'outer'-directedness of the human self in life. Heidegger defines Nietzsche's perspectivism as follows: "The essence of value lies in its being a point-of-view. Value means that upon which the eye is fixed."⁵³ A perspective in itself, having its origin in a unique self-consciousness, is necessarily only one among many, and therefore not invariable, which was the traditional emphasis of the truth of values. But all perspectives project a common object, which is life, or the whole, or Being. Herein lies the truth of transvalued values: that the multiplicity of perspectives affirms a single object, but one which is thereby multiple in its variations within. A limited infinite is what is indicated, or traced from within, by Nietzsche, since he forswears the now-impossible task of rising to truth in a remote (transcendental) or wider (Hegelian) perspective. Alexander Nehamas describes perspectivism as "Nietzsche's famous insistence that every view is only one among many possible interpretations, his own views, particularly this very one, included."⁵⁴ Nietzsche emphasises what Hegel would call the particular, because this is what one can do: speech about the whole is so all-inclusive, leaving only 'nothing' out of account,

⁵³ Heidegger, "Word of Nietzsche," Question Concerning Technology, p. 71.

⁵⁴ Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985). p. 1.

that it amounts to silence. So the self as the 'origin' of perspective must be left to imply the whole. We are to 'bear the burden' of the consequences of a multiplicity of selves in the one world. Perspective is nothing without the affirming self, but it is also nothing without the context affirmed.

One of Nietzsche's own definitions of perspectivism can be found in The Will to Power: "All evaluation is made from a definite perspective: that of the preservation of the individual, a community, a race, a state, a church, a faith, a culture."⁵⁵ Like Hegel, if we can consider an evaluation as something the individual does about his surroundings, we can also consider it as something the surroundings do through the individual. But Nietzsche's arguments rail against Hegelian closure: the universal perspective is in fact a danger called nihilism. We can only stave off such a living death by tragedy, by affirming the limitations of the self: its temporal mortality and its spatial isolation. Nietzsche's 'step back' is in fact a step within.

Nietzsche denies the possibility of truth as the attainment of knowledge of things-in-themselves, but he does assert the possibility of knowledge about things. Truth is no longer eternal substance, but eternal novelty: it is speech about the infinitely varied relations within the limited substance of Being. The 'thing itself,' and the person-in-himself, are both necessary fictions for

⁵⁵ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 149.

knowledge to be possible, but what is 'essential' is perspective. Truth describes 'movement' from one pole to another, the reciprocating and influencing relatedness of parts within a whole. Truth is mutual recognition. Nietzsche expresses the requirement for perspective to truth as follows:

The biggest fable of all is the fable of knowledge. One would like to know what things-in-themselves are; but behold, there are no things-in-themselves! But even supposing there were an in itself, an unconditioned thing, it would for that very reason be unknowable! . . . Coming to know means 'to place oneself in a conditional relation to something.'⁵⁶

The conclusion that there are no things-in-themselves is the end of history. To emphasise objects as projections of a thing called the self is a distortion which Nietzsche makes for the sake of intelligibility. Nietzsche's immoderation is only argued for by contrasting it to the nihilism of post-historical Wisdom. He injects an overabundant exuberance into the 'conditional relation of things' to project a beyond within life, which is the possibility for meaning-creating activity left open to us by Hegel in the post-historical epoch.

The truth which emerges from this kind of activity and evaluation consists of the persistence of the object, or the continuity of the world, or the universal context which we all share. Truth is not found in this object, but rather, it is found in referring to this object, through our 'conditional relation' to it. The various and even

⁵⁶ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 301.

contradictory nature of these truth-references is not proof of the falsity of reality, but instead, it is an affirmation of its actual nature: reality is a whole which is perhaps infinitely diverse---richly differentiated through its components, which are individual human self-consciousnesses. Alexander Nehamas puts Nietzsche's notion of 'the real' as follows: "Reality is not something behind appearance but simply the totality of these various arrangements."⁵⁷ The world is a world of appearance, and because it is nothing but a world of appearance, we cannot get above it or behind it through a metaphysical move: this is nihilism. But nor can we any longer make the Hegelian move of following the development of this appearance, since the 'totality of the various arrangements,' the universality and homogeneity of pure mediation, is upon us.

Nietzsche chooses not to emphasise the notion of truth in his philosophy, but this is not because he believes it does not exist; it does, as a description of one's contact with reality, of one's 'endurance' of the real. But the notion of truth has been tied up for so long with the other-worldly beyond, with the faith in a fixed object, that he feels this stigma is all but irremovable. And so, as Stephen Houlgate writes concerning Nietzsche: "His goal is no longer simply to state in propositions what he holds to be true, but rather to promote and embody a strong, expressive mode of being."⁵⁸ The quality or degree of

⁵⁷ Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature, pp. 45-46.

⁵⁸ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, pp. 76-77.

strength of one's relatedness to Being, and not the 'either-or,' 'true-false' nature of this relation, is what is important for Nietzsche. This is because the notion of truth is too attached to the notion of the in-itself, to the other-world; Nietzsche writes: "The concept 'truth' is nonsensical. The entire domain of 'true-false' applies only to relations, not to an 'in-itself.'"⁵⁹ The locus of truth shifts, by transvaluation, from the object-in-itself to the moment of relation. All values, even other-worldly values, are in fact the result of perspective, but with the end of history, and with Nietzsche, evaluation becomes authentic: one knows that one is affirming a relation, 'giving name' to a process, when one engages in evaluation, and has lost the false belief that one is aspiring to a beyond which is removed from one's actual existence. Nietzsche writes in The Will to Power:

From the standpoint of morality, the world is false. But to the extent that morality itself is a part of this world, morality is false. Will to truth is a making firm, a making true and durable, an abolition of the false character of things, a reinterpretation of it into beings. 'Truth' is therefore not something there, that might be found or discovered---but something that must be created and that gives a name to a process, or rather to a will to overcome that has in itself no end.⁶⁰

What Nietzsche calls the 'reinterpretation of it into beings' is the very necessary activity of making distinctions within Being. Paradoxically, Being as a whole is affirmed when falsifications are made within it, when

⁵⁹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 334.

⁶⁰ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 298.

'beings' or discrete elements are isolated within it, and the rest excluded from consideration, all for the sake of knowledge, and for the self-consciousness of Being through the thinking of self-conscious humans within it. Truth rests on nihilism because in-itself it is a nothing, wholly dependent on what are taken to be subjects and objects for its sake. Like Hegel, Nietzsche argues that claims of truth are meaningless: only active engagement, following the movement of thought, reveals circumstantially the nature of reality.

Most importantly for Nietzsche, perspectivism returns the essence of evaluation to the living subject, and thereby makes truth something essential to man, rather than removed from him. The over-emphasis on the 'objective spirit,' which results in nihilism, is corrected by Nietzsche by this transvaluation. He finds that it is not the case that values ought to come from a definite and defining perspective, but instead that all values do in fact arise in this way. This revelation Nietzsche finds invigorating, because it restores the creativity and spontaneity of human subjects to the hitherto lifeless process of evaluation. Nietzsche writes: "Every centre of force---and not only man---construes all the rest of the world from its own viewpoint, i.e., measures, feels, forms, according to its own force."⁶¹ So not only living subjects ---human beings---find their essentiality through transvaluation, but also the living object: Nietzsche's life-as-

⁶¹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 339.

context, or Hegel's Being which is higher yet the same.

The will to difference, as against the will to unity, is the essential, life-appreciative force, according to Nietzsche. The ability of ontological will to power to divide against itself is the concrete result of history: the achievement as a result of which 'the whole' is higher, yet the same. As Hegel has shown, Being is a whole which is a unity, and this can only be known by an exhaustive exploration of it from within. Being is 'put to the torture' of being broken up into subjects and objects so that it may reveal itself, to itself. Nietzsche is making a more modest claim than that of 'truth': beliefs are useful fictions because they serve life; we elevate them only because we want to make the world intelligible. We must behave as if the part of the whole under consideration is really distinct, when it is---in the end---inseparable from the universe. We do this to avoid the nihilism of 'real truth': ultimate self-reference. And so, Nietzsche writes in Will to Power: "A belief can be a condition of life and nonetheless be false."⁶² It is false in the sense that a belief wilfully leaves out from consideration most of the case (Being), so that some particular aspect (a being) stands out in relief, and is thereby known. The necessity of beliefs to life means that there is some criterion to evaluation higher than truthfulness; as Nietzsche writes in Beyond Good and Evil: "For all the value that the true, the truthful, the selfless may

⁶² Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 268.

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."⁶³ The higher need of evaluation is its dependence on the tension between clarity and opacity, between revealing and veiling the world. If truth is contact with reality, our 'pure mediation,' then 'untruth' is the break in this contact: our desires which are our 'thrown projects' into the future. This wider perspective of evaluation goes beyond the mere will to truth, and is not without its difficulties: "To recognize untruth as a condition of life---that certainly means resisting accustomed value feelings in a dangerous way."⁶⁴ Nietzsche thus recognises that the 'as if' of a variegated world is a falsification of actual unity which is essential to life, making it humane and multifarious, and man as an instance of life someone-in-particular.

According to Nietzsche, values are not merely truth-references: because they are affirmations of a kind of life, they involve both truth and falsehood, or both knowledge and ignorance. He writes in Will to Power:

Knowledge and wisdom in themselves have no value; no more than goodness: one must first be in possession of the goal from which these qualities derive their value or nonvalue---there could be a goal in the light of which great knowledge might represent a great disvalue (if, for instance, a high degree of deception were one of the pre-requisites of the enhancement of life; likewise if goodness were perhaps able to paralyse and discourage the springs of the great longing)---⁶⁵

⁶³ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 10.

⁶⁴ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 12.

⁶⁵ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 141.

Knowledge and wisdom in themselves have no value because they represent rational and reflective satisfaction, and therefore they posit no future, and lead to no action. They therefore are not values: in themselves, they lack the 'from-to' directedness which is the essence of evaluation. The 'goal from which these qualities derive their value or nonvalue' is the kind of life, or the will to power, which posits and is posited by historical knowledge and wisdom.

Nietzsche emphasises the need for falsehood in evaluation because he wants to make possible strong action. As we have seen with Hegel, strong action requires the feeling of involvement in process, and this, in turn, requires a certain amount of ignorance about ultimate goals, and one's 'true' place in the scheme of things. Just as the thought ends the action, so too must an action end the thought; if wisdom marks the decline of strong action, then action marks the decline of reflection---but the consequence of action will, upon subsequent reflection, be a more experienced, wider, or higher, human self. Nietzsche writes: "Once the decision has been made, close your ear even to the best counterargument: sign of a strong character. Thus an occasional will to stupidity."⁶⁶ Action is the limit of knowledge---it is always a foray made in ignorance: beyond the bounds of the known, into the unknown. Action requires an object, man requires a beyond to his immediate self. This is at hand in man's context, in mediated life: the beyond is a beyond within life. But the 'as if' character

⁶⁶ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 84.

of the beyond within life depends on falsifications made for action to be possible. As Alexander Nehamas writes, ignorance is as essential to action as knowledge:

We do not, and cannot, begin (or end) with 'all the data.' This is an incoherent desire and an impossible goal. 'To grasp everything' would be to do away with all perspective relations, it would mean to grasp nothing, to misapprehend the nature of knowledge. If we are ever to begin a practice or an inquiry we must, and must want to, leave unasked indefinitely many questions about the world.⁶⁷

Nietzsche has great difficulty asserting his desire for the recovery of strong action because, with the manifest end of history, ignorance is inauthentic. This is why one must wilfully 'close one's ears to the best counterargument.' End of history wisdom is not possession of 'all the data,' but the assurance that we have the structures at hand which make all the data available for us. As David Kolb writes: "There may be infinite amounts of empirical detail to be studied, but there are no different overall structures of time and space or of history and the state. Otherwise the self-transparency of spirit would be compromised. In an important sense, Hegel's world is finite."⁶⁸ Nietzsche must avoid the trap of nihilism set by the combination of the self-transparency and the finitude of Being, which is the legacy of Hegel. Therefore, he must make an appeal to ignorance, but one not dependent on either our metaphysical inadequacy on the dualist view or on our dialectical incompleteness on the historicist Hegelian view. He finds

67 Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature, p. 49.

68 Kolb, Critique of Pure Modernity, p. 91.

it to be immanent in will to power as its fatefulness, and he expresses this at its extreme in the doctrine of the eternal recurrence.

Nietzsche's perspectivism means that the task of overcoming nihilism is the task of transvaluation. Finding real values to overcome nihilism is not achieved by changing merely the object of the search, from a beyond which has failed to ground, absolutely, our values, to a better, 'truer' world. Nor is it waiting upon a further unveiling of a limitless context. Perspectivism 'diminishes' the subject to radical situation in a world of appearance, but also 'expands' the subject by its over-extension within this milieu. Transvaluation changes the emphasis of evaluation from discovery to evaluation. In terms of nihilism, this is the movement from the passive nihilism of transcendent values, to the active nihilism of Hegel's co-terminous historical dialectic of thought and action, through to Nietzsche's uplifting of nihilism to tragedy by setting will to power within the horizon of eternal recurrence. As Gilles Deleuze writes, transvaluation means, for Nietzsche, "not a change of values, but a change in the element from which the value of values derives. Appreciation instead of depreciation, affirmation as will to power, will as affirmative will."⁶⁹

Nietzsche posits, with admitted arbitrariness, 'life' as the origin of ontological will to power, because this perspective most successfully illuminates the 'natural'

⁶⁹ Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, p. 171.

desire of man to discover what he believed to be hidden: his belongingness in the world, which desire embarked him upon the historical enterprise of the development of reason. Reason, understood in this way, belongs to life as its revelation, as its self-understanding. Nietzsche's Dionysian spirit is the progenitor of the Apollonian. His radical critique exposes this more fundamental grounding of life and philosophy. Ofelia Schutte writes, in Beyond Nihilism: "His advances over nihilism are rooted in the notion that there is no need to invent a more perfect form of life (as in the notion of an afterlife) since life already has sufficient meaning and value. The Dionysian struggle against the Socratic approach to existence is based on the view that reason has exceeded its role when it purports to define the meaning of life in terms of reason itself."⁷⁰ In fact, reason is a manifestation of a kind of life: for Hegel, this was Spirit, or the coming-to-self-consciousness of all things; for Nietzsche, the manifestation of a kind of life is will to power, the appearance of reason only one among many.

Nietzsche attacks the result of reason where that result is an unauthentic culture, an alienated world-view, homelessness and dislocation. He does not attack reason itself, or claim that its exercise inevitably alienates man from his world. But at the core of reason, as it has developed in history, there lies a pre-rational desire: the

⁷⁰ Ofelia Schutte, Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche Without Masks. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). p. 189.

urge for truth. And Nietzsche argues that this urge in fact depreciates life. By its search for the essence of life, the urge to truth has 'discovered' that life is appearance. Human life becomes phenomenal, and this is seen as a disvalue when compared to what was expected. This is why Nietzsche welcomes post-historical nihilism, but at the same time sees it as inadequate. Instead of seeking refuge in unreason, he sees his task in turning reason to the service of life, to found life anew, and give it a new origin. Only in this way can one avoid seeing the essential result of history as a colossal disappointment. He acknowledges that his will to power, his urge to the increase of life, is pre-rational like the historical urge for truth. The 'cause' of will to power cannot be reason; one is not compelled by the dictates of reason to embark on his programme. The cause of this new founding and new direction, Nietzsche hopes, will be will to power itself, the over-abundance of life which will use reason as a tool, instead of serve it as a master. Nietzsche wants to make the nihilism of reason in history very present to the modern consciousness, but he hopes that our reaction to this truth will be as to a Greek tragedy: rather than despair, one will be uplifted---confidence in one's own vivacity will prompt one to undertake the necessary transvaluation. Johan Goudsblom writes:

For all his criticism of contemporary ideals, Nietzsche remains enough of a man of culture not to want simply a 'return to nature.' What he is looking for is the way back to a purified culture which does not generate inauthenticity, which confirms life rather than denying it, which

demands no sacrifices of the reason or the intellect but promotes the free development of all the faculties.⁷¹

The decision to advance life-affirming values and to attack life-depreciating ones does not eliminate nihilism. It cannot do so, because the 'reasons' for both value systems---true values and life values---are rationally equivalent. Reason itself is a process, and a process, in itself, is nothing. Only reference to origins and goals reveals meaning: only the immanent critique makes sense. The 'origin' of history in the desire to discover essences, to find the truth, has resulted in the realisation of reason. But this genesis is a mythical beginning: there is no reason for reason, there is just a desire for reason, the urge for truth. Nietzsche amplifies Hegel's conclusion that the whole metaphysical enterprise through history is nothing but a grand reflection: an exhaustive, through and through self-reference. But instead of seeking withdrawal or escape from this 'manifest destiny,' which is recourse to nihilism, Nietzsche advocates tragic affirmation: a combination of acceptance, conceived as 'bearing the greatest burden,' and directing the over-full force of life to transform Being's ultimate self-reference into something 'higher yet the same.'

Strictly by the principles of reason one cannot prefer one course over the other. This equivalence of reasons, as has been argued, is nihilism. So nihilism is not eliminated by Nietzsche, but perhaps it is overcome. Nihilism is

⁷¹ Goudsblom, Nihilism and Culture, p. 176.

constantly present to reason: the revelation of everything brings with it nothing. Nihilism is found in the two metaphors of the space between and the space outside. There is always a gap between desire and its satisfaction: that gap is the means by which it is satisfied. There is always a gap between a thing and its significance: that gap is the speech which reveals the thing and is revealed by that thing. There is always a gap between an act and its consequences: that gap is its temporal context (history) and its spatial context (community). This gap is where meaning is 'found': to value is to 'build bridges.' But in itself, the gap is a nothingness. To strive for value divorced from its context is therefore to engage in nihilism. The goal of reason is to strive for unity of subject-mediation-object. The unifying activity of reason is to satisfy, to reveal, and to complete the appearance of Being. But the persistence of 'life' in pre-rational desires is Nietzsche's evidence against the passive reflectivity of Hegel's on-going dialectic. Nietzsche's hope is in the failure of reason: its incapacity with respect to nihilism. Reason as logos is limited by life as ekstasis, and this limit, even if it is directly unspeakable, confounds nihilism.

Perspectivism, merely as moral subjectivism, is nihilism. Hegel's move away from this was to include Reason as subject. Nietzsche must reflect upon the whole of this movement as a completed thing, and he returns, as does Hegel, to the self, but no longer as a simple subject.

The self is only different if it is more of the same. Hegel has shown that the self now has immanent power, 'actual' and not 'abstract' possibility, but that it did not get this from elsewhere. Nietzsche's reflection upon this grand historical consequence leads him to posit will to power 'within' eternal recurrence as its implied horizon: its limit which does not limit.

Nihilism is the danger which lies in extremes. The first is absolute subservience to the 'objective spirit.' Should we achieve monistic unity with our world, and be mystically absorbed in the object of our contemplation, then we would cease to be subjects, and the world would cease to be our object. The unity of which we would be a part would be monolithic: it would be unspeakable, unknowable, and inconsequential because would contain no mediation, no relation of parts within it. Such a condition is meaningless because the One is not related to anything else; outside it there is nothing, so if it is related to anything 'other' then it is related to nothing. It is also meaningless because it has no qualities apart from its being: it has no aspects, no differentiations within it. Absolute unity is therefore a condition of nihilism, a condition of reason without life. To consider, similarly, the moment of unrealised desire: Absolute particularity, or atomistic differentiation, is also a condition of nihilism for the above reasons. Parts exist, but they are unrelated, and there is no connectedness of elements, no whole of which they are parts. This is a condition of life

without reason. Nihilism exists, then, in each moment of the dialectic considered exclusively, or in itself. Values exist in perspective, or in the movement of thought from subject, through mediation, to object.

Values are dependent upon limits, and the end of history reveals not that limits do not exist, but that they exist in nothing. The failure of Reason, or speech and action, in the face of the nihilism which is essential to a meaningful world, means that values can never be defined, but can only be demonstrated. Being is infused with and surrounded by nothing: the whole is defined negatively. This is the great 'distortion' which is the 'truth' of history for Nietzsche, and he is led to this by Hegel's notion of Being as Becoming, as negated Being. This is why nihilism is a thing to be overcome, and not a thing to be eliminated. This is done by what Nietzsche sees as the proper situation of perspective: its 'origin' is the self, imbued with limitless will to power, but limited by its tragic milieu of eternal recurrence. The enormous capacity of the self to expand and increase is ultimately thwarted by the impossibility of becoming other. As Stanley Rosen writes in his book Nihilism:

As a microcosm, man possesses the capacity to 'transcend' difference by a vision of unity, but this transcendence is constantly being suppressed by the difference it encompasses. To be a man is to be constantly falling apart and growing back together again. This means that nihilism is a perpetual danger, rooted in the very divisions which make speech, thought, and so completeness possible.⁷²

⁷² Rosen, Nihilism, p. 197.

Hegel does succeed in giving a wholly rational speech, but, nevertheless, there is a perceived failure of Hegelian closure with respect to something which was never within its terms of reference. The limit of Hegel's discourse was always nothing, always the unspeakable, nonsensical 'in-itself' of negation, 'within' and 'without' the whole. It is the immoderation of expectations compared to results which has put the end of history in the lap of nihilism: the desire to speak the unspeakable, to include the utterly alien. It is ironic but true that, as Rosen observes, "man is that paradoxical being, unique so far as we know, who strives for a perfection which, if attained, would altogether deprive him of his nature."⁷³

The difficulty for Nietzsche is that although remote, alienated values may be attacked, even life-affirming values, in order to be appreciative, must in some sense be 'beyond' the life they measure. Distinctions between things and their worth, act and their significance, must persist. What Nietzsche attempts to elaborate is a beyond which is not an outside, to project a non-metaphysical distance within which life has meaning. That he attempts to do so is a sign that he is not a nihilist in the radical sense: he wishes to salvage reason and authentic culture from the wreck of metaphysics.

Authentic evaluation avoids nihilism when it appreciates life. Nietzsche wants to do this by connecting

⁷³ Rosen, Nihilism, p. 214.

our value-feelings with affirmative will to power. At work in the whole articulated by Hegel is both the urge to achieve unity and the urge to introduce difference. Nietzsche's 'everything' more consciously acknowledges 'nothing' as well, and gives content to that healthy ambivalence which is the only remedy to nihilism. Rosen writes: "Human existence is a harmony of desire and speech, or of union with and distance from things."⁷⁴ Man will continue to strive for unity and completeness, but he can never do so immediately. But Nietzsche's objection is that the resultant mediation will never be as 'pure' as Hegel imagined, and that this is actually a good thing. There is nothing between ourselves and our objects, and there is also nothing outside the whole of these relations. But this nothing is not a simple absence of a thing: as Hegel has shown, it is the negation of the immediacy of all things. This is the lesson of the end of history which Nietzsche took so completely to heart.

"One cannot create except by forgetting the authority of the past; at the same time, one must remember how to create, or what it means to be a creator, and therefore a certain memory of the past is indispensable. In a healthy or non-nihilistic society, the discontinuity of remembering and forgetting is overcome by tradition."⁷⁵ The beyond of values is within life through its present and available history. A history of acts and their consequences is the

⁷⁴ Rosen, Nihilism, p. 213.

⁷⁵ Rosen, Nihilism, p. 230.

context for present action. This forum, the horizon of meaning, is the fatedness of our situation. In this sense, it is the 'fixed' reference from which the future is constructed. Hence Nietzsche's amor fati, his 'willing that it have been so.' What is beyond the limit of the control of the self is seen as fate. Despite the fact that there is 'nothing' which is actually inaccessible, at the same time there appears to be 'something' which is beyond the capacity of 'over-abundant' will to power. It is the singular and temporal 'origin' in the self which implies the presence of a limit, and Nietzsche describes this horizon as fate. This tragic dimension of freedom is the beyond within life. Fate constantly deals up the consequences of past action, providing "the unending dialectic of the human psyche as desire articulated by speech."⁷⁶ The question is not, therefore, "from where do values come?", because values continually emerge as the projected realization of desires. What they project, though, is not another world, but a future, a possibility, ultimately inaccessible as 'fate' only because of the 'failures' of our mortality and our isolation. Heidegger writes: "Nietzsche recognizes that despite the devaluing for the world of the highest values hitherto, the world itself remains; and he recognizes that, above all, the world, become valueless, presses inevitably on toward a new positing of values."⁷⁷ This dialectic gives rise to authentic culture: "By paying heed

⁷⁶ Rosen, Nihilism, p. 233.

⁷⁷ Heidegger, "Word of Nietzsche," Question Concerning Technology, p. 67.

heed to vital impulses or cherished cultural commands one vanquishes the nihilist problematic. One finds a solution but no answer; the theory is not refuted."⁷⁸ Because values are a cultural projection, and not merely an individual one, the community provides a different kind of object for the acting self, one which is wholly human, yet beyond the capacity of one individual to control: it is the beyond within life. For Nietzsche, the Overman is heroic because he articulates a peoples's culture, creating from it higher goals. Such goals are growth: a projection out of life to a higher, but re-confirming (and so, ultimately reflective) state of affairs. The will to power is therefore not political domination, (as Heidegger observes, "the essence of overman is no license for the frenzy of self-will"⁷⁹) but the articulation of wider, more abundant, more exuberant life: a quantitative and qualitative increase in the intensity of our experience of reality.

The Higher Man

For Nietzsche, meaning is a way and not an end. He shows this through a metaphor in Thus Spoke Zarathustra: "Man is a rope tied between beast and overman---a rope over an abyss. A dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking back, a dangerous shuddering and stopping. What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not an end: what can be

⁷⁸ Goudsblom, Nihilism and Culture, p. 195.

⁷⁹ Heidegger, "Word of Nietzsche," Question Concerning Technology, p. 98.

loved in man is that he is an overture and a going under."⁸⁰
The abyss he refers to here is nihilism---that into which man will fall should he lose his balance, his poise, his tension: should he forget his nature as a between. The rope, or more precisely the tension in the rope, is meaning ---it is and gives man's directedness; it is and gives him right relation with respect to origins and destinations. And the overman is what provides a new telos, a beyond and an end which anchors our going-across, which is to say that it is a foundation of our meaning. The other foundation is our past---another beyond, yet still one wholly within life. It is for these reasons that Nietzsche writes that "the overman is the meaning of the earth."⁸¹

Dionysian philosophy recovers what Apollonian philosophy abandoned when it commenced the history of reason, when it began to satisfy the urge for truth and to 'work out' reason in human life. Nietzsche's Overman gives substance to the Hegelian Sage: the Sage is wise and free, but the Overman knows how to love life: "There are things that the higher man does not know how to do: to laugh, to play and to dance. To laugh is to affirm life, even the suffering in life. To play is to affirm chance and the necessity of chance. To dance is to affirm becoming and the being of becoming."⁸²

80 Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, in The Portable Nietzsche, edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Viking Press, Inc., 1954). pp. 126-7.

81 Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 125.

82 Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, p. 170.

The Overman re-engages in vital action, through his mastery of tradition---what Rosen calls the 'discontinuity of remembering and forgetting.' End of history wisdom allows one to 'recall the spirits'---and so to perceive oneself as a result; but also to realise one's freedom to project a future---and so to perceive oneself as a means to the 'higher man': the object of growth in and of oneself. There are aspects of the dialectic, even when 're-played' at the end of history, which retain their vital contact with reality, their expanding power over life. These Nietzsche affirms as 'life,' 'chance,' and 'becoming,' according to Deleuze, or as 'flux,' 'multiplicity,' and 'change,' according to Houlgate. All possibilities are realised through the dialectic, but not all have been lived through by man. Nietzsche returns the activity of reconfiguration, the 'eternal novelty' of the end of history, to the feeling of strong action, but without its now-inauthentic transcendence and historicism. The 'self' injects spontaneity, as it is essentially chaotic: a determinate nothingness. Mediation is putting-in-perspective, the ordering activity of Reason. And the beyond-within-life is non-metaphysical objective 'realm': the community and the future as the 'thrown project' of will to power, the affirmation and growth of the self through which it is both situated and elevated.

For Nietzsche, 'laughter, play, and dance' is a way to the affirmation of life. In the light of Hegel's end of history, it is the excess in reflection, through which

Being 'transcends' the circle of its phenomenological self-identity. These inarticulate affirmations are means by which the rationally complete self can grow: through this kind of activity, man at the end of history projects and becomes a higher man.

The higher man is the essential nature of the self---not all selves, but only selves which grow, which expand, which manifest will to power. Similar to Hegel, the subject finds itself in its object: both philosophers are principally concerned with subjects in movement, in transition to higher states of being. Both philosophers emphasise 'higher' as more rather than other. Nietzsche states that the higher man 'gives direction': the example of his life lifts self-consciousness beyond simple self-identity, but not so far as to overstep the precipice of nihilism. He writes, in Will to Power: "Order of rank: He who determines values and directs the will of millennia by giving direction to the highest natures is the highest man."⁸³ Man's own projection of the future, that state of being to which he aspires, is a goal for himself, and so his higher nature is his essential self.

This higher man is further a goal for others, an example for those not imbued with the same 'degree of power.' The context of what Nietzsche calls 'the herd' is a meaning-giving horizon---greater situation for the manifestation of will to power. The higher man is a goal

⁸³ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 519.

for himself, and a goal for others: "The 'higher nature' of the great man lies in being different, in incommunicability, in distance of rank, not in an effect of any kind---even if he made the whole globe tremble."⁸⁴ So meaning does not lie in any effect, in what the higher man does, but rather in what he is---relative to others. Values are a potential, a possibility, and a capability.

'The herd' is also the context out of which the higher man arises. It is one of the higher man's burdens, towards which he must demonstrate his amor fati. The herd is as essential to the higher man's nature as is his future-possibility in the Overman. So Nietzsche does not aspire to elevate all men, as this erosion of difference would expose the nihilistic dangers of immediacy and simple self-identity. He writes: "Not to make men 'better' . . . but to create conditions that require stronger men."⁸⁵ When the herd is an object for itself, nihilism is the result. This, in the light of Hegel, is stagnation in the end of history moment: the fatigue of freedom merely re-affirming itself, without the worthy object of a desired future. In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche writes:

This degeneration and diminution of man into the perfect herd animal (or, as they say, to the man of the 'free society'), this animalization of man into the dwarf animal of equal rights and claims, is possible, there is no doubt of it. Anyone who has once thought through this possibility to the end knows one kind of nausea that other men don't know---but perhaps also a new task!⁸⁶

84 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 468.

85 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 513.

86 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 118.

This new task is the transvaluation of all values: this is the beyond within life, which, with reference to the herd, is the higher man. The tension between the way in which man is the same as his kind (the equality of free individuality) and the way in which he is different from others (the rich variation in the ways in which freedom is made manifest) is the substance of meaning. Nietzsche argues that the higher man seizes upon this tension most strongly, and grasps most truly the more-and-less nature of meaningful life. He writes: "I believe that it is precisely through the presence of opposites and the feelings they occasion that the great man, the bow with the great tension, develops."⁸⁷ More than Hegel, Nietzsche stresses difference and opposition, because self-consciousness---the realised metaphysical project---is his starting point. Rather than aspire to the herd as an ideal, then, Nietzsche proclaims the Overman from out of the herd. For him, man in a state of mutual recognition (the equality of free individuality) is no longer a goal, but the origin of a new goal: the higher man. He writes, in Will to Power:

In opposition to this dwarfing and adaptation of man to a specialized utility, a reverse movement is needed---the production of a synthetic, summarizing, justifying man for whose existence this transformation of mankind into a machine is a precondition, as a base on which he can invent his higher form of being.⁸⁸

Nietzsche inherits the problem set by Hegel, to turn the ultimate dialectical synthesis---self-conscious humanity

⁸⁷ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 507.

⁸⁸ Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 463-464.

---into a new subject, a 'precondition', a not-merely-self-referencing force whose instability forces movement in a new dialectic. For Nietzsche, the man who is merely a citizen of the universal and homogeneous state is a herd animal. What he seeks to do is to give content to the 'eternal novelty' of the post-historical epoch, and this is his 'arrow of longing for the overman,' or the projection of the higher man: a beyond within life.

That the higher man is a beyond within life is shown by Nietzsche's continued use of words such as 'higher,' 'over,' or 'super.' Only situated in context do these terms have vital force, and therefore meaning. The essence of the higher man does not lie in his 'transcendence,' his 'autonomy,' or any kind of alien nature which is removed from the whole which is life. Being is elevated, but not essentially changed---this is Nietzsche's lesson as well as Hegel's. The meaning of things is not found in simple self-reference, nor in any kind of other-reference. An 'aristocracy' which emerges from differences in degrees of power, in zest for life, is Nietzsche's ideal. He writes: "Their [the aristocracy's] fundamental faith simply has to be that society must not exist for society's sake but only as the foundation and scaffolding on which a choice type of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and to a higher state of being."⁸⁹ So equality, for Nietzsche, is a matter of peerage, the recognition of equal standing---it cannot be said to be a fundamental principle. He writes,

⁸⁹ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 202.

in Will to Power: "Once one has achieved a certain degree of independence, one wants more: people arrange themselves according to their degree of force: the individual no longer simply supposes himself the equal of others, he seeks his equals---he distinguishes himself from others."⁹⁰ Nietzsche accepts Hegel's notion of mutual recognition, but he doubts and mistrusts its universality and homogeneity.

The fundamental principle which results in equality among peers is will to power. When the self manifests itself in a wider context, when it imposes its nature on 'the world,' then it raises itself to a 'higher state of being.' To do this is to value, to project meaning. One is 'equal' only with those others who manifest the same degree of life, the same will to power. Nietzsche writes that a genius is "one who either begets or gives birth, taking both terms in their most elevated sense."⁹¹ Greatness lies in the potential, and not so much in the act---Nietzsche recognises that everything is already rationally present within Being. To 'beget' or to 'give birth' is simply to show outwardly the true nature of the inner self. The great man is a microcosm of Being as a whole---in this way he is the 'meaning of the earth,' as Nietzsche describes the Overman. In Beyond Good and Evil, he writes: "'Precisely this shall be called greatness: being capable of being as manifold as whole, as ample as full.'"⁹² Nietzsche's comment on 'greatness' here is the very thought

90 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 125.

91 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 412.

92 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 139.

which Hegel articulates regarding Being as a whole: it is the content of end of history wisdom. The way in which Being is higher at the end of history is that it is a realised and differentiated unity; the higher man is 'higher' because he embodies this.

The higher man is true to nature when he commands, when he wills a change, when he projects values. Nietzsche writes: "In a person, for example, who is called and made to command, self-denial and modest self-effacement would not be a virtue but the waste of a virtue: thus it seems to me."⁹³ To live authentically is 'the Good,' according to Nietzsche, as he writes in Will to Power: "There is nothing better than what is good---and good is having some ability and using that to create, Tüchtigkeit or virtù in the Italian Renaissance sense."⁹⁴ An 'ability' is the merely subjective side of man's 'higher' nature. What is needed further is 'to create.' The coupling of 'ability' with 'creation' links fate with freedom. The lesson of the end of history is that there is nothing beyond one's ability a priori, but the lesson of 'life' is that the self is a fatally flawed vessel for the burden of limitless capacity.

The activity of the Nietzsche's higher man is very much akin to that of Hegel's Sage. Both are types of humanity which project values out of themselves; Nietzsche writes: "Genuine philosophers . . . are commanders and legislators."⁹⁵ Both the higher man and the Sage embody the

93 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 149.

94 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 48.

95 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 136.

qualities each philosopher most admires: for Nietzsche, the higher man embodies will to power---the expanding, creative force of life; for Hegel, the Sage embodies reflective wisdom---the comprehension of world history. Nietzsche's notion of the 'genuine philosopher'---as opposed to the 'other-worldly philosopher,' for whom he has nothing but contempt---can be seen as a connecting term here. In this passage from Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche is effectively describing the end of history type of humanity: that person for whom all possibilities are finally 'at hand.' He writes:

Perhaps he himself [the genuine philosopher] must have been critic and sceptic and dogmatist and historian and also poet and collector and traveler and solver of riddles and moralist and seer and 'free spirit' and almost everything in order to pass through the whole range of human values and value feelings and to be able to see with many different eyes and consciences, from a height and into every distance, from the depths into every height, from a nook into every expanse. But all these are merely preconditions of his task: this task demands something different---it demands that he create values.⁹⁶

In other words, the genuine philosopher is no longer immersed in a process: his ability to reflect back upon the whole of history enables him to pick and choose, to define himself, or the anchor of 'self' within perspective. Ontological will to power functions, for Nietzsche, much as does ontological Reason, for Hegel. As we have seen, Reason is, for Hegel, both a faculty of human minds which is enhanced by progressive appropriation of the world, and a description of that world Mind which enhances itself by

⁹⁶ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, pp. 135-136.

'working out' its differences within itself. The will to power works in much the same way for Nietzsche. Both philosophers see 'the world' is a world posited, a world inferred. Thought is indistinguishable from its object in any absolute sense. In the end, philosophy is much a cause as it is an effect of its presumed object. Nietzsche writes: "It [philosophy] always creates the world in its own image; it cannot do otherwise. Philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the 'creation of the world,' to the causa prima."⁹⁷ We can only understand a world which is liable to understanding, which means that, as Nietzsche writes, "we can comprehend only a world that we ourselves have made."⁹⁸

This does not mean that our object, the world, is something wholly 'made up,' that it is nothing but a fiction for capricious belief. This is Nietzsche's 'abyss' of nihilism, seen when ultimate self-reference is perceived as 'simple.' A belief can only be true when it draws strength or sustaining power from its contact with reality or life. And only if that reality or life is a unity---despite its multitudinous variations within---can truth be 'objective' (i.e., not wholly dependent on discrete subjects). The 'feeling' of strength in a belief is not proof of its truth. Nietzsche makes it clear that this feeling or 'happiness' is merely reflective proof of something more fundamental: the contact of a belief with ontological will

⁹⁷ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 16.

⁹⁸ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 272.

to power. He writes: "'No matter how strongly a thing may be believed, strength of belief is no criterion of truth.' But what is truth? Perhaps a kind of belief that has become a condition of life?"⁹⁹

Nietzsche is a type of the Hegelian Sage because the history of developing Reason preconditions his philosophy. The task of comprehending the world is begun anew for Nietzsche because he stands at the end of a metaphysical journey. Man stands before grand results: his own self-consciousness and his thoroughly mediated world. And Nietzsche finds that, despite all changes within, Being remains self-same as a whole. The only difference is nothing: the negation of Being which reveals the gaps within and the void without. The feeling, within history, that things are apparently being introduced into the world, is replaced by the feeling, at the end of history, that what one accomplished was a reshaping or transformation of the world. A world made, as opposed to a world found, is the new starting point for humanity. Nietzsche writes:

This is the greatest error that has ever been committed, the essential fatality of error on earth: one believed one possessed a criterion of reality in the forms of reason---while in fact one possessed them in order to become master of reality, in order to misunderstand reality in a shrewd manner---And behold: now the world became false, and precisely on account of the properties that constitute its reality: change, becoming, multiplicity, opposition, contradiction, war.¹⁰⁰

So the immediate reaction to the realisation that Reason is a way to 'misunderstand reality in a shrewd manner' (what

⁹⁹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 289.

¹⁰⁰ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 315.

I have called the awareness of distortions within; perspective) is nihilism. But for Nietzsche, the world is a 'world become false' only when Reason is taken to be the cause of the world. In fact, as Hegel has shown, the immanence of Reason---or what Nietzsche would prefer as the inseparability of speech about from logos within---means that it is neither wholly a cause, nor wholly an effect. Reason 'appropriates' the structure of reality through the happy coincidence of both aspects of speech or Reason. Only when it is perceived as something 'primordial' or, at the other extreme, imposed upon reality, is nihilism the result. For Nietzsche, the proper conclusion of Reason can only be to reveal the truly primordial aspects of multiplicity and change within Being.

For Hegel, to those who look at the world rationally, the world looks rationally back. Nietzsche, as well, holds that one finds in things only the explicit appearance of what one already has, implicitly, in oneself. He writes, in Will to Power:

Ultimately, man finds in things nothing but what he himself has imported into them: the finding is called science, the importing---art, religion, love, pride. Even if this should be a piece of childishness, one should carry on with both and be well disposed toward both---some should find; others---we others!---should import!101

The 'finding' called 'science' is philosophy. From Hegel, we know this to be reflective wisdom, or the articulation of the moment which marks its decline. The 'importing' is the activity of will to power; it is a 'childishness'

101 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 327.

because its expansiveness is a 'useful fiction': a distortion of the world into subjects and objects, into lesser and higher states of Being, all for the sake of man being true to his nature as that being which overcomes itself, which projects its own beyond within life. Both the act and its comprehension are essential to meaningful reality: both are terms of the mediation within Being which allow it to be a thing higher yet the same.

Nietzsche takes on the realisation of the end of history by insisting that one is responsible for oneself and one's world in a radical way. Nietzsche expresses this as the need for affirmation: ultimately, for the need to affirm the whole. One does make the world in one's own image. Knowing this, the world can be either meaningless or vital depending upon the manner of one's engagement with it. Nietzsche's appeal for vital engagement, for the exercise of expansive will to power, is an appeal to cast the world in the strongest possible light--- to throw into relief all aspects of Being through a most thorough-going affirmation. He writes: "The desire to bear the entire and ultimate responsibility for one's actions oneself, and to absolve God, the world, ancestors, chance and society involves nothing less than to be precisely this causa sui [self-caused thing]." ¹⁰² To take ultimate responsibility is to find oneself in an inherently meaningful world--- radically rooted in Being which is a limited whole containing infinite possibility.

¹⁰² Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 28.

To take ultimate responsibility is sometimes called by Nietzsche his amor fati, or love of fate. This fate is not something imposed from without, but rather the effective result of a history of free choices within a living community. For Hegel, freedom is determined by Reason, but is not any less 'free' for all that. In fact, an undetermined freedom is an unsituated freedom---it is empty and abstract, and therefore unsatisfying. For Nietzsche as well, only when freedom has some 'given' substance to work upon---in his case, an apparently fated world---is freedom real and concrete. A history of acts and their consequences, and one's involvement in a community of similarly free individuals, means that one will be incapable of controlling all aspects of one's condition. But, in fact, this 'fatedness' of reality makes possible meaningful activity. Nietzsche is not an extreme individualist, as he shows in a passage from Will to Power: "Entry into real life---one rescues one's personal life from death by living a common life."¹⁰³ Only the living of a common life allows such things as fame and reputation--- qualities of an individual which can transcend his own death. Further, the burden of responsibility---which we must either accept or descend into nihilism---is eased by living a common life. The beyond within life---whether it is the community or the projected future of one's own life ---is an anchor to our 'going across': to engagement in meaningful life.

103 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 114.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

The Eternal Recurrence and the End of History

The greatest affirmation of life, or the strongest will to power, is found in those who take ultimate responsibility, and who bear the greatest burden, according to Nietzsche. To be both weighed down by fate and lifted up by freedom is the 'true' condition of humanity: this contradiction is ontological and it is psychological; it is coincidentally the Real and the test of reality. This most radical of affirmations is made possible as a result of Hegel's end of history: the point of reflective wisdom is that one is able to recall the moments of history through a comprehensive speech, and the point of the regime of actual freedom is that one has entered into a condition which enables one to act out those moments. Hegel's achievement makes possible, and even necessary, what Nietzsche calls the 'eternal recurrence.' If Being is a whole which is realised, as Hegel argues, then the only activity possible as a result of this knowledge is movement within. In fact, all of history was the outward showing of Being's inner self, but 'out' is now finally understood as projection/reflection. The 'on-going dialectic' must consist of this movement at a higher level than its 'origin' in immediacy: this is the life of Self-consciousness. To know the ultimate self-reference of reality, and yet to engage in life expansively and acquisitively, is the 'new task' of which Nietzsche speaks. This kind of existence is found in the tension of seeming opposites, harkening back to Hegel, but a tension which is temporally

irresolvable. Nietzsche's great advance, though, is that he does not abandon the requirement of closure: will to power is teleological, but this telos is non-external, and hence 'non-metaphysical,' by being projected onto the tableau of eternal recurrence.

The clearest and most interesting presentation of Nietzsche's notion of the eternal recurrence is found in the section 'On the Vision and the Riddle' in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. In this parable, Zarathustra describes his ascent along a path up a mountainside:

Not long ago I walked gloomily through the deadly pallor of dusk---gloomy and hard, with lips pressed together. Not only one sun had set for me. A path that ascended defiantly through stones, malicious, lonely, not cheered by herb or shrub---a mountain path crunched under the defiance of my foot. Striding silently over the mocking clatter of pebbles, crushing the rock that made it slip, my foot forced its way upward. Upward---defying the spirit that drew it downward toward the abyss, the spirit of gravity, my devil and archenemy. Upward---although he sat on me, half dwarf, half mole, lame making lame, dripping lead into my ear, leaden thoughts into my brain.¹

This 'spirit of gravity' draws Zarathustra towards the 'abyss,' which is nihilism. As I have argued, this abyss is present in two senses: within, as the tendency of collapse into simple, immediate self-reference; and without, as the desire to make external, other-reference. In the light of Hegel, the spirit of gravity is the danger of dialectical incompleteness: 'sealing oneself off' within a single, historical moment. Only when this weight is thrown off, or more precisely overcome, does one adopt the

¹ Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 268.

wider and 'higher' perspective which refutes previous modes of satisfaction as excesses of the subjective or objective spirit. The tension between satisfaction within the moment and ultimate dissatisfaction with regard to world historical goals is the engine of the dialectic for Hegel. For Nietzsche, the tension is between the spirit of gravity and the will to power: between the knowledge that every projection of the self eventually reflects back upon the self, and the drive which engages in such projection nevertheless. The resolution of this tension is the eternal recurrence: the inferred limit which sustains this ontological contradiction. Nietzsche believes that man's will to power is tempered by the spirit of gravity, and its mere strength becomes courage in the face of the truth which the spirit of gravity utters, which is that "every stone that is thrown must fall," and which says to Zarathustra: "O Zarathustra, far indeed you have thrown the stone, but it will fall back on yourself."²

As the parable continues, Zarathustra reaches a gateway, and confronts the spirit of gravity as follows:

'Behold this gateway, dwarf!' I continued. 'It has two faces. Two paths meet here; no one has yet followed either to its end. This long lane stretches back for an eternity. - And the long lane out there, that is another eternity. They contradict each other, these paths; they offend each other face to face; and it is here at this gateway that they come together. The name of the gateway is inscribed above: 'Moment.' But whoever would follow one of them, on and on, farther and farther---do you believe, dwarf, that these paths contradict each other eternally?'³

² Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p.268.

³ Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, pp. 269-270.

When we read this passage in the light of Hegel, we can perceive the path as the progress of history, and the gateway 'Moment' as the realisation of the end of history. It is at this gate that Zarathustra looks back along the entire length of his ascent, in contrast to what was his perspective on the way up. There, his task was exhausted by studying his feet and debating the spirit of gravity: he was immersed in process, only seeing where his stones had fallen when he had ascended to a new height. Now, Zarathustra can see the result of his casting up of stones: he is higher---he has reached the gateway 'Moment'---yet he is the same---the path continues onward eternally. The continuation of the path, beyond the gateway 'Moment,' is essentially the same, but for the fact that, in traversing upon it, he will have passed this gate, he will have experienced the looking back upon the whole. Now, when he casts up his stones, he knows beforehand what he will find---the gateway 'Moment,' eternally recurring, higher yet the same. In a sense, Zarathustra begins all over again, but he cannot simply repeat, because his 'origin' now is the 'new height' of Self-Consciousness.

The contradiction of the paths at the gateway is the distortion or mediation of Being within itself. This contrast is apparent, emerging when one purposefully leaves out of consideration the whole. That the path continues eternally---that Being is an exhaustive whole despite any changes within---means that contradictions are overcome by reflecting upon the whole, by realising the end of history.

That changes are changes within a whole with infinite or eternal possibility, means that Being is eternally self-same. Therefore, all things recur eternally, because of the two truths about Being which both Hegel and Nietzsche teach: one the one hand dialectical movement (Hegel) or multiplicity, flux and change (Nietzsche) are constitutive, and, on the other hand, Being is a realised unity (Hegel) and no aspect of life is meaningful with reference to anything essentially other than itself (Nietzsche). The conclusion for Hegel is the end of history: the incorporation of all dialectical possibilities within a wholly rational speech and existential condition of actual freedom. The conclusion for Nietzsche is the eternal recurrence: a thoroughgoing affirmation of life, which includes life's drive for difference and change.

Zarathustra continues his observations upon the gateway 'Moment' as follows:

'Behold,' I continued, 'this moment! From this gateway, Moment, a long, eternal lane leads backward: behind us lies an eternity. Must not whatever can walk have walked on this lane before? Must not whatever can happen have happened, have been done, have passed by before? And if everything has been there before---what do you think, dwarf, of this moment? Must not this gateway too have been there before? Are not all things knotted together so firmly that this moment draws after it all that is to come? Therefore---itself too? For whatever can walk ---in this long lane out there too, it must walk once more!'4

Again, it is useful to look at this passage with reference to Hegel. 'Before' history, before Zarathustra begins his

4 Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 270.

ascent, Being simply is. However, even here, all the moments of history are nascent: they exist in potential within the as-yet undifferentiated whole of Being. At the end of history---when Zarathustra beholds the gateway---Being is in-and-for-itself: it is higher yet the same; it is what it is, but not merely so---now it is something actual, something real, present, and known.

The difference between the changefulness of life and the ultimate self-identity of Being is the difference between temporality and eternity. The unity of these great conflicting movements is expressed by Hegel as Self-consciousness at the end of history, and it is expressed by Nietzsche as eternal recurrence. Eternal recurrence incorporates all of Being, but it is not an imposed limit. It is a horizon of meaning which is not fixed, hence it is the self-sustaining (and self-subverting) definition of life.

The realisation of the gateway 'Moment' is the gaining of perspective. Fate is the appearance, before reflection, of one's situatedness in life, but the post-historical requirement that one reject imposition means that what is taken to be the accidents or caprices of history is known to be the workings of freedom: the immanent, that is, temporally and spatially specific, result of potentially unlimited will to power, instantiated in the mass of selves which is humanity. Perspective, or where one 'finds' oneself, is the cumulative effect of one's 'casting up of stones,' of one's willing changes, or projecting a future,

In Hegelian terms, all subsequent 'moments' to the end of history are the manifestation of the freedom of the self to locate itself within a completed tableau of dialectical appearance, now present 'purely' (i.e., all-but-immediately) before one. 'Moment'---or where one finds oneself upon reflection---only appears to be the inevitable situation of the self, as it was within history: now, perspective must be a self-aware distortion within Being for the sake of living a meaningful life. For Zarathustra, the gateway marks a contradiction---but only an apparent, or immediate one. The eternal recurrence of all things is the resolution of this tension for reflective wisdom, but it does not take away the actual freedom of the self to 'cast its own stones.' In fact, an individual's will to power becomes something more than mere wilfulness, more than individual autonomy or dominance, because of eternal recurrence.

Hegel was able to avoid traditional metaphysics by thinking dialectically, and posit a whole which is mediated. Nietzsche can only do the same by thinking nihilistically, and posit a whole whose mediation and situation is the nothing. Nietzsche's position is more difficult than Hegel's because more possibilities are denied him as 'false,' or more precisely inauthentic. Not only can he not make the transcendental move of other-worldly reference, but neither can he make the dialectical move of making a wider, more comprehensive speech about Being. What is left is nothing, and speeches about nothing are silences, and this is nihilism. As Béla Egyed writes,

"nihilism . . . is that which is unsayable in our language revealing itself at the limit only as a limit."⁵ Everything defined by nothing, without and throughout, is Hegel's end of history. To sustain this, in the face of the obvious incapacity of rational speech to define the ontological limits of Being in nothing, is Nietzsche's task.

The eternal recurrence is an affirmation, a kind of speech which pushes at the limits of Being in nihilism. Without such an affirmation, Nietzsche is 'merely' a nihilist, and will to power is just over-stated moral subjectivism. Stephen Houlgate advances this view, and arraigns Nietzsche on the charge of metaphysics. Nietzsche holds that metaphysics is imposition, and Houlgate holds up 'life' as Nietzsche's particular imposition. It is surprising, though, that Houlgate does not view eternal recurrence in a Hegelian light: indeed, he mentions it only twice in his book. In one place, he calls eternal recurrence a 'simplified vision of that creativity which we can bear.' Houlgate writes: "This is Nietzsche's aesthetic justification of life: to see reality as creative, and at the same time to create a simplified vision of that creativity which we can bear. The culmination of this project will be Zarathustra's ecstatic affirmation of the myth of the eternal recurrence, in which creativity is given its most 'perfect,' most 'beautiful' form."⁶ Against Houlgate, I think that Nietzsche is right to perceive the necessity

⁵ Egyed, "Tracing Nihilism" in Rhetoric of Nihilism, p. 9.

⁶ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 62.

of myth, and that this can be non-impositional depending upon its timeliness: the only possibility left for truth is as a thought-in-season. This is why Nietzsche must adopt an aesthetic critique: he is more concerned with the effect of proclaiming the eternal recurrence than its truth. Ultimate self-reference, and empty other-reference have subverted the usefulness of truth to life. The limit of sense is nonsense, and so the need is there somehow to express this horizon to avoid condemning life when thought turns back from the abyss of its own limit. Nietzsche's articulations of this useful and valuable 'nonsense' are expressed in his Dionysian philosophy: in that laughter, play, music and dance which is the extra-rational logos of wholly immanent Being.

Nietzsche is relatively unconcerned with the truth of eternal recurrence. In a sense, it is a 'noble lie.' But this is so only because Nietzsche has demonstrated the inadequacy of 'truth' as a demonstration of value. This has emerged from his discussion of nihilism, and his demonstration of the defining character of 'nothing' to an immanent world of life and values. To say anything at all, Nietzsche must also utter 'nonsense': this is the only more-comprehensive speech possible after Hegel. But it does make sense if, following Hegel, we move within Nietzsche's discourse. To do so is to perceive Nietzsche's philosophy as not merely self-subverting, but necessarily so, and useful to life for having affirmed itself.

Houlgate remains rooted in the Hegelian circle, and does not put as much weight on Hegel's admitted exhaustiveness, and hence culmination in the fatigue of the end of history. Nietzsche's unconcern with 'literal, ontological truth' is seen as evidence of a metaphysical projection of an arbitrary beyond in the eternal recurrence. He writes:

To my mind, this idea [eternal recurrence] is to be understood as a conjecture or hypothesis constructed from Nietzsche's experience of the constantly changing character of life. Nietzsche is not attempting to say 'This is how the world really is,' but rather 'This is how I must and will see the world.' Nietzsche is thus not concerned with the literal, ontological truth of the teaching, but with its creative, interpretive 'truth.'⁷

I reject the notion that eternal recurrence is an imposition on the part of Nietzsche, and assert that it is a necessary emergence to which he is led negatively, very much in the Hegelian manner.

I agree with Deleuze's view, distilled by Egyed when he writes: "It is nonsense to construe eternal recurrence as a return of the same"⁸ What recurs is the whole, and the whole is infinitely varied. That this whole is finite, as is shown by both Hegelian and Nietzschean closure, in no way requires recurrence of 'the same.' The metaphysical closure of Being, plus its Negation/Becoming or 'life,' does not equal repetition. This is because of the kind of limit to all things which both Hegel and Nietzsche project: both conclude that the whole is limited by nothing, which is very different from saying that there are no limits to

⁷ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 85.

⁸ Egyed, "Tracing Nihilism," Rhetoric of Nihilism, p. 6.

the whole. Eternal recurrence is this limit which does not limit.

Eternal recurrence is a necessary emergence because of the end of history. Nietzsche recognised the temporal exhaustion of the end of history (hence a need for a move onwards), but also the closed nature of Being, its ultimate self-identity (hence a need for recurrence). Being is not simply self-identical because it's essence is mediation. Both Hegel and Nietzsche demonstrate that the temporal appearance of a closed system cannot be repeated because difference-within is infinite. For Hegel, Self-Consciousness is Being once-again, but Being articulated. For Nietzsche, life has precession, which is to say it is a return-to-self through itself, a movement which turns out to be expansive, but in a wholly immanent way.

For Nietzsche, the truth of eternal recurrence is a fading concern because of the limits to such a claim which he accepts. The truth of eternal recurrence cannot be that it is an underlying principle of reality, nor that it is it's over-riding structure. All it can be is the inferred limit of the mass of projections and reflections which make up the workings of will to power in life. Because Nietzsche makes no claim to the necessity of his assertion, he does not eliminate the nihilistic possibilities of collapse into the moment or empty reference to the beyond. Eternal recurrence is a test, a measure of the strength of will to power, and in this way it is a value. It is an 'absolute' value only because it is the most extreme test,

an impossible limit of the extent of will to power: that one can bear all the consequences of all one's actions, for all eternity. Béla Egyed writes:

First, it should be recalled that for Nietzsche, and for Deleuze, the eternal recurrence is a principle of selection in addition to being the thought of an ontological synthesis. As a principle of selection it separates those who can bear life without 'truth' and 'eternal values' from those who cannot. But to affirm life conceived in such a way is completed nihilism.⁹

Houlgate, in his brief discussion of eternal recurrence, writes that it is, for Nietzsche, the highest expression of will to power.¹⁰ But because Houlgate believes will to power to be an imposition, and hence metaphysical, it follows that eternal recurrence is the most extreme indulgence in metaphysics. On the contrary, I do not think we should be fooled by Nietzsche's objections to the unity of the whole: this is not a rejection of closure as such, but a rejection of the old metaphysics. If we adopt a Hegelian perspective upon Nietzsche, and place ourselves within the horizon formed by will to power and eternal recurrence, then neither term marks an imposition: both are quasi-dialectical emergences through the other. If eternal recurrence is a unity force, balancing will to power as a force for difference, then either term can be seen to be non-impositional only if we take Nietzsche's 'origin' of will to power as a thought-beginning, not-quite-matching the reality it describes, which is

⁹ Egyed, "Tracing Nihilism," Rhetoric of Nihilism, p. 7.

¹⁰ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 85.

a closed, but all-inclusive, whole. Even Houlgate would be led to this conclusion, were he to set aside his belief that 'life' is a metaphysical category for Nietzsche, because he writes: "What Nietzsche believes in is a concrete, internally differentiated totality, a sum of radically different but interrelating forces and activities. What he rejects, however, is the notion of the 'unity' of life which overrides that manifold differentiation and reduces life to a monotonous, uniform structure."¹¹ This 'sum' is the eternal recurrence: the expression of the whole as a beyond within life, and not as an overriding unity. And if eternal recurrence reflects upon will to power as its highest expression, as Houlgate argues, then it would seem more useful to regard both it and will to power as what Nietzsche says they are: distortions for the sake of acting towards the future, 'wilful misunderstandings' which serve life.

Nietzsche adopts an aesthetic critique, and his concern is more with the effect of proclaiming the eternal recurrence. This should not be objected to on Hegelian grounds, because the end of history makes authentic re-engagement impossible. It is a non-arbitrary 'imposition' because it adheres to the only criterion left for truth: the continuity of contact with reality. Even Houlgate writes that the eternal recurrence is an imposition which is anti-metaphysical because Nietzsche holds that all

¹¹ Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 42.

language is the creation of fictions.¹² A fiction is not anti-truth, only if it rises to the level of myth, only if it is a noble lie. Eternal recurrence is Nietzsche's counterpart to Plato's allegory of the cave. Is it true? Only if its effect is to take the measure of life. And life is true to the extent that it approaches the eternal recurrence as the useful fiction of a beyond within life.

The eternal recurrence is the limit of will to power as the extreme of affirmation. The only 'absolute' beyond left which can situate the self is its own widest possible extension. This is 'true' because it is nothing other than the self, but it is 'myth' because all selves will fail to reach this standard. Eternal recurrence is a beyond within life because total responsibility, while it must not be impossible, is impractical. No one can assert his will to power with such vitality that he can control all the consequences of his actions in the community or in the future. Eternal recurrence is one of those ends which, insofar that it is reached, it is fallen short of. What is left is its effect upon the community of selves, which is, in Nietzsche's view, to reveal differences in degrees of power.

Nietzsche thus comes to terms most fully with Hegel's thought that things not only are, but that their nature is to appear as they are, in themselves, for themselves. Nietzsche's 'restatement of the obvious,' though, strives to reach beyond what he perceives to be Hegel's more

¹² Houlgate, Criticism of Metaphysics, p. 86.

passive reflectivity. Zarathustra makes this kind of complete affirmation in the following passage:

'And this slow spider, which crawls in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway, whispering together, whispering of eternal things---must not all of us have been there before? And return and walk in that other lane, out there, before us, in this long dreadful lane---must we not eternally return?'¹³

Affirmation is yea-saying to the whole, but not to the moment, or at least not to the moment exclusive of its situation within the whole. The affirmation of life is therefore not the blind acceptance of any state of affairs, but rather the recognition that all states of affairs are realisations of a part of a perhaps infinitely diverse whole, and liable in varying degrees to the influence of one's own will to power, of one's own choosing of situation within Being, and definition of perspective.

Nietzsche comes to terms with the nature of activity at the end of history, after one has beheld the gateway and looked back, after one has wholeheartedly affirmed life in all its vicissitudes. The liberation of perspective from its single-focused, progressive attitude within history is described by Nietzsche in some places as dance: it is the finding of happiness in the multiplicity, flux and change which are constitutive of reality. Nietzsche writes: "A little wisdom is possible indeed; but this blessed certainty I found in all things: that they would rather dance on the feet of Chance."¹⁴ Here, Nietzsche is clearly departing

¹³ Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 270.

¹⁴ Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 278.

from Hegel, but it is a departure necessitated by the realisation of the end of history: because the end of history is a moment which projects no future, it is an 'eternal' moment. Nietzsche must grapple with the problem of the nature of post-historical activity, or, in his terms, what one's attitude ought to be in the face to the eternal recurrence, what he calls his 'dark thought.'

Nietzsche's self-doubt in proclaiming the eternal recurrence is least evident in the speech of Zarathustra's animals in the section 'The Convalescent' of Thus Spoke Zarathustra:

'O Zarathustra,' the animals said, 'to those who think as we do, all things themselves are dancing: they come and offer their hands and laugh and flee---and come back. Everything goes, everything comes back; eternally rolls the wheel of being. Everything dies, everything blossoms again; eternally runs the year of being. Everything breaks, everything is joined anew; eternally the same house of being is built. Everything parts, everything greets every other thing again; eternally the ring of being remains faithful to itself. In every Now, being begins; round every Here rolls the sphere There. The centre is everywhere. Bent is the path of eternity.'¹⁵

The 'dancing' of all things is movement within Being, creating subjects and objects, and 'staking out' perspective. The nature of this self-situation is dance at the end of history, as opposed to progress or ascent within history. The falling apart and bringing together of all things is the effect of the activity of thought and the exercise of freedom, which elaborate both the synthetic unity, and the diverse, particular nature of Being.

¹⁵ Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, pp. 329-330.

Finally, to say that 'round every Here rolls the sphere There' is to say that in every moment, in every focus of perspective, the self finds itself in its object. The truth, or the enduring contact with reality, or the eternal recurrence, lies in the middle term: in the meeting of apparently contradictory paths in the moment of mediation. That Being is, ultimately, universal and eternal anchors meaning; that the self is a creative, expansive being within this is another anchor. It is on the way across between these anchors that meaning is found, that the self finds a context and the context finds instantiation in selves.

If we perceive the gateway 'Moment' as the object or goal of all striving, as the essential result of Zarathustra's 'casting up of stones' and his ascent up the mountainside, then we can see how it marks the revelation of the eternal recurrence in the following way. Hegel's conclusion is that the object is nothing other than what the subject is implicitly, that the goal is the projected satisfaction of the desire. Here we find the eternal character of 'Moment': the thing-itself remains self-same as a whole. Along with this is Hegel's conclusion that the object is the appearance of the subject, the showing-forth and making-known of what was merely implied or potential: one's satisfaction reflects upon one's desire as its negation or decline. So the object or goal is not simply identical to the subject or the desire---the relation here is never an immediate one. Although nothing is added from

without, a change does occur: the self, through its relation to the world, gains experience. What is 'new' for the self is its history or its fate---a past made present through the consequences of action. Here we find the recurring aspect of 'Moment': the eternally self-same whole is higher by the cumulative effect of past action, which is the creation of a human world through history. The significance of this new height for perspective is not that one gains anything absolutely new, something from without the whole, but that one is able to live more fully, more humanely, by virtue of one's wider perspective, and expanded will to power.

And so, what is new is only apparently so to the limited perspective of the self. This limitation is, in fact, meaning-creating, because it allows one to take satisfaction from the exercise of one's freedom, despite the eternal recurrence, or ultimate self-reference, of all things. Hegel has shown that changes within Being are phenomenological, which is to say that they are internal variations within a whole. Although Nietzsche rejects the idea that there is a guiding principle at work in this whole, he nevertheless projects a unity to all things, defined by a limit which is on one 'side' the widest possible extension that is eternal recurrence, and on the other 'side' nothing. And he shows how it might be possible, in spite of the knowledge that all things are ultimately irremovable from a universal or eternal context, to lead meaningful lives. To 'dance on the feet of Chance'

means to face the ongoing presencing of things in the post-historical epoch in a way which gives as much satisfaction as was found through our historical experience of immersion in process. Nietzsche expresses a very Hegelian thought when he writes: "Whoever reaches his ideal transcends it eo ipso."¹⁶ To transcend is to go beyond what there was previously, but only as the continuation of that thing, and not as a shift to something essential other than what it is. What is essential is not the ideal, or the desire, but the achievement.

Nietzsche's emphasis on 'multiplicity, flux, and change' is consistent with the doctrine of eternal recurrence if one considers that 'Chance' is the appearance which the consequences of past action have to man. The way the self confronts the world is always from a limited perspective, in that although the self has Being---everything there is, appearing as it is, eternally---for its object, it remains a single locus of perspective, a single origin for world-projection and self-reflection: the subject is individual. The word "fate" better describes the way in which all things recur eternally, except that one is able to affect the appearance of things depending upon the strength of one's will to power, of the degree of one's affirmation of life. The extent to which one is at home in the world depends upon how much of it one can effectively make one's object, and make meaningful by putting it into relation with oneself.

¹⁶ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 80.

What is for Nietzsche fate is, for Hegel, the ongoing dialectic. Even at the end of history, all things, considered merely in-themselves, are unstable, and perpetually 'drive outwards' to manifest themselves, to work out the tensions or apparent contradictions which are present within them. All aspects of this ongoing dialectic are eternally present---to know this is end of history wisdom ---but they never will be immediately so to man. Our distance from things, or our inability to experience the world except through mediation, means that the way in which objects are projected appears as fate, subject to our control only from our limited vantage-point. But limitations are, as has been argued, meaning-horizons---boundary stones which enable us to make sense of the world.

In Nietzsche's parable, the gateway 'Moment' signifies that we are higher; that the path continues onward eternally signifies that we are the same. To put it another way, if the gateway marks the 'beyond' for Zarathustra's ascent, then the path onwards shows him that this beyond is 'within life'---the fulfilment and not the condemnation of his striving. Zarathustra can continue onward from this 'Moment'---he can cast off the spirit of gravity---because, in looking back, he perceives his past acts now (i.e., as a consequence) to be, effectively, his fate. By acting as if his past free choices are a given (which is how they now function as consequences), Zarathustra can begin anew. Nietzsche writes: "The consequences of our actions take hold of us, quite indifferent to our claim that meanwhile

we have 'improved.'"¹⁷ We have indeed 'improved,' but the result is the need to take more complete responsibility, to accept greater consequences, because our improvement is the acquisition of a past, of a history of developing action and thought. Our 'height' in the ascent of Being is built upon the cumulative effect of acts and their consequences. Being is, Being becomes, and the reflection of this apparent externalisation, this falsification or distortion within, raises Being to a unity which is differentiated, to a whole with self-consciousness, to a thing which is in-and-for-itself. Nietzsche, and Hegel as well, argues that despite our realisation of this, there remains a dynamism in our relation to the world that continually projects new configurations of the universal and eternal substance---new grist for the mill of humanity's zest for life.

For Nietzsche, one's freedom is a function of one's will to power, of how much reality one can endure. To deal with consequences is to take the past as a 'given,' even though one knows that one is ultimately responsible, that one cannot separate completely one's identity from the whole of Being. In Will to Power, he writes: "A deed produces its consequences, within the man and outside the man, regardless of whether it is considered as punished, 'expiated,' 'forgiven' and 'extinguished,' regardless of whether the church has in the meantime promoted the doer to a saint."¹⁸ Post-historical activity---what Nietzsche calls

¹⁷ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 93.

¹⁸ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 212.

'dance'---means that by the creative shifting of perspective one can continually cast the world (and, in retrospect, world history) in a different light. But the fact that our past, in-itself, is beyond our reach means that the nature of post-historical activity is engagement with consequences (which activity in turn produces more consequences, and onwards eternally). Thus 'the deed' itself functions as an anchor to meaning, because it can never be recalled. The act may be repeated, and one can re-act to it in many different ways, but the past is always a beyond within life, which we can 'control,' or make our object, only through the mediation of consequences.

The fated appearance of things only contradicts our actual freedom immediately: upon reflection, one's fate is the manifestation in the present of a past of free choices. One makes oneself by expressing what one is, and only when one focuses one's attention on a single moment in this development does the self appear to be fated. In fact, or universally and eternally, one 'bears one's own guilt,' as Hegel writes in the Logic: "If man saw . . . that whatever happens to him is only the outcome of himself, and that he only bears his own guilt, he would stand free, and in everything that came upon him would have the consciousness that he suffered no wrong."¹⁹ Post-historical experience is therefore a tension between knowing that one's life is wholly unconditioned because of its situation in a context of possibilities which are universal and eternal, and

¹⁹ Hegel, Logic, p. 211.

taking one's starting-point for action as given: as if all that has gone before (temporal beyond within life) and all that is outside one's effective influence (spatial beyond within life) is fated.

In addressing this actual situation, Nietzsche is concerned with creating conditions for the living of a meaningful life, with how one approaches the question of values. He does not baldly state how one ought to live, or what values should be projected. Emphasis upon the individual does not ignore the individual's context, but it does contrast the difference between what one is able to say about mortal man, and what one is able to say about the eternally recurring whole of Being. Greatness lies in extent, in over-mastering one's situation to be more than what one simply is. What one becomes is the object or the beyond, but it is an inferred limit to the self as 'origin' of will to power. Nietzsche's individualist emphasis is his caution against the trap of attributing causation to be essential to this beyond. But nor should we be drawn to the opposite extreme, to perceive some force, called will to power, as the cause of a meaningful world. Nietzsche's philosophy succeeds only if it is, in the Hegelian manner, circular and complete. Nietzschean philosophy achieves closure defined by the logos of will to power/eternal recurrence, and exhaustively described by Apollonian self-reference and Dionysian excess.

As Hegel argues, the Idea is the whole of Being and its appearance. There is nothing from without, so the

universe is a closed system. But, consistently with this, Nietzsche shows that the universe is boundless, which it must be if there is no outside, if the whole is both the content and the limit of itself. One can consider this temporally as well: although there is nothing other than everything there is (in other words, the 'boundary' of the Idea is nihilism), that 'everything there is' recurs eternally. Although the moments of history can apparently occur only once, in fact they were always implicit in Being: their eternal presence is made known through temporal experience. Man is the origin of a limited perspective because he is a mortal being experiencing eternally recurring things, and because he is a single self-consciousness within a universally present Self-Consciousness. All things, arranging themselves in infinite configurations, over and over again for all time, are thus able to seem to be a 'given' material for the exercise of our freedom. Our limited perspective, within a boundless but closed whole, enables us to seize upon the substance of our world as the work of Chance: our mortality rescues us from eternity. Nietzsche writes:

If only we could foresee the most favourable conditions under which creatures of the highest value arise! It is a thousand times too complicated and the probability of failure very great: so it is not inspiring to look for them!---Scepticism.---On the other hand: we can increase courage, insight, hardness, independence, and the feeling of responsibility; we can make the scales more delicate and hope for the assistance of favourable accidents.²⁰

²⁰ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 480.

So overcoming nihilism is not a matter of adopting certain true values as against certain false ones. For Nietzsche, to overcome nihilism is to adopt a posture in the face of actual conditions---one discovers values by the way in which one lives; one does not invent them, and then decide to live accordingly. A goal is revealed in the 'I am' of the subject, which goal reflects upon that subject as its higher being. The ongoing dialectic is the dynamic relation between the self, the world, and the value. For Hegel, the self is characterised as the moment of desire; for Nietzsche, it is taken as the origin of the will to power: both forces are an implicit expanding-outwards. For Hegel, the world is the objective appearance of Being; for Nietzsche, it is the consequences or 'Chance' cast up by eternal recurrence. Finally, for Hegel, the value is the satisfaction of the desire, and for Nietzsche it is the attainment of 'new height' for the self. To value, or to live a meaningful life, is, for both philosophers, to stand in relation to the world, spatially, and the future, temporally. This is a combination of acceptance ("it is so"), affirmation ("I will that it be so"), and projection ("I extend myself into it thus"). And so, Nietzsche writes, that, in the face of nihilism, the strongest "not only concede but love a fair amount of accidents and nonsense."²¹ To love is to put oneself in relation to the object in a way that reflects upon, or transforms, the self. To love 'accidents and nonsense' is to actively

²¹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 38.

engage with the world as it appears before one, to allow it to affect one's self in the same way that one projects one's own nature upon the world. In Hegelian terms, this is mutual recognition, which raises both moments to a higher level, although adding nothing but the insubstantial putting-into-relation of the apparent opposites: the subject and the object, the self and the world.

To favour Chance, or the apparently given nature of a world which is in fact comprehensive to itself, is to set up a mediating tension with the opposite impulse, which is the will to unity, to appropriate Reason. Nietzsche writes: "We possess art lest we perish of the truth."²² Here we find the nature of post-historical activity: the ongoing dialectic which emphasises, once again, the subject within the completed object, enabling the self to affirm itself and thereby 'life' through art---selecting certain possibilities and eliminating others by manifesting one's nature in an authentic (i.e., world-engaging) way.

The immediate consequence of the end of history is nihilism. When man no longer finds himself involved in a meaningful community and progress, he does not easily adapt to the new task of involving himself, and so generating a meaningful context out of his own fullness of life. He does not realise, at first, that the past of self---involvement---world is now only present in experience, and is once again a force latent in himself, waiting for expression from this new height. Man must re-engage in the

²² Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 435.

working-out of the nature of himself and his situation, but self-consciously: taking the perspective of things as given, but knowing this to be projected. In other words, the dialectical nature of Being as a whole must be incorporated in the human self. Not to come to terms with this post-historical truth is to lapse into nihilism, to root oneself in nostalgic thinking at odds with one's existential condition. Nietzsche clearly shows that he knows he is living through a period of nihilism, precipitated by the pervasive awareness that humanity's involvement in life has lost its intensity, and not yet learned to posit new goals. How one can be able to project a new future is precisely Nietzsche's concern, as expressed when he writes:

Let anyone look at the nineteenth century with an eye for these quick preferences and changes of the style masquerade; also for the moments of despair over the fact that 'nothing is becoming.' Perhaps this is where we shall still discover the realm of our invention, that realm in which we, too, can still be original, say, as parodists of world history and God's buffoons---perhaps, even if nothing else today has any future, our laughter may yet have a future.²³

Nietzsche's higher man, or great man, is the one who overcomes nihilism by, first of all, possessing the capacity to 'laugh, play, and dance,' or to cope with the substance of Being, universally present and eternally recurring, and, second of all, employs this capacity to forge new goals, to project a beyond within life. Nietzsche makes the sad observation that such strength of character---possessed by what Hegel would call 'world-

²³ Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 150.

historical individuals'---did not exist in his time, and perhaps this is true today as well. He writes: "Such men of great creativity, the really great men according to my understanding, will be sought in vain today and probably for a long time to come."²⁴

Contrary to the mode of language which each philosopher employs, I would argue that Nietzsche is more moderate than Hegel in his claims for what the ideal 'type' of humanity can achieve. Hegel's world-historical individual sees through history, and raises all apparent givens to the level of self-consciousness. The Sage is almost inhuman in his capacity for speech, and incapacity for action. Nietzsche's higher man, on the other hand, is defined by his failure, by the point at which he falls short of the most radical of all affirmations. 'The beyond' exists beyond one's capacity, to the limit of the eternal recurrence. The feeling for this beyond within life is what Nietzsche wishes to instill. Although he shares Hegel's prescription of fatigue and nihilism with the end of history, Nietzsche's modesty furnishes him with the grounds of optimism. He writes: "It seems to me that the religious instinct is indeed in the process of growing powerfully---but the theistic satisfaction it refuses with deep suspicion."²⁵ This instinct finds expression, now, in the feeling for the beyond within life.

24 Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 501-502.

25 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 66.

Dionysus and Apollo

The religious instinct, which is the drive for unity with all things, is expressed by Nietzsche under the heading of 'Dionysian spirit.' Dionysus stands as a metaphor for the kind of humanity which Nietzsche sees as possible and desirable. While Hegel's philosophy makes possible a rational satisfaction, or a self-conscious unity with all things through the terms of Reason, Nietzsche seeks to go beyond self-reference in an extra-rational manner, by 'paying heed' to instinctual life, by drawing upon the feeling of expanded life as reflective proof that one is truly at home in the world.

In a note to Beyond Good and Evil, Walter Kaufmann writes that, "in the later works [of Nietzsche], Dionysus stands for controlled and creatively employed passion."²⁶ The 'control' of passion is a result of the appropriation of Reason by the Understanding, to use Hegelian terms: the incorporation of world-structure into self-consciousness in the person of the Sage. As Nietzsche shows, this is not an impediment to the 'creative employment' of passion, but is, in fact, an enhancing influence, elevating its activity to a higher, expanded level: it turns 'passion' into transformational involvement, or love. Rational satisfaction directs the instincts, allowing one to undergo the very same 'natural' processes as before, but now self-consciously. The ongoing dialectic, or the continual emergence of

²⁶ Kaufmann, ed., Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil, p. 235.

desires, is ontological. The only difference at the end of history is that now passion can be controlled, and also creatively employed, knowingly projecting a desired state of affairs. And so, Nietzsche writes: "The desire for destruction, change, becoming can be the expression of an overfull power pregnant with the future (my term for this, as is known, is the word 'Dionysian')." ²⁷

A desire, as has been shown with Hegel, is a force which generates a future of itself. The moment of the desire, in itself, is insufficient to itself. Therefore, the self, as the subject of the desire, expands outwards---seemingly outside itself---to incorporate the object and achieve an equilibrium: the moment of satisfaction reflects upon the desire as its completion, as its 'truth.' The Dionysian spirit is precisely this drive outwards, whose effect is to manifest a unity which is realised, at a greater height than the former moment, which was unity implicitly. Nietzsche writes of the Dionysian spirit: "It is explicable only in terms of an excess of force." ²⁸ The overflowing of life projects the only beyond from which value may be taken, because this excess leads to a measure which is from and of life: the beyond within life always affirms a kind of life being led, because it is that way of life 'writ large'---projected into the future, at a higher level of expanded perspective.

27 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 446.

28 Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, p. 560.

Because the beyond within life is an object which contains all of the subject, Nietzsche argues that affirmation must take the good with the bad. He writes: "Toward a justification of life, even at its most terrible, ambiguous, and mendacious; for this I had the formula 'Dionysian.'"²⁹ In Hegelian terms, the drive for unity is a reflection upon the self, because the subject is found essentially in its object. Man is most human when he extends his identity---always through the terms of mediation---to encompass all of humanity. Nietzsche gives a more visceral expression to this thought in his Dionysian philosophy. He could hardly be clearer than in the following passage:

The word 'Dionysian' means: an urge to unity, a reaching out beyond personality, the everyday, society, reality, across the abyss of transitoriness: a passionate-painful overflowing into darker, fuller, more floating states; an ecstatic affirmation of the total character of life as that which remains the same, just as powerful, just as blissful, through all change; the great pantheistic sharing of joy and sorrow that sanctifies and calls good even the most terrible and questionable qualities of life; the eternal will to procreation, to fruitfulness, to recurrence; the feeling of the necessary unity of creation and destruction.³⁰

The Dionysian spirit is only fully possible with the end of history, with the realisation of all possibilities, present before one universally and eternally (i.e., purely mediated). If strong action is impossible in the historical sense, then man can only remain true to his nature, and

29 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 521.

30 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 539.

overcome nihilism, by investing 'mere activity' with his will: one takes delight or finds happiness in the self-conscious movement between union with and separation from all things. In Twilight of the Idols, Nietzsche writes: "Such a spirit who has become free stands amid the cosmos with a joyous and trusting fatalism, in the faith that only the particular is loathsome, and that all is redeemed and affirmed in the whole---he does not negate any more. Such a faith, however, is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name of Dionysus." ³¹

Nietzsche's statement that 'only the particular is loathsome' should not be seen as a condemnation of particularity as such: in fact, Nietzsche strongly affirms setting-at-a-distance as essential to life. What he cautions against is an inference from any particular aspect to the whole. Only all aspects of Being, presencing themselves eternally, are equal to the whole: every aspect of Being is certainly beyond the strength of any single individual's will to power to embrace. The higher man is able to articulate more of the world, and is therefore able to lead a more meaningful life, but all things beyond his practical influence he must take as fate, or as the workings of chance, if he is to escape a purely reflective, inactive existence. Hegel argues that Being-as-subject is a self-consciousness which posits a perspective which contains all within its purview. That the universal and the particular perspectives are never merely identical can

31 Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, p. 554.

usefully be seen as the 'fatefulness' or Chance of all things. How we confront the world is, therefore, a more worthwhile project for us, Nietzsche argues, than the discovery of 'truth' about it. Nietzsche uses the term 'Dionysian' to refer to the nature of the individual's relation to the whole, and he uses the term 'Apollonian' to refer more specifically to the particular self, drawing attention to the difference of the individual from 'life.' He writes: "The word 'Apollonian' means: the urge to perfect self-sufficiency, to the typical 'individual,' to all that simplifies, distinguishes, makes strong, clear, unambiguous, typical: freedom under the law."³² In Hegelian terms, the Apollonian spirit can be seen as the structuring or mediating of Being through Reason. Hegelian philosophy is not merely equivalent to the Apollonian spirit: Nietzsche emphasises man's posture when confronted with a realised unity, and relates man's instinctual life with what Hegel has shown to be his distance from and proximity to things through the terms of Reason.

Nietzsche's notion of controlled and creatively employed passion gives substance to Hegel's notion of desire, but now translated to the new height of the end of history. Nietzsche gives expression to the Hegelian idea that instinctual life is the fulfilment of Reason, when raised to the level of self-consciousness: passion, far from contradicting Reason, is Reason in its very essence. For Hegel, Reason is a system of relations, and we find

³² Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 539.

this exact language used by Nietzsche, in the following passage from The Will to Power: "The misunderstanding of passion and reason, as if the latter were an independent entity and not rather a system of relations between various passions and desires; and as if every passion did not possess its quantum of reason."³³

The realisation of the end of history leads to a concentration on the completeness or unity of things, which often means the neglect of persistent mediation and individuation. What was taken to be the absolute or open-ended nature of things, which was its discreteness, is now known to be its concrete character: its very life. To confuse the overcoming of difference in unity with the elimination of parts in the whole is to fall into nihilism. Both Hegel and Nietzsche retain the essential balance: meaning itself is a tension, poised between two extremes. And so, whilst praising the Dionysian spirit, Nietzsche does not neglect the Apollonian. With regard to desires and their satisfaction, Nietzsche recognises the practical necessity of emphasising the former moment for the sake of the health of the whole. Given the end of history, this pre-occupation is justified; given that, as Nietzsche says, 'nothing is becoming,' or that man 'does not negate any more.' Again, we must take these statements in the strong sense, as a reflection upon the way things appeared within history. Becoming or negation do not cease in the post-historical epoch, but they become a self-conscious

³³ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 208.

activity. Nietzsche seeks to make this possible by proclaiming his Dionysian philosophy, through such statements as: "In the end one loves one's desire and not what is desired."³⁴

The eternal recurrence makes it possible to recapture the feeling of strong action which man had by engagement in history. Since goals outside life are impossible, then they are 'at hand': this is the end of history. But if goals are affirmed eternally, which is what vital will to power does through us, then goals are not only present, but also stand at a distance eternally. The object is now known to be present in the subject, but mediately, through Reason, according to Hegel, or through its eternal recurrence, according to Nietzsche. Nietzsche confronts the post-historical dilemma as follows: "Can we remove the idea of a goal from the process and then affirm the process in spite of this?---This would be the case if something were attained at every moment within this process---and always the same."³⁵

Nietzsche exhorts the reader to take a stance with regard to goals. To do this, he distorts the process of value creation by placing emphasis on certain moments, in many places on the moment of the self, or the will, or the desire. But Nietzsche's distortions bring to light the nature of all values as emerging from a point of view. To value is to stand-in-regard to something, to project a

34 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 93.

35 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 36.

framework which always embraces some possibilities and rejects others. For the sake of the middle term (meaning), Nietzsche places greater emphasis upon the subjective term (the self), because he sees the objective term (the world) as dominant in the present-day. This is precisely Hegel's conclusion: the end of history necessitates a return to self: once again, the human individual is the focus of consideration, since he is the embodiment of all previous movements. Therefore, Nietzsche gives his hierarchy of value-feelings as follows: "Higher than 'thou shalt' is 'I will' (the heroes); higher than 'I will' stands: 'I am' (the gods of the Greeks)."³⁶ In Hegelian terms, Being as potential posits its own Becoming as actualisation, which, all together (or eternally) is the Idea: Being in-and-for-itself. This last term is a return to the first moment, but at a higher level. For Nietzsche, the 'I am' of the gods (e.g., Dionysus) is not the mere Being of Hegel's origin, but the self-conscious Being of Hegel's end of history. The gods are powers which are potent with the future---and know this fact.

To emphasise aspects, as against the overarching unity of the whole, does not deny that unity, but rather, gives it expression. Differences are maintained because, along with the ongoing resolution of dialectical movements in unity, there is the perpetual introduction of desires out of man's instinctual life. Hegel's State is matched by the particular desires of its citizens, just as Nietzsche's

³⁶ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 495.

Dionysian spirit is matched by the Apollonian. Differences between human beings are as constitutive of reality as their common humanity, and this is reflected in every aspect of experience. What Nietzsche calls the 'offence' the two paths give each other in fact raises both to a higher level, makes possible the gateway 'Moment,' which is the realisation of growth. He writes:

Without that pathos of distance which grows out of the ingrained difference between strata--- . . . that other, more mysterious pathos could not have grown up either---the craving for an ever new widening of distances within the soul itself, the development of ever higher, rarer, more remote, further-stretching, more comprehensive states---in brief, simply the enhancement of the type 'man,' the continual 'self-overcoming of man,' to use a moral formula in a supra-moral sense.³⁷

As we saw with the master/slave dialectic, the slaves's need of the master is essential to his liberation, because the development of his relation to the master leads to mutual recognition. The need for tension between apparent opposites to live a meaningful life leads Nietzsche to set these up himself, and to lament the homogeneity of his times. He writes:

The cleavage between man and man, status and status, the plurality of types, the will to be oneself, to stand out---what I call the pathos of distance, that is characteristic of every strong age. The strength to withstand tension, the width of the tensions between extremes, becomes ever smaller today; finally, the extremes themselves become blurred to the point of similarity.³⁸

What Hegel has shown to be humanity's rational satisfaction

37 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 201.

38 Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, p. 540.

in the end of history means that the self's relation to other selves and to the world is through pure mediation. The 'gap' between things is as small as it can be, as nothing actually other intervenes. Nietzsche, therefore, draws attention to the fact that this 'gap' has in no way disappeared, and so he encourages courage or strength in the face of great tension, or apparent otherness.

Nietzsche's proclamation of the eternal recurrence indicates his recognition that a great circular movement has been completed, that his times marked a return to essential philosophical concerns. At the same time, he sees that what is happening is no mere repetition, but a re-encounter of 'opposites,' where both participants have been transformed, each through the other. Man finds himself, at the end of history, in a pre-historical condition, but with his historical experience intact. He can not 'merely' return, but must re-engage, in a similar way, from this new perspective. Nietzsche traces this revelation as follows:

German philosophy as a whole---Leibnitz, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, to name the greatest---is the most fundamental form of romanticism and homesickness there has ever been: the longing for the best that ever existed. One is no longer at home anywhere; at last one longs back for that place in which alone one can be at home, because it is the only place in which one would want to be at home: the Greek world! But it is in precisely that direction that all bridges are broken ---except the rainbow-bridges of concepts!³⁹

This last phrase touches upon Hegel's entire enterprise: to attain again the feeling of oneness, but through something

³⁹ Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 225.

(the logos of Reason), since one has lost forever the possibility of immediate unity.

From our new height, which means through the terms of mediation which we have revealed through history, man seeks to restore the 'innocence of becoming' which he had when he set about the historical enterprise. Since there is nothing beside the whole, we cannot create anything 'new' as we thought we were doing in history. But the whole is so extensive beyond the particular self, both spatially and temporally (because of our singular perspective and our mortality), that our stance towards it can be similar to what it was throughout history. We can treat the eternal recurrence of all things as Chance; we can treat the multitude of objects (whether other selves or the world) which are effectively outside our influence as 'given.' Nietzsche writes, in Twilight of the Idols:

One is necessary, one is a piece of fatefulness, one belongs to the whole, one is in the whole; there is nothing which could judge, measure, compare, or sentence our being, for that would mean judging, measuring, comparing, or sentencing the whole. But there is nothing besides the whole. That nobody is held responsible any longer, that the mode of being may not be traced back to a causa prima, that the world does not form a unity either as a sensorium or as 'spirit' ---that alone is the great liberation; with this alone is the innocence of becoming restored.⁴⁰

We see here that Nietzsche separates 'the whole' and 'unity' in a way that Hegel does not. But Hegel's Spirit is not what Nietzsche calls 'spirit' here: it is nothing imposed upon the whole, but rather that whole exhaustively,

⁴⁰ Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, pp. 500-501.

that whole revealed in its entirety. Spirit is not a causa prima. In fact, Hegel's revelation that it is not such a thing is the conclusion of the end of history, which is precisely the 'great liberation' about which Nietzsche speaks. For Hegel, 'the True' is the whole, and concerning the True he writes in the Phenomenology: "It is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual."⁴¹ The whole is therefore the unity of its actualisations: since nothing is added from without, no principle is imposed, but rather given its very content from within. The end is realised in wisdom and it is actual in the State. The end is a return to the beginning universally, i.e., for Spirit, but also a higher perspective in particular, i.e., for human self-consciousness. For both Hegel and Nietzsche, then, the 'innocence of becoming restored' is the new starting point, higher yet the same.

Metaphorically, the end of history is a return to the perspective of a child, but with the experience of an adult. One still seeks to grow, but one's self-sufficiency makes this impossible in the same way as before: one cannot posit the same goals, but one must posit the same kind of goals, the same beyond to the self, but this time wholly within a life which the self has already attained in principle. Nietzsche expresses this thought in religious

⁴¹ Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 10.

terms as follows: "The Kingdom of Heaven is a condition of the heart (---it is said of children 'for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven'): Not something 'above the earth.'"42 The activity of the self imbued with Dionysian spirit, overfull with the capacity for life, is stated by Nietzsche to be 'laughter, play, and dance.' Not to project something else, but to project the same in infinite and eternal variation---this is the new ground of values. Nietzsche writes: "'Play,' the useless---as the ideal of him who is overfull of strength, as 'childlike.'"43 Goals are now 'useless' only in the historical sense, since it is impossible to translate the self by action to another world, this world must be affirmed by the controlled and creative employed passions of humanity.

The last word is Hegel's: "The harmoniousness of childhood is a gift from the hand of nature: the second harmony must spring from the labour and culture of the spirit."44

42 Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 98-99.

43 Nietzsche, Will to Power, p. 419.

44 Hegel, Logic, p. 43.

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