Sampsa Saarinen

**Nietzsche, Religion, and Mood**

# Monographien und Texte zur Nietzsche-Forschung



## Band 71

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# Preface and acknowledgements

This study is based on a doctoral dissertation defended at the University of Vienna in autumn 2017. Although the work has been revised, no efforts have been made to cover up its origin. Quite to the contrary, I have sought to retain as much of its form and content as reasonably possible, including some rough edges, to highlight the experimental nature of the work.

Thanks to the generous financial support of the Osk. Huttunen Foundation, I was able to concentrate on the dissertation for three entire years in a location of my own choice; in a city of dreams and nightmares. I would like to thank all those who helped create a productive research environment at the Department of Religious Studies in Vienna, Austria. Specifically, I want to thank my supervisor Hans Gerald Hödl for encouraging independent thinking. A great thanks also to Sandra Freregger for helpful advice; not least about opportunities open to scholars working on Nietzsche. In this regard, the Werner-Ross-Stipendium of the Nietzsche-Forum Munich is in a league of its own. The stipend gave me the opportunity to spend September 2016 at the Nietzsche-Haus in Sils-Maria, to wander in the alpine landscapes, and to reflect on questions timely and untimely. To all those who made this experience possible, I am forever grateful.

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# Contents

# 1 Introduction

Visions of an accelerating, perhaps even irreversible decline of religion both haunted and inspired the imagination of some of the most prominent intellectuals and artists in 19th-century Europe. While historians have rightly stressed that the experience of a crisis of faith was anything but common, if one looks at society as a whole,[1] and that any major crisis in Christian religion was still a distant prospect, these prophetic voices deserve all the attention that they have received. Far more important than any rapid and general decline in religiosity, is the fact that those who reflected on the spiritual situation of the times transformed their hopes and fears into compelling narratives; and thus bequeathed later scholars and thinkers a language that resonates to this day. On the one hand there were narratives of emancipation that interpreted the declining grip of religious ideas as a sign of progress and in terms of a recovery of natural human life and a natural humanistic morality. On the other hand there were narratives that instead emphasized the loss in loss of faith and foresaw a bleak future bereft of hope. While the humanist narratives of the past appear more questionable than ever after the horrors of the 20th century,[2] narratives that emphasized loss have proven remarkably resilient to criticism; at least insofar as their language provides the archetype for all narratives of modernization as loss. A striking and oft-quoted example of this vague sense of loss can be found in Matthew Arnold's poem *Dover Beach*, in the vision of a receding sea of faith, which only leaves melancholy behind (cf. Taylor 2007, 570).[3] Yet no words from that era have left such a

**1** Instead of implying that there was no basis for the intellectual discussion, this conforms with Max Weber's classical understanding of intellectuals as defined besides by their social position especially by their particular sensitivity to questions of "meaning", and specifically crises of meaning (Weber 1978, 506). There is also evidence that in the latter half of the century the discussions that had been confined to intellectual circles started to have a wider impact, though one can still not talk of a general crisis of the Christian religion (e.g. Chadwick 1975; cf. McLeod 2000).

**2** Thus, it is more than a coincidence that one can after the first World War observe a turn to anti-humanist alternatives in atheistic thinking; with the emergence of a number of positions that can only be grouped together due to a shared rejection of the most important presuppositions of 19th-century humanistic atheism; namely the ideas of the progress of reason, of a common human nature and common ethical ideals (cf. Geroulanos 2010). However, it needs specifically to be pointed out that this was not as radical a break with 19th-century thought as Geroulanos in his French case initially presents it to be (Geroulanos 2010, 1 and 4), but rather a shift to more complex and prescient 19th-century sources, above all to Nietzsche, as the case of Georges Bataille testifies (cf. Geroulanos 2010, 8), not to mention the later influence of Nietzsche on post-structuralist thinking. This influence e.g. on the radically atheistic (cf. Hägglund 2008) thinking of Jacques Derrida was pervasive, and one does not do justice to it by mentioning that he wrote about Nietzsche (Derrida 1979). The same applies to the atheism of Gilles Deleuze (cf. Deleuze 1983).

**3** It is here beside the point, whether a focus on this image is the best possible interpretation of the poem. What matters is that the metaphors are apt to describe a common view of modernity as an era of necessarily melancholic unbelief, "the view from Dover Beach", which Charles Taylor criticizes for rejecting humanism altogether and denying the possibility of living a life of faith in modernity (Taylor

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legacy as the words that God is dead, and no single thinker has been identified with the crisis in question, and with those particular words, in quite the same way as Friedrich Nietzsche. Indeed, this distinctively European philosopher is widely celebrated[4] as the pre-eminent diagnostician of what is at stake, and perhaps not entirely without cause.

Unfortunately, Nietzsche's enigmatic words that God is dead are all too often simply assumed to express the assumed horror of his own crisis of faith, as well as his lament for the fate of a culture that as a whole is about to lose faith, and these presuppositions consequently cast a cloud over the interpretation of the philosopher's thinking, not least when it concerns the future. In this sense, paragraph 125 of *The Gay Science* (GS 125, KSA 3, 480 – 482),[5] the famous parable in which a Madman announces that God is dead, is then read as an "archetypal Nietzschean expression of this notion of modernization as loss" (Pippin 1999, 147). Thus, as Robert Pippin notes, Nietzsche's diagnosis of a melancholic mood in modernity is read as the philosopher's own view of the truth about modernity; the truth that beneath all superficial joy a melancholic mood deriving from the absence of belief in an absolute value holds each and every one of us captive (cf. Pippin 1999, 148). Nietzsche certainly had little patience with the idea of an inevitable progress of reason or the idea that a natural morality must be humanistic and egalitarian (cf. A 4, KSA 6, 171) but it is nevertheless worth following up on Pippin's suggestion that Nietzsche can even less be fitted into the opposite camp and all its gloom.

Indeed, there are good reasons to provisionally start from the assumption that Nietzsche is sceptical of both narratives. Instead of seeking to provide a synthesis of the narratives, he seems to play with them and their respective metaphorical languages in his writings. Characteristically, he gives a variety of meanings to the words that God is dead, which has to quite a few scholars suggested that he sceptically conceives the spiritual crisis of his time as an unprecedented opening of possibilities (cf. Hödl 2009). Perhaps it is precisely this scepticism that makes him the preeminent

2007, 570 – 571). Taylor's monumental tome *A Secular Age* serves as a magnificent illustration of the enduring power of the major 19th-century narratives: Despite seeking to strike a balance between narratives of emancipation and narratives of loss, he ends up reinforcing the apologetic idea that life without reference to transcendence is diminished life (cf. Gordon 2008 and Lockwood 2015).

**4** Precisely therefore, it is a futile task to try to "prove" the influence of Nietzsche's words. Put differently, Nietzsche's words have become a cliché, and repeating them or invoking the philosopher's name doesn't imply that one has acquainted oneself with his philosophy. On a positive note and to mention but one recent example of the scholarly reception of Nietzsche's words beyond academic philosophy, the editors of the *Oxford Handbook of Atheism* justify their volume by referring to the words of "the great nineteenth-century German philosopher" (sic!) in the following way: "Whether Nietzsche was right about the death of God, he was surely right about the importance and significance of the death of God." (Bullivant and Ruse 2013, 2) It is hard to disagree with this perceptive statement, as the value of Nietzsche's thinking on the matter is arguably to be found precisely in his reflections of the significance, nature and possibilities of atheism.

**5** Consult section 10.1 for a list of abbreviations.

diagnostician of the crisis in question, as he turns melancholic and humanistic interpretations into objects of his psychological questioning. The decisive question, which remains to be answered, is whether he does not aim to be more than merely a diagnostician, whether his scepticism does not reach further. What is therefore called for is a study that revisits Nietzsche's criticism of religion, his thinking on the death of God, through the lens of his psychological thinking, but above all with a focus on the question of mood. Of course, there have been a number of studies of Nietzsche's psychology that have had a lot to say about religion, many of which are discussed in detail in this work, but none put mood at the centre of the investigation and quite a few of those that do discuss mood are methodologically flawed. Above all, it makes quite a difference whether one writes about Nietzsche's psychology with a focus on his psychological thinking or with a focus on his psyche. I will therefore now specify what kind of study I propose through a critical sketch of the scholarly position I argue against, the anti-thesis to my thesis.

A typical formulation of the view I argue against is that Nietzsche counts with a necessary progression from the recognition that God is dead to nihilism and to melancholy, the overcoming of which finally requires a return to religion in one form or another (e. g. Düsing 2010). Without exception, scholars who defend such a thesis rely heavily on psychological interpretations of biographical details. In doing so they follow the model provided by Lou von Salomé, that femme fatale, who besides managing to create quite a bit of havoc in the life of our philosopher, despite their fairly brief acquaintance, advocated the view that any serious study of Nietzsche's philosophy would essentially have to be a study in the psychology of religion [*religionspsychologische Studie*] (Andreas-Salomé 1894, 38). There has certainly been no lack of biographical studies that have treated Nietzsche as if he really aspired to be the founder of a religion [*Religionsstifter*] (Ross 1980, 584), and this despite his express wish not to be interpreted as such (KSA 6, 365).[6] More recently, this line of reasoning has also found both champions and adherents in Anglophone scholarship, in the context of which it is explicitly promoted as a revision of the scholarly consensus that Nietzsche was an atheist and that his thinking is atheistic to the core. It is, however, worth noting that discounting one notable exception (Young 2010) the emphasis has been more on philosophical speculation based on assumptions about Nietzsche's inmost desires than on serious biographical scholarship (e. g. Young 2006; cf. Fraser 2002 and Benson 2008). To be absolutely clear, I do not mean to deny that the philosophical and biographical are intertwined in Nietzsche's thinking; even to an unusual degree. Nor do I mean to deny that much can in fact be gained by devoting careful attention to such studies. Despite employing rather questionable hermeneutic practices in trying to prove that the driving force behind Nietzsche's philosophy is a religious impulse,

**6** Nietzsche's wish, which is best read in connection with his fear of being mistaken for something he is not (KSA 6, 257), is of course no objection in itself but worth mentioning as it points to the limits of biographical scholarship.

they at the very least raise awareness of an important question that should always be asked when interpreting his texts but which is all too often forgotten in more specific philosophical debates, namely: what does Nietzsche seek to achieve through his writings? Nevertheless, I propose a different approach to Nietzsche's psychology of religion; one that focuses primarily on his psychological thinking, instead of on his psyche. It is remarkable, that despite there being no lack of "psychological" studies of Nietzsche's relation to religion a thorough study of how Nietzsche's own thinking on mood relates to his critical project is still lacking.[7] In fact, so little attention has been paid to Nietzsche's own psychological thinking in the context of this particular debate that not even the most accomplished scholars of Nietzsche's criticism of religion, including those critical of biographical interpretations, explicitly mention it as a foundation of his criticism of religion.

In his erudite study *Der letzte Jünger des Philosophen Dionysos* Hans Gerald Hödl identifies historical criticism and language criticism as the foundations of both Nietzsche's early and late criticism of religion (Hödl 2009, 341). Undoubtedly, Hödl is correct, but he downplays how intricately these forms of criticism are intertwined with psychological thinking precisely when Nietzsche reinvented himself as an independent philosophical thinker in the 1870s, and how this heightened interest in psychology shaped the path of his later thinking. Perhaps it is even more correct to say that Hödl recognizes the problem but is reluctant to draw the required conclusions. When discussing Nietzsche's reception of historical thinking in this decisive period, he does note that Nietzsche's interest in historical criticism was to no small extent of a psychological character: on the one hand it concerned psychological analyses of the past and on the other the question whether the emergence of historical criticism itself should not be treated as a psychological problem (cf. Hödl 2009, 343 – 345). Likewise, Hödl himself mentions but does not reflect further on the fact that Nietzsche in the most important early expression of his criticism of language, in a text not intended for publication entitled *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, bases his criticism on the assumption of a drive to form metaphors (Hödl 2009, 345; TL 2, KSA 1, 887). In fact, the text is teeming with physiological (e. g. nerves) and psychological (feelings etc.) terms. Most importantly, when Nietzsche's criticism of religion appears in full force in *Human, All Too Human* (1878) it is primarily of a psychological character and this is all the more true of his later yet more radical criticism.

By pointing this out I do not here mean to challenge the consensus about the intellectual genealogy of Nietzsche's criticism of religion nor do I suggest that historical criticism and language criticism are unimportant in his mature thinking. I merely wish to add to this picture a dimension without which it would be incomplete; namely the fundamental importance that the development of Nietzsche's psychological

7 As I have already suggested, Robert Pippin's works (Pippin 1999 and 2010) contain valuable suggestions, but his discussion on Nietzsche in these works is essayistic and quite speculative in character, and his focus is not on Nietzsche's criticism of religion. In other words, a more comprehensive treatment is lacking, and such a treatment can arguably cast much light on the philosopher's thinking.

thinking has for his criticism of religion, which is such that it cannot simply be said to build on the other foundations.[8] In this sense, I take as my starting point Hödl's conclusion that one cannot understand Nietzsche's critical engagement with Christianity and atheism without taking account of his understanding of human possibilities.[9] The scholarly literature, including Hödl's account, has to be expanded, because the intimate connection between Nietzsche's thinking on human possibilities and his psychological thinking has not been explored thoroughly, and because exploring it might help solve central problems in scholarship about Nietzsche's critical thinking on religion, not least how to understand his words that God is dead.

In this study, I will explore Nietzsche's criticism of religion in the light of his communication of mood. I speak of Nietzsche's communication of mood, because Nietzsche's psychological thinking about mood is arguably not only present in his statements but also manifests itself in his strategies of writing (see esp. chapter 3 on why taking account of statements is not enough). Specifically, I argue that the philosopher aims through his writings to make possible what one scholar has called affective reorientation;[10] i.e. a transformation of feeling, specifically towards post-religious modes of experience. This is the provisional starting point of the investigation, the adequacy of which will be measured against the best available evidence throughout this study. Needless to say, this assumption allows for a variety of more or less controversial interpretations, wherefore I will now specify exactly how it is to be understood and how it should inform the way one reads the texts, before moving on to present the central questions that I seek to answer through this work.

## 1.1 Introduction to Nietzsche's communication of mood

In his lectures on Nietzsche's aristocratic radicalism, which were held in Copenhagen in 1888 and soon thereafter published as an article, Georg Brandes right at the outset made a case as to why one should read the philosopher. Put in plain English, Brandes ascribes to Nietzsche many talents, among which however he singles out

**8** One likely reason why scholars working within philological traditions have not emphasized Nietzsche's psychological thinking is because it is practically impossible to establish precisely where his psychological ideas came from, except perhaps for his terminology. Nietzsche's psychological thinking seems to a large part to stem from Nietzsche himself and that might be bewildering to those who only have eyes for texts, i.e. to scholars trained to always look for a source in a text instead of in life (see chapter 3 and chapter 4, especially 4.1.1).

**9** Hödl ends up arguing forcefully for the significance of what he, in lack of a better word, calls the anthropological function of Nietzsche's criticism of religion, i.e. its preoccupation with human possibilities [*Möglichkeiten des Menschseins*] (Hödl 2009, 361–362).

**10** I borrow the term from Christopher Janaway, who uses it to describe what he interprets as Nietzsche's attempts to influence the reader's emotions in *GM* (Janaway 2007). My use of the term differs only insofar as my focus is more on the big picture of moving from religiously conditioned feelings to post-religious feeling.

the rare talent to communicate mood and so to set thoughts in motion.[11] The word communicate is here of utmost importance, since it implies that Nietzsche's writings not only evoke mood or elicit any other affective responses in the reader, but that Nietzsche sought to communicate mood. Many intriguing questions can be asked about what I here also call Nietzsche's affective communication. How does it relate to Nietzsche's philosophical projects? Is it a vital part of his projects or a mere rhetorical addition to a philosophy that could as well be communicated as pure theory? While the lectures of Brandes are generally recognized as having been decisive for the international reception of Nietzsche's philosophy, the scholarly literature has surprisingly little to offer in form of answers to such questions. A quick glance at the history of the reception of Nietzsche's writings reveals that readers have almost without exception felt themselves to be emotionally moved and challenged by Nietzsche's words, but it is far more rare to find perceptive reflection on the meaning of this phenomenon. In this regard, the Austrian author Stefan Zweig must be honoured, whatever else one might think of his oeuvre in general, or specifically his understanding of Nietzsche, as he gave an intriguing description of the philosopher's communication of mood. Zweig finds in Nietzsche's writings no explicit teaching but the transmission of a specific atmosphere, meant to spur the recipient towards ever greater independence.[12] If Zweig's intuition captures something important in Nietzsche's writings, or if it is of any value at all, one can ask why then there has been such a silence on the matter in academic scholarship, as the consequences of accepting that there is some truth to it are not negligible.

Most likely as a result of the pervasive influence of the linguistic turn on 20th-century philosophy and scholarship in the humanities, the question concerning the manner of Nietzsche's communication, and its relation to his philosophical projects, has all too often been reduced to one concerning Nietzsche's style in a very narrow sense. Specifically, it has been reduced to the thesis that Nietzsche's style, or more properly his use of a wide variety of styles, is designed to resist systematic interpretation (e. g. Derrida 1979, Kofman 1993 and Nehamas 1985; cf. Westerdale 2013). From this starting point, which to some extent is indisputable, one can either move in the direction of a deconstructive philosophical approach or towards a strictly philological approach, both of which have resulted in invaluable contributions to the understanding of Nietzsche's thinking. Although such philosophical exercises and philolo-

**11** "*Han har blandt flere gode Egenskaber den at meddele Stemning og sætte Tanker i Bevægelse.*" (Brandes 1889, 565)

**12** "*Nietzsches großartige Unabhängigkeit schenkt … keine Lehre (wie die Schulhaften meinen), sondern eine Atmosphäre, die unendlich klare, überhelle, von Leidenschaft durchströmte Atmosphäre einer dämonischen Natur, die sich in Gewitter und Zerstörung erlöst. Tritt man in seine Bücher, so fühlt man Ozon, elemenatrische, von aller Dumpfheit, Vernebelung und Schwüle entschwängerte Luft: man sieht frei in dieser heroischen Landschaft bis in alle Himmel hinauf und atmet eine einzig dursichtige, messerscharfe Luft, eine Luft für starke Herzen und freie Geister. Immer ist Freiheit Nietzsches letzter Sinn…*" (Zweig 1925, 322)

gical scholarship have rightly stressed that Nietzsche's manner of communication reflects his philosophical projects, there is no denying that the affective dimension of his writing has been marginalized in the process. This has come to pass despite the fact that Nietzsche himself emphasized the emotional dimension of his texts.[13] The strongest expression is to be found in *EH*, where looking back at his own work right before his descent into madness he writes: "Communicating a state, an inner tension of pathos through signs, including the tempo of these signs – that is the point of every style", and consequently adds that, "Every style is good that really communicates an inner state" (Large 2007, 40 – 41; KSA 6, 304). Nietzsche thus insists that there is no good style in itself; that the value of a style is measured by its ability to communicate a felt state. That he here indeed speaks primarily about what style means for him, instead of the goals of style in general, is apparent when one takes into account that he then goes on to speak of his own work. Importantly, and perhaps rather alarmingly, Nietzsche adds that his understanding of style presupposes readers who are capable of experiencing such states as his style expresses. Specifically, he claims that until there are readers with the right "ears to hear" no one will comprehend his *Zarathustra* (KSA 6, 304). Rather than discarding this discussion as a sign of his approaching madness, there are reasons to regard it as an extreme statement of what he had been trying to do since his first frontal attack on religion in *HH* (cf. chapter 4). Such or similar understandings present serious problems to the task of interpretation. Indeed, it is worth asking, if an acknowledgement of an affective dimension to the texts does not place impossible demands on the interpreter and consequently render interpretation next to impossible.

Perhaps the reluctance to pay more attention to Nietzsche's affective communication has to do with an understandable fear that doing so would restrict the possibilities open to interpretation. It seems to me as if the choice has been between accepting Nietzsche's extreme statements as they are, or ignoring the affective dimension altogether. Be that as it may, it is notable that of major 20th-century interpreters only the philosopher and psychiatrist Karl Jaspers understood the question of style as one concerning experiences and gave it a central role in his investigations. His intervention is, however, deeply unsatisfactory. Jaspers essentially claims that in order to understand any thought that the reader encounters in Nietzsche's texts, the reader would have to enter the state that gave rise to the thought in Nietzsche.[14] This is an extreme demand to place on the interpreter, unless of course one assumes that Nietzsche's text is somehow able to attune or transport the reader to that state of mind in which the thinker originally had his thoughts. Perhaps Nietzsche at some

**13** There are certainly a few exceptions, mostly among philosophically inclined scholars, and they will be discussed and critiqued throughout the study. What is evident is that these discussions have been marginal and have had no significant impact on the dominant trends in scholarship.
**14** "*Nietzsche spricht aus seinen Zuständen heraus und kein Gedanke von ihm kommt einem Leser nah, der nicht unmerklich mit eintritt in den Zustand, aus dem er bei Nietzsche gedacht war.*" (Jaspers 1981, 338)

point really thought that was what his style did instead of only playing with the idea that the perfect style could have such an effect on the reader (cf. HH II, WS 88, KSA 2, 593). Nevertheless, this latter way of understanding Jaspers' statement is unhelpful and utterly implausible, as not only countless ordinary readers fail to grasp what Nietzsche really had in mind and experience only frustrated irritation when confronted with his texts. Even experienced scholars have fundamental disagreements about the best interpretations of central issues such as the words that God is dead. In other words, Nietzsche's texts are demanding, which leads us back to the first and simplest reading of Jaspers' contention as a prohibitively demanding precondition for understanding. As such, Jaspers' claim opens the door to esoteric interpretations of Nietzsche's writings by which I refer to interpretations that stress the supposed affinity between Nietzsche and the interpreter. Ultimately, such interpretations of which there is no lack rely more on the authority of the interpreter than on the evidence of the text, and therefore they should be granted no place in scholarship. How should one then proceed? For now it is enough to note that the specific way that Jaspers formulates his demand is problematic for any interpretation, whether it rests on esoteric claims of natural affinity or careful and transparent use of the evidence at hand. This becomes clear when one takes Nietzsche's troubles with his health into account. To step into the state from out of which some thought of Nietzsche sprung, would require the ability to experience his pains, and there is not even agreement about what caused his various ailments, nor is it likely that there ever will be.

Jaspers does not mention the source that his claim rests on; it is rather based on a comprehensive intuition. Nevertheless, textual support for it is not hard to find. However, Nietzsche also makes the connection to disease. The foreword to the 1887 edition of *GS* is most explicit in this regard. There Nietzsche writes specifically of the health of the philosopher: "he simply cannot keep from transposing his states every time into the most spiritual form and distance: this art of transfiguration is philosophy" (Kaufmann 1974, 35; GS Preface 3, KSA 3, 349). Have we then not already reached a dead-end? To the contrary, it can be shown that Jaspers' intuition is misguided, though obviously not entirely unfounded, and that Nietzsche's self-presentation in that foreword is deceptive. The reason is fairly simple. Jaspers fails to distinguish between the states and moods of Nietzsche's thinking and the expression of his thoughts in his published writings. This is a problematic hermeneutic when applied to any writer, but in the case of Nietzsche, it is a fatal mistake. The evidence speaks a clear language. One can often follow how a thought that Nietzsche has scribbled down in his notebook develops and takes a rather different form in the published writings. Indeed, there is plenty of evidence that Nietzsche actively sought to shape his writings according to aesthetic ideals, and that they can in no way be treated as the pure expression of an existential state (see especially chapter 6). I therefore here propose a different approach to the question of style, centred on the idea of communication of mood, the presuppositions of which I will outline next.

In order to be able to have a meaningful scholarly discussion about mood in Nietzsche's writings, one must (1) assume that whatever configurations of feeling

are expressed in his texts are at least in principle accessible to the interpreter. I maintain that this statement must not itself be qualified, but that one should note the words "in principle". For the interpreter this means nothing more than that a general openness toward affective phenomena is required. One can recognize and to a certain extent understand a mood without fully inhabiting it. Basically, and I stress the word "basically", this is no more mysterious when it comes to texts as when we are dealing with intersubjective understanding. Admittedly, openness towards moods can be impaired, and in this regard there are degrees from mild mood disorders to more pronounced psychic pathology, though it is generally recognized that only in certain severe psychiatric diagnoses is the horizon of mood altogether locked (cf. Ratcliffe 2008 and Ratcliffe 2014).[15] One could, however, argue that texts require more than a general openness towards mood, but this I maintain is only true in the rather trivial sense that the interpretation of text is an art that requires a certain set of skills and practice, perhaps even a certain predisposition. Arguably, Nietzsche's texts are especially demanding in this sense so the rather elitist intuition that one finds in Nietzsche's own comments and which I see at work in esoteric interpretations need not be totally abandoned, as long as one recognizes its limits. This, in short, might be called the accessibility criterion.

One must also (2) assume that whatever feelings one finds expressed in Nietzsche's texts, they are at least to a significant degree best understood as intentional communication. In other words, one must assume that Nietzsche sought to communicate specific feelings and by extension a specific configuration of mood, which in turn presupposes that Nietzsche did not write only for himself, but wanted to be understood. This might be called the intentionality criterion.

Last but not least, we must (3) assume that the affective dimension of Nietzsche's texts is philosophically significant, at the very least in the minimal sense that it is significant for understanding the aims of his philosophy. Against this background, it is worth pointing out that one can find many distinct feelings in the texts we are concerned with, and that it is impossible to take account of all of them. This is no problem at all, since I take it as a fairly uncontroversial assumption that some aspects of Nietzsche's communication are more significant than others, and that it is the big picture that matters. That means that the focus of scholarly work should not primarily be on a single affect or affects in a specific passage in the following sense: "in this passage Nietzsche is trying to evoke affect X". That would be fairly pointless. Instead, the focus should be on a contextual reading of the communication of the kind of mood(s) that he considers to be of particular, perhaps lasting value. Put differently, the focus should be on those feelings that contribute to affective reorientation. This might be called the relevance criterion.

**15** The work of Matthew Ratcliffe is apt to illustrate the importance of mood in life. What interests Ratcliffe specifically is how feelings and moods, or what he terms existential feelings, open up and close horizons of possibility. E. g. in depression the experience of moods is limited and one loses much of the sense for possibilities that elated moods open up (see Ratcliffe 2008 and Ratcliffe 2014).

These basic, interconnected criteria make a meaningful discussion of the affective dimension of Nietzsche's texts possible, not least because they provide a foundation for intersubjective verification of the results of research. Needless to say, the assumptions of course have to be made plausible in the sense that one cannot for example simply assume purely on the basis of subjective experiences of reading that Nietzsche intended to communicate some specific feeling which one experiences when reading the text. This merely points to the necessity of a transparent use of evidence. Now, if one puts the three points together, one can come to the following conclusion: That Nietzsche wrote in a manner designed to provoke an affective response suggests that he might have had, when composing any specific text, an ideal mood in mind, the possibility of which his text is meant to communicate. This is a contentious issue. Jaspers for one did not think that Nietzsche had any such ideal, and that he instead only described various distinct ideals. However, his evidence is problematic. Jaspers incomprehensibly takes as guide a statement that the philosopher wrote in a notebook in the year 1881: "one should not strive for any state at all".[16] If one randomly scours the *Nachlass* for support of one's own view, another note, from 1884, in which Nietzsche defines for himself the meaning of the philosophical life as a love of a high feeling,[17] could with equal or more reason be taken as symptomatic for his way of life as well as of his writings. One should in any case rather consult the published work and consider the greater trajectory of Nietzsche's writing. Thus, for example, Manfred Kaempfert notes that Nietzsche's entire conception of philosophy is guided by the vision of a sublime state.[18] There has been a tendency among some scholars to interpret this eminently desirable state as a religious state. Kaempfert himself labels it quasi-religious [*religioid*], but more recently there have been less ambiguous judgements. Julian Young bluntly identifies it as a religious state, specifically as an ecstatic state, in which one feels as if one were "in heaven … eternal" (Young 1992, 115; cf. Young 2006, 110 – 111 and Young 2010, 562). Young's judgement is insofar understandable, as Nietzsche describes his

**16** Own translation of: "*Erster Satz meiner Moral: man soll keine Zustände erstreben, weder sein Glück, noch seine Ruhe, noch seine Herrschaft über sich.*" (Jaspers 1981, 338; cf. NL 1881, 12[89], KSA 9, 592) The problem here is that Nietzsche's published writings do not contain any significant expressions of this sentiment; to the contrary. Jaspers also cuts short another note that he uses to justify his approach: "*wir dürfen nicht einen Zustand wollen*" (Jaspers 1981, 336, cf. NL1882, 1[70], KSA 10, 28). This note, if indeed it should be considered significant, is arguably best interpreted only as a rejection of such states that close off access to other moods, and has otherwise not much to do with the question whether specific moods are more desirable than others. In other words, it is in itself a sign of at least an ideal about moods: a rejection of end-states.

**17** "*Philosophie als Liebe zur Weisheit. Hinauf zu dem Weisen als dem Beglücktesten, Mächtigsten, der alles Werden rechtfertigt und wieder will. – nicht Liebe zu den Menschen oder zu Göttern, oder zur Wahrheit, sondern Liebe zu einem Zustand, einem geistigen und sinnlichen Vollendungs-Gefühl: ein Bejahen und Gutheißen aus einem überströmenden Gefühle von gestaltender Macht. Die große Auszeichnung. Wirkliche Liebe!*" (NL 1884, 25[451])

**18** "*Zielvorstellung eines höchst erhabenen Seelenzustandes*" (Kaempfert 1971, 134)

ideal with metaphors of heights. Interpreters have certainly had a hard time with these metaphors. To mention but one example, Eugen Biser righty noted the centrality of these metaphors but practically admitted being at a loss how to interpret them (cf. Biser 1962, 249 – 256). Perhaps this study of Nietzsche's criticism of religion, the central questions of which I present next, can through its emphasis on Nietzsche's psychological thinking on mood cast light on this problem and bring much needed precision to the scholarly discussion.

## 1.2 The research questions and their sources in traditions of scholarship

As I explore Nietzsche's criticism of religion in the light of his communication of mood, the following are the guiding questions. What role, if any significant role at all, does communication of mood play in the context of Nietzsche's criticism of religion? How and why does Nietzsche criticize religion and how and why does he seek to communicate mood? If indeed there is evidence that Nietzsche seeks to communicate mood in his first major attack on religion in *HH* (1878), how does the nature of his communication change over the years? Does Nietzsche seek to communicate an ideal mood, and if yes, how should this mood be characterized? Is it perhaps best described as a religious state of mind? If it is best described as a religious state, should the goals of Nietzsche's philosophy be described as religious?

Needless to say these questions arise primarily from an engagement with Nietzsche's philosophy, and secondarily from an engagement with scholarly commentary, as should be evident from the discussion thus far. Yet their precise articulation, the way the questions are framed, follows from the perspective of this study, which grows out of a scholarly tradition that is if not entirely foreign to the discourse still foreign enough to enable a certain distancing from most of the secondary literature on Nietzsche's thinking on religion. Since this perspective guides the study, but remains in the background throughout the work, it is here necessary to clarify its character. The perspective in question is fundamentally not that of a philosopher but that of a scholar of the history of religions.[19] What this practically means here is not only that the focus is squarely on Nietzsche's criticism of religion, but more importantly that it is in this context on questions about desire, about extraordinary experiences, and above all about mood. In other words, the focus is on aspects of reality and of Nietzsche's thinking that philosophers all too often eschew. As a contrast, reflection on such questions has traditionally been at the centre of the history of religions. In order to avoid misunderstandings it is worth noting straight at the

**19** In this regard, my work grows out of a specifically Viennese tradition of seeking to make advances in *Religionswissenschaft* fruitful for research on Nietzsche and vice versa (cf. Figl 2007 and Hödl 2007), and of sceptically questioning the value of viewing Nietzsche as a religious "*Gottsucher*" (Figl 2000, 99; cf. Hödl 2009).

outset that the focus of scholarship in this discipline was never exclusively and definitely no longer is on defining the human as essentially *homo religiosus* (cf. Lang 1993, 164 – 172), and then approaching experience through this prejudice, but rather on examining how experience turns into religious experience through interpretation (cf. Geertz 1973, 97).[20] From this perspective, it therefore does not follow that I would *a priori* treat Nietzsche as an essentially religious thinker. To the contrary, precisely this perspective, and specifically the sceptical spirit that is prominent if not dominant within the contemporary study of religions, can guard against too hasty classifications and comparisons, which arguably obscure rather than cast light on the goals of Nietzsche's philosophy. That this indeed is the case can be shown through a short digression into the debate about the concept of religion within the discipline.

The classical traditions of this discipline already emphasize the variety of human experience; an emphasis which sooner or later leads to the recognition that not only is there a wide variety of ways of being religious but also of being non-religious and that just as experiences that seem ordinary can take on religious meaning experiences that seem extraordinary should not necessarily be classified as religious.[21] Although there will always be debate about the definition of religion within the field, it is generally agreed that broad definitions that fail to demarcate religion properly and at worst end up finding religiosity in all articulations of the experience of being in the world must be rejected as useless and meaningless. For example, defining religion in a way that is bound to make all of us religious and then declaring that Nietzsche should be approached as a religious thinker is hardly helpful.[22] According-

**20** To be absolutely clear, I am here not claiming that Geertz worked within the discipline I am describing. Although Geertz was an anthropologist writing primarily for anthropologists, his emphasis on the "interpretation of culture" (Geertz 1973), in the sense of highlighting the role of interpretation in shaping culture, influenced academic discourse far beyond anthropology. Indeed, his understanding of religion has been "extraordinarily influential" (Arnal 2000, 26) in almost all academic research on religion, including the discipline known as history of religions.

**21** This recognition already played an important role in William James' classic work on the *Varieties of Religious Experience* (James 2012 [1902]), which has just like the work of Geertz been immensely influential in the study of religion. It is nevertheless worth noting that, as a philosopher in his own right, James seems to have thought that the "strenuous mood", the mood he considers the highest and most noble, requires a religious interpretation of the world in order to be experienced and maintained. James specifically denied that anything finite such as humanistic visions of future progress could motivate the kind of striving that allows one to be indifferent to the hardship of one's own life in the present and to work for a greater future. Instead, he thought only the vision of infinite value, i. e. of God, can open the highest possible mood (cf. Slater 2009, 86 – 88). This matter is no mere curiosity: not only does feeling play a central role in pragmatist philosophy, and in the thinking of James in particular (cf. Shusterman 2012), but the question of mood should, as I here seek to show, be considered central to serious thinking on life without religion and to Nietzsche's concerns, wherefore it is of great interest to clarify his quite different answer.

**22** There has certainly been no lack of attempts to stretch the definition of religion in order to be able to treat Nietzsche as an essentially religious thinker. While I fully agree with Johann Figl that it can be very fruitful to take a specifically *religionswissenschaftlich* perspective when approaching the ques-

ly, more recent reflection on the concept of religion has underscored the necessity of limiting the use of the term since that is a presupposition for meaningful scholarship. On the grounds that the concept of religion evidently is a social construction it has been forcefully argued that scholars should take a minimalist position, and altogether refrain from thinking that there is an essence of religion to be found either in human nature, i. e. "deep within" the psyche, or in a specific category of experience that is *sui generis* (e. g. McCutcheon 1997, Arnal 2000 and Stuckrad 2003; cf. Lincoln 2012, 1–3). While such a position can be presented as a radical turn away from the kind of essentialist reflection on experience that has traditionally dominated the discipline (e. g. Fitzgerald 2000b), the basic constructionist proposition that no experience should in itself be defined as religious, as it is interpretation that makes an experience religious, might just as well be read as a fruitful radicalization of the basic insight that not all extraordinary experience should be classified as religious and therefore as calling for a shift to questions concerning interpretations of experience and the communication of interpretations (cf. Stuckrad 2003). I mention this possibility, because I think the most radical proponents of constructionism fail to fully recognize that the interpretation of experience is not merely a matter of putting experience into words but that interpretation can fundamentally shape experience (Geertz 1973, 95 and 124). That radical constructionists fail to recognize this is evident when they go on to advance the claim that one cannot distinguish the experiences of religious persons from the experiences of the non-religious in any meaningful sense and that therefore not only notions of religious experience but the entire concept of religion should be abandoned as an analytic tool (e. g. Fitzgerald 2000a and 2000b). Once the minimalist position has morphed into an eliminativistic program, the only questions that remain for the scholar to pursue concern the use of language (cf. Fitzgerald 2000a, 4–5); e. g. who uses the term religion and related terms, to what terms is religion opposed in discourse, and whose interests does such discourse serve. Al-

tion of Nietzsche's relation to religion, and admire much of his work in the field, his suggestion in one paper that it might be beneficial to operate with a definition of religiosity as the capacity to answer to the suffering of existence (Figl 2002, 160) shall here be made to serve as a warning example. Such a definition should be rejected precisely from within the history of religions, as everyone is bound to come to terms with suffering in one way or another, which means that the history of religion loses all focus. It does not even help much to specify that one means coming to terms with suffering psychologically through the construction and maintenance of a worldview. Indeed, it will still be hard not to think of the therapist's couch if not the hospital as the religious institution *par excellence*, unless one specifies that the answer to suffering has to have something to do with a transcendent reality or incorruptible value in order to be classified as religious. Figl, however, explicitly rejects such an understanding of religion as unfruitful in the context of his paper, in which he argues that it hinders the dialogue between Nietzsche's position and Christianity (Figl 2002, 160–161). This is not only a questionable idea, as it implies that religious persons can only engage in fruitful dialogue with persons that can be defined as religious, but also an unmistakably ecumenical if not explicitly theological one. To Figl's credit, he only suggests the possibility of such an approach for the purpose of dialogue and in no way seeks to downplay Nietzsche's hostility towards Christianity or his atheism following stricter definitions of religion (cf. Figl 2002).

though it certainly is an important task to always keep such questions in mind, and in this regard even critics acknowledge that the challenge of radical constructionism has without a doubt heightened reflexive awareness in the discipline (cf. Schilbrack 2012, 113 – 115), the consequences of rigidly adhering to a rule so restrictive would be just as devastating for scholarship as operating with a too broad definition. This can again be illustrated by the case of scholarship on Nietzsche, which would have to refrain from making any judgements about whether the philosopher's writings express a desire for an experience or ideal that can only be described as religious, since it purportedly is impossible to distinguish a religious ideal from a non-religious ideal in a way that makes sense. While I have expressed scepticism regarding some ways of approaching the issue, for instance through biographical speculation, declaring that central question completely meaningless is hardly satisfying.

Fortunately, it can be shown that it does not follow from the fact that the concept of religion is a social construct that the term is not analytically useful in the sense that it would in no case refer to anything that can be observed and intersubjectively verified (cf. Schilbrack 2012, 100 – 101 and 103 – 106). First of all, it is worth noting that power, politics and the state are also social constructs in the specific sense that religion can be said to be, but none of the scholars who would eliminate "religion" from the analytic vocabulary of scholars argue that the concepts "power", "politics" and "state" do not refer to anything that can be observed and are entirely useless or that one could not discriminate between more and less fitting uses of the terms within and beyond academia; to the contrary they rightly recognize that it is hard to make sense of the world without them (cf. Schilbrack 2012, 100 – 101). Secondly, and more importantly, it simply makes no sense to claim that one could altogether blend out the psychological dimension in the social construction of religion, i. e. that the construction of religion fundamentally is a matter of the interpretation of experience in more than some trivial sense of using words. In this regard, it is of course crucial to distinguish between the construction of religious discourse, which is primary, and the construction of discourse about religion, which is secondary; something radical constructionists fail to do. If one can associate the construction of religious discourse with a specific way of interpreting experience, perhaps best conceptualized as a "religious perspective" (Geertz 1973, 110), the claim that one could not distinguish between what kind of discourse is best classified as religious and what kind is not can be refuted. Thus, Bruce Lincoln, who advocates a moderate constructionism and whose theses on method provide a telling example of the sceptical spirit that is so prominent in the field today (Lincoln 2012, 1 – 3), holds that one can very well distinguish religious discourse from other forms of discourse as the kind of discourse that relies on the notion of a reality which is immune to the corruption of time. That which in Lincoln's words defines religion is a "desire to speak of things eternal and transcendent with an authority equally transcendent

and eternal" (Lincoln 2012, 1).[23] It is in this view then the task of the historian of religion to identify and critically examine such discourse as well as the desires that produce it, which makes this a particularly fruitful framework for approaching the question about religiosity in Nietzsche's writings. After all, the key question in the controversy surrounding Nietzsche's relation to religion is whether his texts only counter and criticize the discourse of transcendence or also contain expressions of a desire for transcendence significant enough to define the goals of his philosophy as religious. More specifically, the question is whether Nietzsche's writings speak of a striving for an experience of a transcendent state of being (see section 1.1) that can only be defined as religious.[24] Because Nietzsche himself "constructs" religion in similar terms (see esp. chapter 2 and chapter 4, section 4.1), even the most radical constructionist will agree that one cannot simply bypass the metaphysical idea of transcendence and operate with a completely different concept of religion when approaching his work. Of course, the radical constructionist will demand that one also asks what purpose speaking of religion in such terms serves in Nietzsche's writings. This is certainly a crucial question and it might just turn out that precisely a perspective informed by this question and the sceptical spirit of the contemporary academic study of religions allows one to describe Nietzsche's relation to religion with greater nuance. This is arguably not only the case because a healthy scepticism concerning the concept of religion allows one to view scholarly ideas about Nietzsche's religiosity with a critical distance, but also because the question about the ends of Nietzsche's discourse on religion points directly to an important aspect regarding the construction of religion in the philosopher's writings; namely the question of mood.

Arguably, Nietzsche constructs religion in a way that inevitably leads him to ask questions about mood, if he indeed constructs religion in terms of a desire for another world (see esp. chapter 2 and chapter 4, section 4.1). That it is at least worth asking about the role of mood in his work is strongly suggested by those traditions in the

**23** This definition avoids problematic assumptions about humans being essentially *homo religiosus*, but does not go to the other extreme to deny the psychological roots of religion, i. e. that religious interpretations arise from human desires. In other words, one can and should recognize that humans often express a desire for transcendence without assuming that one would be dealing with a by its nature perennial "religious desire". The most obvious practical benefit of such a definition of religion in terms of discourse is that it is strict enough to limit the use of the term but wide enough to cover the central discourses of all those social constructions commonly labelled religious. To be precise, the definition prevents viewing football as by its nature religious, and instead allows one to compare the classical writings about the deeds and teachings of Jesus Christ with those about the Buddha as expressions of a desire to speak about things eternal and transcendent.

**24** For the work done here it is consequently not decisive that other leading scholars of religion (e. g. Bruce 2011, 1), not to speak of philosophers (e. g. Taylor 2007 and Hägglund 2008, 8), also do not shy away from defining religion as bound to notions of transcendent reality, since this is often done in an unreflective manner. It is here rather the case that a heuristic definition such as Lincoln's seems to be the best one available for approaching the task at hand.

study of religion that emphasize that religious interpretation shapes experience. In this regard, it is impossible to overlook Clifford Geertz's definition of religion as

> (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz 1973, 90)

While Geertz's definition has been criticized for being too vague and potentially misleading,[25] it is nevertheless useful in order to raise the question about secularization and moods. Given that establishing specific moods that are connected to the idea of transcendence arguably is characteristic of at least the dominant forms of the Christian religion,[26] questions about mood can be assumed to arise in thinking that seeks to move beyond religion in a context shaped by that religious tradition. One should already therefore raise the question about mood when investigating European criticism of religion. In this sense, Geertz' work provides the background for my attempt to describe Nietzsche's criticism of religion in the light of his communication of mood.

Geertz' does not provide even a rudimentary phenomenology of mood, as that would be an unnecessary distraction from his main concerns, but it is evident that his understanding of mood is intimately related to philosophical attempts to grasp in words the intuition that all experience is felt and that the way it is felt is indissociable from time and place. The name of Martin Heidegger is perhaps most widely associated with the notion that being is always already attuned, i.e. that we approach the world in and through moods (cf. Heidegger 2006). However, it is worth emphasizing that strikingly similar ideas can be found in thinkers preceding him (cf. Emerson 1983, 30) as well as among later philosophers who explicitly relate their views to psychological and neuroscientific research (e.g. Bollnow 1941, Ratcliffe 2008 and Colombetti 2014). While acquaintance with the works of such thinkers can certainly be helpful when approaching Nietzsche's thinking on mood, Nietzsche's

**25** One should of course not forget that the definition was meant to spur more anthropological fieldwork (cf. Arnal 2000, 26), and definitely not to reveal the truth about the essence of religion, though it has certainly been misused in this way (cf. McCutcheon 1997, 9–10). In other words, its vagueness need not be interpreted as a weakness as is often argued (e.g. Arnal 2000, 29), since it was meant to provide initial orientation and for this reason leaves room for the scholar to specify the key terms (e.g. "system of symbols") in a culturally sensitive way. Just as Geertz intended, I have used the definition as orientation, and in this sense it has inspired my work. While Geertz was also adamant that one can and should distinguish religious from other ways of viewing the world (cf. Geertz 1973, 110), I here specify that the "system of symbols" is the discourse of transcendence. This is a justified addition that is helpful for understanding the specifics of European religious history, and which is supported by Geertz's own example that: "A man can indeed be said to be 'religious' about golf, but not merely if he pursues it with passion and plays it on Sundays: he must also see it as symbolic of some transcendent truths." (Geertz 1973, 98)

**26** As Geertz cursorily notes: "In the doctrine of original sin is embedded also a recommended attitude toward life, a recurring mood, and a persisting set of motivations." (Geertz 1973, 124)

thinking deserves to be considered in its own right. Therefore, I here refrain from engaging in a detailed discussion of their works. For the main purpose of this study, it is in any case quite inconsequential whether this understanding of mood as "always there" is true in the sense of being the best possible articulation of the matter (though I take it as fairly uncontroversial that it is). What matters is showing that Nietzsche operates with a similar understanding of mood and showing how this influences his writings. So the point is primarily to take account of a dimension of the philosopher's thinking that aids the understanding of his texts, not to examine or to promote a specific understanding of mood for its own sake. Consequently, it is up to the reader of this study, just as it is up to the reader of Nietzsche, to ask to what extent the matters dealt with reflect his or her own experience. In other words, returning to Geertz, it is up to the reader to ask why it is the case, if it is the case, that the moods and motivations at stake seem uniquely realistic.

The word describe is indeed quite significant to distinguish the project undertaken here from certain kinds of normative philosophical approaches. This means above all that my aim is neither to promote nor to refute Nietzsche's criticism of religion. While I do present philosophical interpretations of Nietzsche's writings, the aim is always clarification, though admittedly such clarification also does much to clarify on what grounds one can form an opinion of the value of his writings. The scholar of religion is also not blind to the value that the research object might have for the understanding of religion and atheism. Indeed, the guiding intuition behind this study is that by taking account of Nietzsche's criticism of religion, much can be gained for a better understanding of contemporary philosophical atheism (See chapter 8 and Conclusions) as well as of the philosophical background shaping debates about secularization (see Conclusions). While one might question the value of purely philosophical readings of Nietzsche's thinking as well as that of strict Nietzsche-scholarship, not least in a situation where the secondary literature seems to grow at a faster pace year by year, the research interest that lies behind this study is arguably of broader concern. That remains to be demonstrated, and for now we turn our attention to Nietzsche and scholarship on Nietzsche's philosophy. In this regard, there are of course traditions of scholarship that refrain from explicit value judgements and instead focus on clarification. Therefore, I will briefly name and describe the traditions I mostly draw on in this study.

A veritable industry of Anglophone scholarship has during the last decades grown to complement the already venerable continental tradition of Nietzsche-scholarship, of which the German, French and Italian variants are the most vibrant. This study is an attempt to marry the respective virtues of these two traditions.[27] Therefore, the reader of this volume should find a strong emphasis on clarity and argumentation familiar from analytic Anglophone approaches (e. g. Leiter 2002), as

**27** I regret that I am here unable to draw much on the French and Italian traditions, so it might be said that I specifically seek to bring the German and the Anglophone traditions into dialogue.

well as a careful attention to the evidence of the texts from the more philological continental tradition (e. g. Zittel 2011). This should result in what is best termed a contextual interpretation; an interpretation that takes into account the most relevant evidence in clarifying the philosophical intentions of Nietzsche's major writings. Closely related understandings of contextual interpretation can in fact be found within the continental tradition (e. g. Hödl 2009), but it needs to be explicitly pointed out that the approach taken here is not to be confused with a method of interpretation that takes as its primary task the reading of a philosophical text in its historical context. Interpreted narrowly, such a strategy would mean focusing exclusively on the texts that the philosopher can be assumed to have read and on his documented interactions with his contemporaries, and using this knowledge as a key to the text. Just as secondary literature in general is drawn upon to aid interpretation, not for its own sake, such historical contextualization can be useful but has no value in itself and, if taken to an extreme, might distract from or even distort what matters most in the text, i. e. that which is worth clarifying: namely, the philosophical intention. In the case of Nietzsche, this is arguably particularly evident, since one has to operate with a broader notion of context in order to take account of the emotional dimension of his writings. In other words, the decisive evidence for interpretation is simply not be found in potential textual sources but within the play of Nietzsche's own texts that themselves form a context; the primary context from within which any interpretation that wants to do justice to Nietzsche's efforts should arise. A final note on the emphasis I place on evidence is still required. This emphasis means that there will out of necessity be quite a lot of paraphrase as well as direct quotes from Nietzsche's writings. As much as there is reason to avoid unnecessary paraphrasing of Nietzsche's text, the nature of this study makes a fair amount unavoidable. Besides, it is worth bearing in mind that any rigid distinction between paraphrase and clarifying interpretation is hard to uphold, and especially so when translation is involved.

Finally, it has to be pointed out that, irrespective of tradition, there is general agreement about a central question about approaches to Nietzsche's philosophy. This is the question concerning the value of the published works compared to that of the *Nachlass*. I follow the established practice of focusing on the published work, and occasionally drawing support for interpretations of the works from the "unpublished" works and the notes. Or as Graham Parkes put it: "adducing the notes only when they serve to amplify some theme already found in the published works" (Parkes 1994, 15). Additionally, I also follow established practice in treating the final works, *Antichrist* and *Ecce Homo*, as if they were comparable to those works whose publication Nietzsche could himself witness. Last but not least, I follow the general practice in scholarship of presupposing some knowledge of the biographical details of Nietzsche's life, in the sense that I will not provide detailed biographical excursions that distract from the argument of the study. Instead, I will occasionally, when it is relevant, refer to biographical works (e. g. Janz 1978 and Young 2010).

## 1.3 Introduction to and summary of chapters

Chapter 2 presents a brief historical contextualization of Nietzsche's criticism of religion. On the one hand it provides a general introduction to the discourse on religious decline in the 19th century as well as a short sketch of the formative intellectual influences on Nietzsche's understanding of religion (specifically in the crucial period when he was developing into an independent thinker), and on the other a brief presentation of the general trajectory of Nietzsche's criticism of religion.

Chapter 3 is an analytic chapter that questions attempts to systematize Nietzsche's psychological thinking and argues in favour of the necessity of contextual interpretation, and consequently the need for taking account both of Nietzsche's psychological statements and how his psychological thinking is reflected in his writings. Importantly, the chapter also clarifies Nietzsche's vocabulary on the life of feeling as well as that used in this study.

Chapter 4 presents readings of *HH* and *D* with special focus on questions concerning mood. Nietzsche had already in 1875 planned an "untimely meditation" on religion with a strong psychological streak (Figl 2007, 285). However, the first time Nietzsche takes a psychological approach to religion in his published work is in *Human, All Too Human* (HH), published in the year 1878. I therefore start the contextual investigation of Nietzsche's texts here, whereafter I turn to *Daybreak* (D) from 1881.

Chapter 5 presents a comprehensive reinterpretation of the central issues of *The Gay Science* (GS), the work in which Nietzsche for the first time explicitly presents the words that God is dead, in the light of his communication of mood.

Chapter 6 presents an intervention into the scholarly debate about the role of mood in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Z) and asks to what extent *Z* can be used to challenge the interpretation advanced in the previous chapters.

Chapter 7 focuses more explicitly on the question of Nietzsche's ideal mood, particularly in the context of his late works, and challenges the claim that the philosopher's last works are evidence of a return to religion.

Chapter 8 finally seeks to specify Nietzsche's position as a form of atheism by drawing on Martin Hägglund's thinking about radical atheism (e. g. Hägglund 2008), which is arguably particularly fruitful for the task.

Chapter 9 draws conclusions from the results of the study, reflects on the broader significance of the work done, and outlines possibilities for further research related to the concerns of Nietzsche and to secularization. Thereafter one finds the literature cited in the study.

# 2 Nietzsche and the inadequate secularization of the "heart" in the 19th century

Despite the criticism that has rightly been directed at certain rigid formulations of sociological secularization theory,[1] the idea of secularization, understood as a decline of religion in one form or another, remains indispensable for a proper understanding of European religious history. This is the case irrespective of whether one uses that specific term or not. Evidence of changes in the significance of religion in Europe, of changes that can hardly be interpreted as anything else than secularization, is abundant as recognized by historians (e. g. McLeod 2000), philosophers (e. g. Taylor 2007) and sociologists (e. g. Bruce 2011), but for most of the work done here even that is beside the point. At the very least, even the staunchest critic must concede that the idea of a decline of religion is of utmost importance to the intellectual historian. Taking account of the 19th century discourse about a crisis of faith is indispensable for the work done here, as it forms the general background of Nietzsche's thinking on atheism and religion. Therefore, I will begin by presenting a general picture of the nature of secularization among intellectuals in that century, before moving on to the more specific sources of Nietzsche's understanding of religion,[2] after which I will finally present a provisional picture of the general trajectory of Nietzsche's criticism of religion.

## 2.1 The role of doubt in the 19th century crisis of faith

While sociologists doing research on secularization have focused primarily on decline in the social significance of religion (Wilson 1966, xiv; cf. Bruce 2002, 30 and 2011, 2; cf. Berger 1967, 107; Norris and Inglehart 2004, 24 – 25), that which has interested the intellectual historian most is decline in the credibility of religion among prominent thinkers, the "Secularization of the European mind" (Chadwick 1975). How the two relate in the eyes of the sociologist is a question that need not concern

1 The suggestion that modernization and secularization necessarily go together can justly be criticized if and when secularization is treated as a unidirectional process that will eventually result in the complete insignificance of religion. Critics are certainly right when they claim to find echoes of humanist narratives of progress in the scholarly literature on the topic, although such charges can also miss the mark (cf. Bruce 2011, 59). To deny that secularization theory does capture something important about modernity or even more radically to discard the entire concept of secularization on account of supposed ideological bias is nevertheless short-sighted. In this respect, it needs to be pointed out that the concept of secularization is not the sole property of social scientists, but is employed in a variety of ways in historical research.

2 To be precise, I will not give a full picture of all of Nietzsche's sources and readings concerning different religions. Instead, I focus on what really matters, namely the most important sources for his philosophical understanding.

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us here. For the intellectual historian, the two are insofar intertwined as there is only a small step from personal reflections on the absence or insignificance of religious faith in one's own life to reflections on what would happen were one's own experience to spread; if the condition of doubt were to become the rule rather than the exception. This is all the more true in the case of the century that is perhaps more than any other associated with the concept of secularization, namely the 19th century. As already suggested in the introduction, this association has arguably at least as much if not more to do with the intellectual discourses of the era than with any dramatic decline in general religiosity. So despite there being no sudden decline, it is therefore hard to find a work on 19th century intellectual culture in Europe, or even 19th century religion in general, that contains no mention of a crisis of faith. Even revisionist historians who have sought to balance the narrative by reminding of the general religiosity of the era and by introducing the notion of a corresponding crisis of doubt, i. e. of secular activists finding their way back to religion, concede that there really was a crisis of faith and that it should be taken account of (Larsen 2006, 1). In other words, the general picture of a crisis of faith among the intellectual strata remains as solid as ever. What is more contentious is whether research in general has focused on the secularization of the mind in a too narrow sense and consequently ignored the enduring power of religious ideals on those who sought to leave religion behind. In this regard, it is worth reflecting on the role of doubt, and this I think is best done with the help of a heuristic tool, an ideal type, of its opposite: religious faith.

Let's call this ideal type the Man of Faith.[3] To be absolutely clear, the following is not the description of a particular religious ideal: it is not the ideal believer of any specific Christian denomination. I rather follow a Weberian strategy of isolating and rationalizing a tendency inherent in the Christian tradition, thus constructing a rational model in order to better understand historical reality, especially by paying attention to deviation from this model (cf. Weber 1978, 6 – 7). This strategy is already justified because the crisis of faith cannot be understood without some minimal understanding of faith, but even more so because it can arguably cast light on an understanding of doubt that shaped the emotional dimension of the crisis. The Man of Faith interprets reality through his faith. As his name suggests, his faith is strong

**3** This designation is meant to give historical colour to the discussion, not to deny the important role of women. Needless to say, men (of class) dominated 19th century discussions on religion and doubt. There were of course exceptions; influential women such as Mary Ann Evans a.k.a George Eliot, of whom Nietzsche took notice and whom he allowed to serve as a typical example of what he took to be an English tendency not to go far enough in the criticism of religion: "G. Eliot. – *Sie sind den Christlichen Gott los und glauben nun um so mehr die christliche Moral festhalten zu müssen…*" (KSA 6, 113) This is insofar ironic as Eliot's thinking on the matter derived in no small part from German thinking; after all, she translated Ludwig Feuerbach and other German critics of religion into English (cf. Young 2010, 36). To this can be added that the young Nietzsche himself probably held similar views (Young 2010, 36 – 37), before becoming more radical in his criticism.

as a rock, he feels the truth of his faith and his heart longs for nothing as much as the fruits of faith in this life and the next. He is consequently unmoved by interpretations that oppose the latest findings of science and historical research to the truth of faith. He trusts the providence of God; that all comes to pass according to a greater design, a divine plan. He will therefore also not despair if there is a crisis of faith around him. Such a Man of Faith might of course consider loss of faith something dreadful. It is also understandable, that he should tend to think that the atheist must be miserable deep down irrespective of his worldly success; as he might imagine his life as lacking that which is most valuable, namely faith. Be that as it may, he will respond to the crisis around him only through his faith. He will not fall into melancholy and neither can he imagine a truly godless future.

By contrast, the vast majority of real individuals, whether believing or unbelieving, are not as certain about any of their beliefs, not even of their most cherished ones. No insignificant number specifically feel a conflict between religious and non-religious interpretations of existence. In this respect, Charles Taylor speaks of cross-pressures which he sees as a characteristic and almost essential ingredient of secular modernity (Taylor 2007, 594–595). While Taylor is perhaps generalizing too much from the experience of thinkers, his idea can be applied fruitfully to the 19th century situation.[4] The thinking person found his faith, if he had one, which was highly likely, put to a test, if he was acquainted with the latest intellectual trends, of which the most important ones were expressions of historical thinking. More than the rationalistic criticism of earlier ages, the emerging historical narratives challenged the religious imagination. On the one hand were advances in the science of natural history that culminated in Darwinism, which among other things had the effect of casting doubt on traditional biblical accounts of creation (cf. Chadwick 1975, 161–188), and on the other advances in historical scholarship and methodology, which for example in the case of biblical criticism had the effect of casting doubt on religious narratives of the past and especially of the life of Jesus (cf. Chadwick 1975, 189–228). Besides having a secularizing effect, all these advances had the effect of expanding the historical imagination, which two tendencies combined resulted in grand visions of historical development and religious decline, perhaps most notably in positivist narratives of progress. What is noteworthy, however, is that de-

4 I specifically refer to intellectuals here and do not touch upon the question of the general nature of religious faith in the 19th century, but I do think there are reasons to be sceptical of viewing the era as an "age of faith". Arguably, this is one weakness in Chadwick's otherwise brilliant work, as he presents the vast majority of believers as immune to scepticism in the sense that I have presented the ideal type of the Man of Faith to be. This is especially clear from what he writes in his concluding chapter "On a sense of providence": "Still, religious men knew what they knew. Whatever philosophers might contend, or scientific historians, or anthropologists, or psychologists, religious men and women had God, knew God, obeyed God, felt joy in God, had an experience, an experience of simplicity, surrounded by darkness but still experience. Amid all the perplexing questions they seemed to themselves to do best to have the single eye, or simple regard." (Chadwick 1975, 250)

spite this clearly creative role of doubt, quite a few of those who could no longer hold onto their faith found their lack of faith disturbing, and the visions of the future less than cheerful.[5] Specifically, it seems as if they found their doubt a negative condition. In this sense, the ideal type of the Man of Faith can illuminate a precondition for narratives of modernity as defined by a necessarily melancholic lack of faith. Such narratives do not arise from within faith, but from within a doubt that finds itself problematic. Faith was and is not only a matter of the mind, but also of the heart, and this is perhaps the best reason why one speaks of a crisis of faith in the first place, instead of simply a discarding of errors.

One could perhaps write a very strict history of 19th century intellectual secularization that would only concentrate on the transmission of ideas, but that could only be done at the expense of ignoring the moral and emotional dimensions of what happened, which are arguably of at least as great interest. D.G. Charlton critically points to this tendency to limit the focus of research in his classic survey of French secular thought from 1815 to 1870:

> Although many historians have given greater stress to the scientific, philological, and philosophical grounds for unbelief, moral rejection of Christianity appears to have been in fact primary for all but professional philosophers. (Charlton 1963, 18)

Charlton is here referring primarily to the moral force of narratives of progress and the associated idea of human rights, but he goes further than this to emphasize the emotional consequences of the secularization of the mind. He goes on to assert that the most important secular French thinkers, among them Auguste Comte and Ernest Renan, experienced a "conflict of mind and heart" (Charlton 1963, 25) in which the heart most often was for religion. According to Charlton, this made "regret for lost faith" so common a theme in 19th century writings that one can speak of a "widely shared nineteenth-century mood" (Charlton 1963, 27).[6] There were certainly humanists who would not recognize themselves in the picture, but the mood was widely shared even across borders.[7] This is the melancholic mood that Nietzsche ar-

**5** Chadwick notes that though some found a "new faith" in Progress and Humanity, this was far from common and that a loss of all faith was perhaps a more typical experience (Chadwick 1975, 255).
**6** I basically see no reasons to challenge the historical veracity of this account. Arguably, historians such as Owen Chadwick, D.G. Charlton and Charles Taylor are a bit too eager to reduce the emotional aspects of the story to fit a loss-replacement schema, the idea being that loss of faith always must lead to finding another faith to serve the same function as the old or else one will fall into despair. I have intentionally drawn on the works of these three Gifford-lecturers, because historians with humanist sympathies rarely if ever draw attention to those aspects of the story that are of interest to us here, above all the question of mood.
**7** The fact that this mood was widely shared has made a particular genre of popular history possible, in which the focus is almost exclusively on loss, and to a lesser extent on replacement. To mention but one example, this is the case in A.N. Wilson's work "God's Funeral: the Decline of Faith in Western civilization", which despite what its title says is really focused on the British experience (cf. Wilson 1999).

guably finds as questionable as the joy of the humanist, and now we can see that it results from a kind of unbelief, in which the existence of God is denied, but the existence of God or a higher reality still thought of as desirable. It stems from a situation in which the mind was secularized, even as the heart remained attached to religion.

That a thinker like Nietzsche through his writings on religion comments as much if not more on this general mood than on any specific interpretation of religious decline might at first sight suggest that it is hard to determine the specific sources of his thinking on the matter. This is true, but it is nevertheless worth considering if there were some peculiarities in the German situation or the traditions of thought closest to Nietzsche that can account for the specific direction of his criticism. In other words, one must consider the intellectual background, against which the breakthrough to a different kind of atheism took place. After all, a specific intellectual tradition played an important role for Nietzsche even though he tried to shake off as much of it as he could.

## 2.2 The intellectual sources of Nietzsche's understanding of religion

It is a commonplace to characterize 19th century thinking on religion as a turn to the human. This shift in the discourse from the natural world to the subjective, inner world was particularly prominent in the German-speaking world. It is seldom appreciated to what extent this was not only an anthropological turn, but a specifically aesthetic one. Friedrich Schleiermacher's definition of religion as feeling and taste for the infinite [*Sinn und Geschmack für das Unendliche*], and as a feeling of dependence on the universe, in his *Ueber die Religion* (1799) was to be highly influential indeed.[8] Yet more important than any specific formulation was a general revitalization of ideas about religion as natural, as rising from the depths of the human being, from inner nature. In such views, religion could be denied and suppressed but not done away with, and the privileged access to the truth of religion was through feeling or intuition. Thus, Romantic theology rose against the rationalism of 18th century theology, which was blamed for failing to respond to Enlightenment criticisms of religion. While this shift was meant to respond to atheistic and materialistic currents, a motivation which is evident in Schleiermacher's work, it provoked an unexpected counter-reaction. So besides having a lasting impact on theology and the study of religion (cf. Lang 1993, 167–168), the shift in the discourse mostly associated with Schleier-

**8** Although not a single copy of a work by Schleiermacher has been found in what remains of Nietzsche's personal library, one can assume that Nietzsche learned about Schleiermacher's formula during his education, as it was common knowledge among the educated and as there are many passages in his work that seem to comment on it (cf. Sommer 2016, 251).

macher also influenced the direction of atheistic thinking, and ultimately paved the way for a more radical atheism.

Arguably, the shift in the discourse did create a challenge for critical thinking about religion, as would be critics now had to contend with the anthropological "truth of religion". A typical response was to pay respect to the impulse behind religion, if not to religion itself. Such a strategy is perhaps most associated with the name of Ludwig Feuerbach, and indeed he is a telling example (cf. Feuerbach 1849), but the single most important source for Nietzsche's thinking on religion (Young 2006, 8; cf. Hödl 2009, 321), Arthur Schopenhauer, is also a case in point and more relevant here. The avowedly atheistic philosopher wrote of a metaphysical need arising from the experience of finitude (Schopenhauer 1999, 184). What, however, is it that makes finitude unendurable? Why is there a need to transcend it? Schopenhauer's answer is that the human being can't stand individual existence in time, because it is necessarily marked by suffering and the inevitability of death. Because of the universality of suffering and death, there is a universal need to transcend finitude. For the majority of humans this need is in his view satisfied by religion, for the few by philosophy: Both raise humans out of their individual existence, out of time, and thus allow them to experience themselves as infinite. Art, or aesthetic experience more generally, can also lead to the realization of this metaphysical truth that existence in time is undesirable and ultimately illusory (Schopenhauer 1999, 184 – 218; cf. Young 2006, 8 – 14). What is noteworthy is that this view is as melancholic as it gets: all earthly life is essentially suffering and only art, religion and philosophy can lift the human being to a higher realm. It is of no small consequence that Nietzsche in his student days encountered precisely this philosophical formulation of the idea of an emotional need for transcendence, since it at least leaves room for an independent philosophical answer or replacement that serves the same function as religion. So even if it was precisely as a replacement of a lost faith that Nietzsche initially treated this philosophy (cf. Young 2010, 86 – 89),[9] reading Schopenhauer undoubtedly furthered Nietzsche's development as a thinker. "Discovering" Schopenhauer in 1865 (Young 2010, 81; cf. Hödl 2009, 306), and becoming an ardent Schopenhauerian had more than intellectual repercussions for Nietzsche, as common enthusiasm for "the master" played no small role in uniting him and Richard Wagner in 1868 (Young 2010, 77 – 78 and 87 – 88). In other words, Schopenhauer had a tremendous influence on Nietzsche. Not least because his most important social contacts were with Schopenhauerians, the pessimistic philosopher was Nietzsche's single most important influence in the 1870s when he started to develop into an independent philosophical thinker.

**9** Nietzsche had already become sceptical of Christianity, and for all effect "lost faith", some time (1863 at the latest) before leaving school to study theology in Bonn; studies which he dropped within the first year to instead study classical philology in Leipzig (Young 2010, 86 – 87; cf. Hödl 2009, 252 – 253).

It is not unimportant that the one living scholar that Nietzsche respected most, a respect that remained intact from their first meeting until the end, shared Schopenhauer's view on this issue. Jacob Burckhardt, the renowned historian, Nietzsche's colleague and mentor at the University of Basel, followed Schopenhauer in positing a metaphysical need to explain religion; a need eternal, indestructible and mostly unconscious, based on experiences of fear of and dependance on nature (Burckhardt 1978, 28). However, his influence should not be overestimated. Burckhardt has been mentioned as another possible source for Nietzsche's discussion on the metaphysical need (e. g. Riccardi 2009, 103), which is misleading insofar as Nietzsche read Schopenhauer before attending the lectures of Burckhardt in 1870, in which the historian discusses the metaphysical need.[10] More important than establishing a particular source of influence is to note how common similar ideas were in the intellectual discussions of the time, whether or not they were presented by believers or critics. In fact, ideas concerning a supposed need for religion, whether expressed in terms of innate religiosity, desire for God or the moral necessity of God, were so widespread in the era that it is impossible to reduce Nietzsche's reception and critique of such ideas to be a response to a single thinker. To give but one example, the question about a need for religion was almost certainly discussed in the circle of Malwida von Meysenbug, another devoted Schopenhauerian, whom Nietzsche had become acquainted with through Wagner at Bayreuth in 1872 (cf. Young 2010, 150). In a critical note written in summer 1880, Nietzsche explicitly refers to her as advocating the view that humanity needs God (cf. NL 1880, 4[57], KSA 9, 113). To provide one final example of a source that Nietzsche studied carefully in the early 1870s (cf. Figl 2007, 230), Friedrich Max Müller is worth mentioning. The émigré professor at Oxford, commonly counted among the founders of the history of religions as an academic enterprise, posited a specific faculty for apprehending the infinite. According to Müller, the very basic aesthetic experience of limits, and the capacity to see beyond them, points toward the love of God that all mankind strives toward and that is most fully realized in Christianity (e. g. Müller 1873, 14 – 15). Yet when encountering that idea in Müller's work and excerpting passages from it in 1870, Nietzsche's attention is fixed on the different idea that all Gods must die, "*alle Götter müssen sterben*", as Johann Figl has shown (Figl 2007, 234; cf. NL 1870 – 71, 5[57], KSA 7, 107). This might indicate that Nietzsche by then rejected a religious interpretation of the need for religion. Be that as it may: Under the influence of Schopenhauer and others who championed similar ideas the early Nietzsche nevertheless seems to accept a philosophical interpretation of the idea that religion has its origin in an innate need to transcend the

**10** In a letter to his friend Carl von Gersdorff from 1870, Nietzsche even presents Burckhardt as a devoted Schopenhauerian (cf. KGB II/1, Bf. 107). The only sense in which Burckhardt might be truly considered a source of Nietzsche's later thinking about the matter has to do with the fact that Burckardt goes some way towards historicizing the notion of a metaphysical need, in the sense that he notes that despite being indestructible the metaphysical need does not seem to be as strong in every era, i. e. that it waxes and wanes (cf. Burckhardt 1978).

merely natural. He will in the late 1870s explicitly turn against this interpretation of religion, yet importantly he not only retains the aesthetic framework but radicalizes it through a psychological critique as is evident when one examines the general trajectory of his criticism of religion.[11]

## 2.3 The general trajectory of Nietzsche's criticisms of religion

Nietzsche's "philosophy of religion" has been presented many times and from many different angles, but if there is one question above others that provides access to the heart of his thinking on religion it must be the question of desire. Not only does viewing Nietzsche's thinking from this perspective allow one to situate his thinking within the major discourse of his era, it also allows one to appreciate why his thinking is still a reference point in debates about religion and atheism.

Initially, Nietzsche seems to have accepted the idea of a metaphysical need after reading Schopenhauer, and perhaps precisely therefore he seems not to have paid much explicit attention to it in his writings until he rejected its adequacy. While some passages in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) testify to the lingering influence of this Schopenhauerian understanding, Nietzsche's development into an independent thinker coincides with the critique of the metaphysical need. This critique is unleashed in full force in 1878, in *Human, All Too Human* (HH I 26 and HH I 27, KSA 2, 47–48; HH I 131–135, KSA 2, 124–129; see chapter 4). The main point of Nietzsche's critique is that the metaphysical need is not really a need at all in the sense of a compelling force such as the need for food, but rather a "need" more akin to an acquired taste. In other words, it is no need but a desire.[12] Desires can be redirected, but they can also be fundamentally transformed and thus effectively extinguished. When it comes to the metaphysical need or rather those desires that make it up, Nietzsche opts for the latter strategy (cf. HH I 27, KSA 2, 48), which entails a radical revaluation. This

**11** This concluding point cannot be emphasized enough. So even if this turn against the "metaphysical need" was initially to a significant extent inspired by his direct reading of ethnology and Victorian anthropology, as well as his second-hand reading of works of classical philology that applied such work, as mentioned briefly in section 4.1.2 of this study and as discussed in detail in a monograph by Andrea Orsucci (Orsucci 1996), Nietzsche retains the aesthetic framework until the very end and views desire for another world as the defining feature of religion as it concerns him in his criticism. Hence, figures such as Tylor or Lubbock should not be counted among the most important sources of Nietzsche's understanding of religion, nor is it reasonable to claim that it was his intensive reading of such non-philosophical figures in late 1875 that transformed him from philologist to philosopher (cf. Orsucci 1996, 7). In other words, this turn also speaks of an internal development of thought (See chapter 4, esp. 4.1).

**12** This initial deconstruction might be "explained" with reference to his readings of anthropologists, the works of whom suggest that both psychological "needs" and what is called religion have a history (= are not immutable, again, see chapter 4, section 4.1.2, cf. Orsucci 1996), but what follows, namely the reevaluation of desire, can not.

decision arguably informs all of Nietzsche's criticism of religion from *HH* onward, and is to be considered an important background to his communication of mood. Since providing evidence for this interpretation about Nietzsche's communication of mood is a key task of the central chapters of this study, it is now only necessary to give a sketch of the intention behind it. What is it about desire for another world that according to our philosopher makes it so important to get rid of it, and to get rid of it not only as an idea but also as a desire?

Nietzsche's intention can't be grasped by referring to his readings; as respect for science. While he thinks that religious desires can impede the pursuit of knowledge, the focus of his critique lies elsewhere. Basically, Nietzsche claims that directing one's desires at religious goals or pursuing metaphysical philosophy diverts attention away from the earth, the only world there is, and therefore stands in the way of making life on earth great. The desire for another world is for him still not only a trivial hindrance to the earthly projects he considers desirable. He instead consistently presents it as something morbid and dangerous; though this is most apparent in his final works. In the *Antichrist*, Nietzsche polemically turns the idea of the melancholy of the unbeliever on its head by portraying the believer, particularly the Christian, as the one with the necessarily despairing view of life, i.e. of that mortal life which we in fact live. For only the melancholic or physiologically weak person, his challenge rings, can feel such a need as to desire escape from this world, to desire the existence of a higher world in the first place. In this regard, he specifically deconstructs the Christian idea of God as the greatest objection to life that there has been, as an idealization of death (cf. A 18, KSA 6, 185). However, it is important to note that Nietzsche understands his critique as a challenge to atheists as much as to Christians. For the great majority of European atheists have been raised as Christians and inherited the emotional legacy of European Christianity, and thus risk falling into an even deeper melancholy. Therefore, Nietzsche speaks suggestively of a great crisis, which entails that "we" either have to get rid of the moral and emotional legacy of Christianity or perish (GS 346, KSA 3, 581; cf. NL 1870–71, 5[115], KSA 7, 124–125). How would Nietzsche then transform the emotions so as to get rid of any need for religion, while simultaneously enabling a greater affirmation of life? Or is it only Christianity that is problematic, in the sense of being life-denying, and the answer lies in leading the way towards a life-affirming religion? Is the goal a more radical atheism, a more radical scepticism, or a new faith?

To begin to answer these questions, I will in the next chapter delve deeper into Nietzsche's psychological thinking about the life of feeling. To conclude the discussion here, Nietzsche's relevance for the understanding of 19th century secularization lies in his questioning of the nature of secularization. Nietzsche questions whether a mere repudiation of the intellectual aspects of faith can ever be enough, and it is arguably precisely this questioning of the secularization of the heart and the desire for other worlds that makes him relevant to contemporary thinking on atheism and religion (see chapter 8).

# 3 Nietzsche's psychology and the tension between body and spirit

In this chapter, I lay out and justify the foundations of my approach to Nietzsche's psychology through a critique of what I take to be misguided attempts to construct a coherent theory of drives on the basis of his writings. Not only has the excessive focus on drives in recent scholarship led to an unproductive focus on technicalities, but the resulting "Nietzschean" theories tend to obscure rather than illuminate Nietzsche's greater philosophical and critical projects. Moving beyond the current debate is an essential task of this study, because the dominant perspectives on Nietzsche's psychology hardly provide the resources required to advance understanding of his thinking on religion. That notwithstanding I do not intend to deny that theoretical reconstructions can be useful tools in scholarship. Instead, I seek to ask again, from the beginning, what generalizations about Nietzsche's psychological views can be made. In this regard, the philosopher's thinking about feelings is of particular interest, since he is in his criticism of religion preoccupied with the topic of religious feelings and especially religious interpretations of extraordinary feelings. I will therefore start by taking a closer look at Nietzsche's terminology for feelings.

For someone who purportedly holds the view that unconscious drives govern the psyche (cf. Leiter 2002), Nietzsche pays very close attention to conscious mental states and employs a remarkably rich vocabulary for affective phenomena. Besides a wealth of words for specific feeling-states, Nietzsche also uses quite a few general concepts. Affect [*Affekt*], feeling [*Gefühl*], passion [*Leidenschaft*, *Passion*], attunement/mood [*Stimmung*], and "state" [*Zustand*] are Nietzsche's favoured concepts to describe felt experience. Very rarely, he also uses the term emotion [*Emotion*]. These are not technical terms in any rigid sense nor does Nietzsche draw rigorous distinctions between them. Though it could perhaps be argued that his terms affect and feeling correspond most closely to feelings in contemporary philosophy of emotion, in the sense that they seem to be bodily, mostly episodic states, there is not much that distinguishes passion, attunement/mood and state from the former terms. The only minor difference is that the last two terms are perhaps more often used by Nietzsche to describe a greater unity of distinct feelings, such as an enveloping background of feeling that is always there. In any case, there is a continuum between shorter episodes of feeling and more stable states. This view does not only remain implicit in the writings, although it is already quite evident as such. Nietzsche also explicitly affirms that the most commonly discussed emotions are only exceptional states that fit into a larger picture of affectivity: "Anger, hatred, love, pity, desire, knowledge, joy, pain all are names for *extreme* states: the milder, middle degrees, not to speak of the lower degrees which are continually in play, elude us, and yet it is they which weave the web of our character and our destiny." (Hollingdale transl. Clark and Leiter 1997, 71; D 115, KSA 3, 107) Importantly, this view of a constant background of feeling, of a continuum between evanescent and enduring

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as well as intense and barely noticeable feelings, remains the same even as Nietzsche's vocabulary changes. A case in point would be Nietzsche's use of the German term *Stimmung*. This term might be thought to be of special interest to us, because it is the most direct and most commonly used translation of the English word "mood". However, the term *Stimmung* plays a rather insignificant role in Nietzsche's writings, which allows me to here reserve the use of the English term mood to primarily serve the technical function of referring to the continuum of feeling as a whole.[1]

The importance of the term for mood [*Stimmung*] diminishes in Nietzsche's mature philosophy; so much so that he not even once uses the term in his published works after the *Gay Science* of 1882. The first scholar to draw attention to this fact was Stanley Corngold. In an article on Nietzsche's use of the term mood [*Stimmung*], he advanced the thesis that in Nietzsche's later writings "Affect displaces Mood as the feeling mode of disclosure" (Corngold 1990, 87). Furthermore, Corngold connects this change of vocabulary to a more significant turn away from residual romanticism and idealism towards a fully-fledged vision of the world as will to power. Although Corngold is certainly on the right track concerning the change in terminology, he simplifies the issue and only by this simplification can he make the exaggerated claim that specifically affect would displace mood. Corngold's thesis needs to be qualified. First of all, it should be noted that this is merely a change of vocabulary, and not a significant change in the way that Nietzsche thinks about the phenomena in question. The term affect [*Affekt*] takes over some of the meanings attached to the term mood [*Stimmung*], while feeling [*Gefühl*] and state [*Zustand*] take on other aspects. There is especially one aspect that the term affect can't easily assimilate. One of the things the term mood [*Stimmung*] accomplishes is to refer to a unity of feeling or a unifying background feeling. The term affect is if not totally unsuited then at least not the ideal candidate to take over this meaning,[2] whereas state [*Zustand*] serves this purpose well. Even feeling [*Gefühl*] can be used to refer to a synthesis of feelings. In this regard, the English speaker might want to remind him- or herself that the German language does not distinguish between feeling with a small f and the capitalized Feeling, so it is harder to distinguish whether one is dealing with a distinct feeling or generalized feeling. In any case, it should come as no surprise that before giving up on the term mood [*Stimmung*], Nietzsche at times uses the

**1** For some reason unknown to me, the term affect has become the preferred term of scholars when discussing the topic. It is worth pointing out that this has nothing to do with the frequency that Nietzsche employs the term. The simple term feeling [*Gefühl*] is actually used far more often by Nietzsche. Throughout this study, I follow Nietzsche in not drawing rigid distinctions in this regard, and the scholarly justification for preferring the term mood is simply this: there is no other term in the English language that is as well suited to describe the kind of continuum in question. Furthermore, such use of the term mood is already established due to Heidegger (cf. Heidgger 2006).

**2** This comment refers to Nietzsche's use of the term affect. I have nothing against the broader use of the term in contemporary scholarship, e. g. in "core affect theory" (Colombetti 2014), and I frequently employ the term affectivity in a way comparable to the use of the term mood throughout this study.

terms mood [*Stimmung*] and state [*Zustand*] interchangeably (HH I 134, KSA 2, 129; D 552, KSA 3, 322–333; cf. GS 288, KSA 3, 528). The same goes for mood [*Stimmung*] and feeling [*Gefühl*] (D 28, KSA 3, 38–39; cf. GS 288, KSA 3, 528). Obviously, this doesn't mean that the terms always refer to the same phenomena. In the end, only a contextual approach to the texts can avoid overgeneralization (and thus: misinterpretations). Nevertheless, it is safe to say that all of Nietzsche's terms for felt experience refer to a continuum; a continuum that is perhaps best captured by the term mood. Now, if he also thinks that all such states are generated in the body, more specifically through the operation of the drives or instincts,[3] it would seem that the current scholarly preoccupation with drives is more than justified.

Throughout this chapter, I argue that Nietzsche certainly thinks that one cannot separate spirit from body, and also that drives play an important role in this picture, but that there nevertheless are major problems with the dominant interpretation of Nietzsche's thinking on drives. Since this specific way of interpreting Nietzsche's statements on drives as evidence of an underlying theory of action is a very recent development, I will begin by presenting a short history of research on Nietzsche's psychological thinking, with special attention paid to how it came to be that Anglophone scholarship ended up where it is today.

## 3.1 A short history of research on Nietzsche's psychological thinking

Nietzsche's philosophical psychology is nowadays seen as central to scholarship on Nietzsche.[4] This was not always the case. Walter Kaufmann complained in the late 1970s that Nietzsche's psychological thinking had until then received scant attention, in spite of the philosopher's explicitly stated wish to be recognized as a psychologist (Kaufmann 1978, 261). This claim is often repeated almost verbatim (e. g. Parkes 1994, 2 and 383–384; cf. Brobjer 1995, 59), and accepted as such as a valid starting point for discussing Nietzsche as a psychologist. One should however ask, in what specific sense Nietzsche had until fairly recently not been recognized as a psychologist, because it is certainly not the case that the psychological aspects of his thinking had

**3** It is generally recognized that Nietzsche uses the terms drive [*Trieb*] and instinct [*Instinkt*] interchangeably (Clark and Dudrick 2012, 169; cf. Katsafanas 2013), though it is worth noting that it has been argued that this is the case only until 1888, after which the final notes and writings perhaps distinguish the two (cf. Conway 1999, 58–59).

**4** Not only has there been a number of special journal issues, conferences and edited volumes (cf. Dries and Kail 2015) dedicated to Nietzsche's psychological thinking during the last few years, but such scholarship has also become integrated into both general accounts of Nietzsche's philosophy (see Pippin 2010) and interpretations of specific works (see Clark and Dudrick 2012). The recent monograph of Paul Katsafanas also deserves mention as it exemplifies the trend (Katsafanas 2016).

been ignored altogether. If Nietzsche indeed had revolutionary psychological ideas, why then would they have been overlooked for such a long time?

A closer look at the history of the reception of Nietzsche's philosophy reveals that the psychological aspects of the philosopher's writings did not escape early commentators. Besides enthusiastic endorsements, many critical remarks can be found. Admittedly, the vast majority of early commentators made only cursory remarks if any on Nietzsche's psychological ideas; and not a few betray a superficial grasp of Nietzsche's thinking.[5] However, there was also more focused scholarly commentary. Despite predating the emergence of historical-critical approaches in Nietzsche-scholarship, the literature in question is not entirely lacking in insight. Some contributions even prefigure contemporary debates, especially when it comes to the question whether Nietzsche's psychological views can be systematized and presented in the form of a coherent theory.

A case in point is Max Riedmann's *Nietzsche als Psychologe* from 1911. Having summarized the most important elements of Nietzsche's psychological thinking fairly accurately, Riedmann concludes that Nietzsche's psychology will never become influential if understood as a whole (Riedmann 1911, 123).[6] This judgement is best understood against the ideal of a systematic, experimental and scientific psychology, the emergence of which is in the German-speaking world indissociable from the name of Wilhelm Wundt and the institutionalization of which was advancing rapidly in the years that Riedmann wrote. According to Riedmann, Nietzsche crucially fails to develop and prove the scientific value of the idea that could serve as the foundation for a psychological theory; namely the principle of the will to power. Riedmann's main objection is that instead of carefully basing his analysis on experiential evidence, the later Nietzsche simply presupposes the operation of the will to power so that in effect the idea acts as a prejudice [*Vorurteil*] through which Nietzsche approaches psychological phenomena (Riedmann 1911, 118 – 123). A properly scientific approach would instead proceed inductively from simple elements to complex phenomena (Riedmann 1911, 134). Because Nietzsche's psychological thinking is not of a systematic nature, and is instead made up of fragmentary and often contradictory statements, Riedmann goes as far as to question whether it is at all meaningful to call Nietzsche a psychologist (Riedmann 1911, 123). Nevertheless, he finally asserts

**5** In this latter category, a 1909 article by H. Aschkenasy deserves special mention, as it can be considered the first scholarly attempt to view Nietzsche's thinking on religion through the lens of his psychological thinking. The article is marred by inconsistency and a lack of textual evidence for support, but on a positive note, it did note Nietzsche's preoccupation with moods [*Stimmungen*] (cf. Aschkenasy 1909, 143). For early works explicitly focusing on Nietzsche's psychology consult the *Weimarer Nietzsche-Bibliographie*; specifically pages 998 – 1001 of volume three (WNB 2002a) as well as pages 244 – 245 of volume five (WNB 2002b). Cursory remarks on Nietzsche as psychologist can be found in many of the works discussed by Richard Frank Krummel in his works on the reception of Nietzsche's writings in the German-speaking world (cf. Krummel 1998a–c).

**6** "*Im Ganzen wird Nietzsches Psychologie nie eine Bedeutung gewinnen.*" (Riedmann 1911, 123)

that Nietzsche's psychological intuition was extraordinary and that therefore the psychological fragments that play no small role in Nietzsche's writings might yet serve science; they might even turn out to be a real treasure trove (Riedmann 1911, 135).[7]

Riedmann's work can usefully be compared to and contrasted with another contemporaneous study, namely Hans Schaffganz's doctoral dissertation *Nietzsches Gefühlslehre* from 1913. Just as Riedmann (cf. Riedmann 1911, 134), Schaffganz works under the impression that Nietzsche had only a weak grasp of late 19th century psychological thinking and instead relied on his own experience and intuition in his psychological thinking (Schaffganz 1913, 1, 34–35 and 59).[8] However, instead of only criticizing Nietzsche's psychological thinking on scientific grounds, Schaffganz also seeks to prove that it is systematic in its own way by trying to show that Nietzsche's intuitive understanding of feeling guides his entire philosophizing (cf. Schaffganz 1913, 58). In this view, Nietzsche's philosophy is essentially the result of intuitive thinking through feeling, which is perhaps a bit too bold a thesis, although it rests on the solid observation that Nietzsche is preoccupied with the affective life throughout his writings. According to Schaffganz, Nietzsche's thinking through feeling culminates in and finally becomes fully systematic in the idea of will to power as a metaphysical principle (Schaffganz 1913, 59–60). It is however precisely here that the major problem of the dissertation comes to light, as Schaffganz inevitably fails to prove convincingly that one can reduce all of Nietzsche's late thinking to this systematic design. In this regard, the work is clearly influenced and distorted by the general consensus of the time that a work entitled *The Will to Power* [*Der Wille zur Macht*] was Nietzsche's main work,[9] but it is worth adding that although Schaffganz is de-

**7** To be precise, Riedmann writes that the fragments "*können zur Fundgrube für die Wissenschaft werden*" (Riedmann 1911, 135).

**8** This assumption is only insofar mistaken that Nietzsche, besides reading psychological literature in the broad sense that would include literary authors, did read quite extensively about contemporary developments in psychology that eventually led to the differentiation of a new science from within philosophy. To mention but two broad works: 1) early, in 1866, he read Friedrich Albert Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus* (1866), in which the neo-Kantian philosopher also discussed recent physiological and psychological research and reflected on their relevance to philosophy (cf. Brobjer 2008, 32–36), and 2) late in 1887 he read and heavily annotated Harald Höffding's *Psychologie in Umrissen auf Grundlage der Erfahrung* (1887), which discusses both classical and contemporary psychology (cf. Brobjer 2008, 103–104). What arguably should concern us most about Nietzsche as psychologist, namely his revaluation of desire, his insight into the question about mood, simply cannot be said to be the logical consequence of such readings, wherefore the judgement that he relied most on his intuition is basically correct.

**9** Nietzsche at most suggested the possibility of a systematic metaphysics of will to power and never himself carried out the project to write a major work on will to power, as Mazzino Montinari has pointed out (KSA 14, 383–400). Various efforts at the beginning of the 20th century to compile a work of that title from the *Nachlass,* most notably at the *Nietzsche-Archiv* controlled by Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, proved disastrous for the reception of Nietzsche's philosophy, and helped to create the unfortunate association between Nietzsche's thinking and National Socialism. In this regard, the work done at the archive has rightly been considered more than merely a scholarly failure.

termined to present Nietzsche's metaphysics of the will to power as the most bold and radical psychological attempt of its kind ever undertaken (Schaffganz 1913, 130), he remains ambivalent as to the scientific and philosophical merits of the attempt and points to serious inconsistencies in Nietzsche's psychological thinking (e. g. Schaffganz 1913, 101). Indeed, all in all, both of these early works (of Riedmann and Schaffganz) are marked by a healthy scepticism.

So if we now look closer at Kaufmann's claim that Nietzsche's psychology had not received the attention it deserves, we can see that what really is at stake is more than taking account of Nietzsche's psychological ideas or even taking account of his desire to be recognized as a psychologist. In fact, the claim rests on the willingness of the interpreter to accept Nietzsche's claim of being a psychologist without equal (EH 5, KSA 6, 305). This self-aggrandizing hyperbole does of course not disqualify Nietzsche's psychological ideas from serious attention. However, taking an acceptance of his self-interpretation as a standard of judging whether a scholar has recognized Nietzsche as a psychologist can only result in a distorted picture of the history of scholarship. Just as I have argued that there is a heavy price to pay if one takes Nietzsche's own statements in *EH* at face value as a starting point for discussing Nietzsche's communication of mood, taking his mockery of a self-assessment as a starting point for discussing his philosophical psychology must necessarily lead to a neglect of valuable contributions that do not fit into the picture. This, however, is exactly what Kaufmann does. Against this background, it is no wonder then that the only work that Kaufmann mentions as a precursor to his own is one which is more about celebrating Nietzsche's psychological genius than seriously engaging with his ideas.

Apart from his own work *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, published in 1956, Kaufmann mentions Ludwig Klages' *Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches*, from 1926, as the only significant contribution to the topic (Kaufmann 1978, 262). This judgement is problematic in more than one respect. First of all, Klages seems to be interested in Nietzsche only insofar as the philosopher's thinking can be absorbed into his own eccentric project of characterology [*Charakterologie*/*Charakterkunde*] (Klages 1926). As if that were not enough to disqualify his work, Klages' treatment of the subject matter is thoroughly irrationalist (cf. Parkes 1994, 383). Therefore, it is hard to view his book as a serious contribution to the understanding of Nietzsche's psychological thinking. Secondly, Kaufmann not only omits all works critical of Nietzsche's psychology but also one influential early work that is sympathetic to its subject matter. Unlike the less well-known works of Riedmann and Schaffganz that I have discussed, works that Kaufmann might be forgiven for not mentioning,[10] this is a work of whose existence Kaufmann was well aware.

**10** I definitely do not thereby mean to suggest that these works should be considered obscure curiosities. Considering that it was a doctoral dissertation, the work of Schaffganz was surprisingly widely reviewed. A striking example of the internationalism of early 20th century philosophy is a review by Ellen Talbot, who was one of the first female professors of philosophy in the USA, in The Journal of

This early work that definitely should be mentioned is Karl Jaspers' *Nietzsche. Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens*, from 1936, which despite lacking a mention of psychology in its title provides a more helpful introduction to Nietzsche's thinking on affects and moods than either Klages or Kaufmann. Kaufmann's failure to mention Jasper's work is perhaps best explained as being a result of personal animosity and/or intellectual rivalry,[11] but the omission also raises the question as to what we are talking about when we are talking about Nietzsche's psychological thinking. Jacob Golomb, for example, in his turn wonders about the word "psychologist" in the title of Kaufmann's famous work, because even as Kaufmann is "referring to Nietzsche's psychological leanings, he then proceeds largely to ignore them" (Golomb 1999, 16). This judgement is a bit too harsh, as Kaufmann clearly takes a broader view of psychology than Golomb's depth psychological perspective allows for.[12] Nevertheless, it points to a real problem: neither Kaufmann nor other early writers were all too clear about in what if any sense Nietzsche should be understood as a psychological thinker and what his most important contributions in this domain were. This question seems to have been settled in more recent years, in the sense that there is a consensus on the question, and next I will briefly outline how this came to be.

The current flourishing of research on Nietzsche's philosophical psychology is to a great extent the fruit of Anglophone scholarship.[13] One might even say that Kaufmann's exhortation to take Nietzsche's psychology seriously and his call for more research in this area did not go unheard, even if it was initially met with silence. In any

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Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods (Talbot 1915), which is nowadays known simply as The Journal of Philosophy and is still counted among the best American journals in the field.

**11** Kaufmann and Jaspers were well acquainted with each other's works and had fundamental disagreements about the methods of Nietzsche-interpretation (cf. Pickus 2007). Put shortly: Kaufmann emphasized textual evidence more, whereas Jaspers emphasized the intuitive understanding of the interpreter. While the former is essential for scholarship, one can also not do without the latter. As I do not see why one would have to choose one approach over the other, I think it is best to refrain from judging, which of the two scholar-philosophers left a more lasting legacy.

**12** Kaufmann, in my view correctly, pays most attention to Nietzsche's revaluations, e. g. his analysis of *ressentiment*.

**13** Nietzsche's philosophical psychology has not received comparable attention during the last decades in continental scholarship, though there are always exceptions. Again, the *Weimarer Nietzsche-Bibliographie* is a good place to start, but it is in no way exhaustive. Besides useful studies on self-fashioning (e. g. Brusotti 1997 and Hödl 2009) that are relevant to the understanding of Nietzsche's psychological thinking, the most enlightening contributions can be found in historical scholarship, the paradigm of which would be studies on the relations between Nietzsche and Freud (e. g. Assoun 2002; Gasser 1997) and to a lesser extent Nietzsche and Jung (e. g. Liebscher 2012). Although these studies are excellent in their own right, they contribute little to the understanding of what I have already suggested is most relevant in the big picture of Nietzsche's psychological thinking: his psychological revaluations of desire and mood. While some continental scholars have also written on the topic of drives, they have not significantly contributed to the Anglophone discussion, wherefore I will not here engage their work.

case, it would still take quite a few years until the first attempt at a comprehensive, in-depth investigation of Nietzsche's psychology was published under the title *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche's Psychology* (Parkes 1994).[14] This pioneering work by Graham Parkes remains an invaluable contribution to the discussion. Parkes pays attention to the whole range of metaphors that Nietzsche employs to get grips of the psyche from the inorganic over the vegetal, animal and political realms to the landscapes that are composed out of these. His work is equally alert to the variety of Nietzsche's concepts. Affects, atmospheres and moods all find a place alongside drives and instincts in this multifaceted yet balanced tome that eschews undue systematization. Parkes' effort to provide a comprehensive account of the development and transformations of the many layers and aspects of Nietzsche's psychological thinking is all the more significant, precisely because the current discussion is almost exclusively focused on the notion of drives (cf. Katsafanas 2013).

When it comes to the prominence of drives in later scholarship one can observe a certain historical irony. To a great degree, Parkes' work is responsible for the attention given to drives in more recent years. According to Parkes, the notion of drives had been either underappreciated or misunderstood in previous scholarship (Parkes 1994, 273 and 444).[15] In contrast to earlier accounts, he singles out the idea of the psyche as a multiplicity as the most "revolutionary" and "radical" feature of Nietzsche's psychology (Parkes 1994, 18 and 251). Since Parkes then goes on to discuss the psyche as composed of multiple drives, it is not entirely unjustified to conclude that Parkes considers Nietzsche's thinking on drives his most important contribution to psychology. After all, it is precisely this aspect of Nietzsche's psychological thinking that echoes forth in depth psychology (Parkes 1994; cf. Gasser 1997). So Parkes settled the question in what sense Nietzsche was a psychologist by describing his psychological thinking as culminating in a drive-psychology. What remained unclear was if this drive psychology relies on a systematical drive-theory that can be spelled out. This latter question is already present in the immediate reception of Parkes' book.

The main worry in the reviews was not so much to what extent it is enlightening to take account of Nietzsche's psychological thinking when approaching his philos-

**14** Jacob Golomb's equally pioneering work *Nietzsche's Enticing Psychology of Power* (Golomb 1989), which was originally written as a dissertation and published in Hebrew in 1987, focused on the therapeutic dimensions of Nietzsche's psychological thinking and did not aim for a comprehensive view of Nietzsche's psychology. Perhaps because of Golomb's attempt to present Nietzsche as something of a psychoanalyst in his own right, this work did not become influential in the Anglophone discussion on Nietzsche's psychology. The work would however have deserved more attention than it received, because of its challenging discussion of the role of mood in Nietzsche's thinking and writing.

**15** In the first footnote of chapter 8, "Dominions of Drives and Persons", Parkes mentions a few exceptions to "the general rule of ignoring the Nietzsche's ideas about the drives" (sic!) (Parkes 1994. 444).

ophy,[16] but rather to what extent his psychology is systematic or could be systematized. So in a sense Parkes' work had put scholarship at a crossroads; one would now have to choose between taking a more systematic or a more contextual approach. Alexander Nehamas for one sought to emphasize that Nietzsche's psychological thinking cannot be dissociated from his project of self-fashioning, and that therefore any systematization must necessarily fail to take account of the broader context of his psychological statements (Nehamas 1996). This is indeed a valid concern, insofar as it points to the necessity of a certain kind of contextual interpretation, which always keeps Nietzsche's projects in mind. However, one should remember that Nietzsche pursued a great variety of interconnected projects, and that Nietzsche's texts do not present his self-fashioning as such, but what he considered significant enough about his self-fashioning to communicate to his readers. One might therefore question whether that which is essential about this communication cannot be systematized after all. I nevertheless take Nehamas' critical perspective on attempts to systematize Nietzsche's philosophical psychology as a useful warning, which is worth heeding carefully, not least because it was not the only one of its kind.

Already in the year preceding the publication of Parkes' study, Bernard Williams wrote bluntly that "Nietzsche is not a source of philosophical theories" (Williams 1994, 237).[17] For Williams this is apparent when we carefully examine Nietzsche's writings: it is not only that he nowhere presents systematic psychological theories, but that his texts positively render such a pursuit futile (Williams 1994, 237–238). In other words, the very fact that Nietzsche himself never cared to present his psychological thinking as a systematic theory already speaks against efforts to do so on behalf of the philosopher. In Williams' view, Nietzsche's moral psychology is minimalist in the sense that he does not seek to apply a pre-given theoretical framework to specific human actions, but instead seeks to invite his readers to interpret experiences and actions through a variety of non-moral perspectives (Williams 1994, 240). Ergo, Nietzsche's psychologizing is strategic. This means that it is crucial to see what use Nietzsche makes of psychology in any given context and that his psychological statements should always be interpreted from within his projects.

Despite such strong-worded warnings, not a few Anglophone scholars have devoted their time to the task of providing a more systematic account of Nietzsche's

**16** Though such a worry was expressed by Glenn Martin, who feared that a focus on psychology perhaps necessarily obscures the historical problem of nihilism, which Martin correctly identifies as being central to Nietzsche's philosophical concerns (Martin 1996). While it is certainly the case that Parkes (1994) does not have much to say about nihilism, I do not share Martin's fears. Quite to the contrary, I argue throughout this study that it is rather the case that in Nietzsche's thinking the historical and the psychological are intertwined, so that Nietzsche's thinking on nihilism and the death of God cannot be fully understood without taking account of his psychological thinking and vice versa.

**17** Williams' article was first published in the *European Journal of Philosophy* in 1993 (see Williams 1993), but for reasons of convenience I here cite the later publication of it in an edited volume (Williams 1994).

psychological thinking. More specifically, much effort has been put into the attempt to turn Nietzsche's disparate, at times contradictory statements into a coherent drive theory. The desired result would be a Nietzschean psychological theory, which besides allowing scholars to interpret other aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy more authoritatively could perhaps even contribute to contemporary discussions in philosophical psychology. This approach has most forcefully been advanced by Brian Leiter, who in his influential *Nietzsche on Morality* (Leiter 2002) first constructs a naturalistic moral psychology centred on the notion of the drive, and then proceeds to interpret *GM* on the basis of this naturalistic psychology, in order to finally argue that Nietzsche's psychology is more in tune with contemporary research in psychology than the ideas of any other major philosopher. The implication for textual scholarship is that the same naturalistic psychology could be applied in a similar procedure to all of the mature works.

The notion of the "drive" is certainly a key term in Nietzsche's psychology. Besides that the analytic approach, and more specifically the theory-building approach, has become dominant within Anglophone scholarship. Therefore, the following section is devoted to the drives and the question what role they play according to Nietzsche, i.e. how one should understand Nietzsche's drives. However, this examination is done with the question of mood in mind. What is the relation of drives to felt experience? Do drives explain mood? Are drives irrational forces of nature and if so does this also apply to mood? This approach makes it possible to question the dominance of drives, i.e. the exclusive focus on drives in contemporary scholarship, without denying that they do play an important role in Nietzsche's philosophy. This is a necessary first step towards an approach that recognizes the importance of Nietzsche's psychological thinking for any interpretation of his philosophy without succumbing to the temptation of constructing a systematic theory.

Surveying the history of scholarship on Nietzsche's psychology, it is hard to escape the impression of historical contingency. Which concepts are deemed to merit special attention depends much on the scholar's research interests as well as his or her understanding of what constitutes psychology. This applies to my treatment as well. I do not here claim to provide a representative overview of Nietzsche's philosophical psychology; indeed, I have suggested that there are reasons to be sceptical about the very possibility of such a presentation. Instead, I concentrate only on those aspects most relevant to the guiding question of my work; namely Nietzsche's thinking about reorienting feeling and creating new moods. While there have hitherto been a few exceptions (Jaspers 1936, Golomb 1989, Parkes 1994 and Solomon 2003), those aspects of Nietzsche's thinking most relevant to the "philosophy of emotion" have been neglected in the scholarly literature. While it is certainly the case that Nietzsche's psychological thinking has received more sustained attention in recent years than ever before, many central questions still remain unexplored; perhaps because they can only be asked after the dominant view on "Nietzsche's drive theory" has been thoroughly questioned.

## 3.2 Drives in Nietzsche's philosophical psychology

The first appearance of the concept "drive" [*Trieb*] in Nietzsche's oeuvre is to be found in a short essay entitled "On Moods" [*Über Stimmungen*], written in 1864 by the then 19-year old student (cf. Parkes 1994, 273). This youthful exercise, which remained unpublished during the lifetime of the philosopher, serves to prove that Nietzsche's interest in the affective dimension of life is not confined to his mature philosophical writings. In that early text the notion of the drive appears only as one term among others to make sense of the workings of the psyche, and the term mood [*Stimmung*] is at the centre of the picture. It is, however, when consulting the secondary literature, hard to escape the impression that in Nietzsche's mature thought the concept of the drive plays a more important role than any other term that relates to affectivity. Yet it would be misleading to claim that the concept "drive" gains in importance at the expense of other terms related to the life of feeling. It is true that the term mood [*Stimmung*] almost disappears (cf. Corngold 1990), but the later Nietzsche still talks about affects, feelings and states all the time; in other words, he merely replaces one term with others. So if there is a shift, and there is some textual evidence to suggest there is one, it does not have so much to do with the disappearance of any specific term nor with the frequency of the appearance of the term drive. It is rather about the possibility of a new interpretation of the relation between the terms in question. When did this shift take place and how is it to be understood?

The shift can be dated to the early 1880s. In *Daybreak*, there are passages that emphasize the primacy of drives and instincts (D 109, KSA 3, 96–99; D 119, KSA 3, 111–114). What these passages do is to open up the possibility of reinterpreting in terms of drives any passage that applies a more conventional vocabulary of thinking, feeling and willing. So even if Nietzsche continues to refer to conscious states throughout *D* and even explains actions with reference to such states, these passages suggest that all conscious states and actions are the result of the unconscious operation of drives and could perhaps in principle be explained by drives. So for example with regard to mood, Parkes notes about this stage "that moods may well be manifestations of drives" (Parkes 1994, 289). Quite tellingly, Parkes does not have much to say about moods in Nietzsche's thinking after this. From now on, it would instead seem, the drives become the undisputed driving forces within the psyche. Is then not the result a view of persons as driven to act by forces utterly beyond their control? It is precisely in this sense that *D*, according to Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, marks the arrival of Nietzsche's mature philosophy (Clark and Leiter 1997, viii). The key question here, however, is whether Nietzsche's emphasis on the drives, his granting them some kind of primacy, implies that he thinks drives determine human life in the sense that the operation of the drives cannot be influenced consciously. Before seeking to answer that question, an initial overview of Nietzsche's use of the concept "drive" is called for; not least because Nietzsche never in his published work defines

what he means by a drive or gives an unequivocal presentation of the role of drives in conscious life.

In recent years a number of Anglophone scholars have come to recognize that it is far from clear what exactly Nietzsche had in mind when talking about drives, and that he even seems to present contradictory statements regarding their role (e. g. Katsafanas 2013; cf. Stern 2015). This recognition might serve as an important step towards a sceptical view regarding the possibility to present Nietzsche's psychology as a drive theory, since it points toward very real problems with taking his statements out of context and generalizing them; especially if that is done without balancing the resulting view with possibly contradictory tendencies in the texts. In this regard, the greatest temptation has been and still is to equate drives with physiological occurrences. It certainly is the case that the philosopher's rhetoric occasionally seems to encourage such a reading. Nevertheless, it can easily be shown that Nietzsche's "drives" should not exclusively be identified with "very basic motivational states, such as urges or cravings" (see Katsafanas 2013, 727). In his writings, Nietzsche mentions a vast number of drives from the sex-drive (BGE 189, KSA 5, 111) over art-drives (BT 2, KSA 1, 30) all the way to the drive to truth (GS 110, KSA 3, 471).[18] In other words, there are clearly different kinds of drives; e. g. in *D* Nietzsche distinguishes drives such as hunger which require material satisfaction from moral drives that are to a certain extent satisfied through illusory fulfilment (dreams etc., cf. D 119, KSA 3, 112). This does not mean that the basic drives would even all be based on the same physiological model; i. e. akin to hunger in the sense that they would motivate specific actions or require nourishment. After all, one of the most basic, fundamental drives is supposedly the drive to form metaphors [*Trieb zur Metaphernbildung*] (TL 2, KSA 1, 887), which simply operates without any special nourishment.

As the text *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense* might not be considered an admissible source to base any interpretation on, and can be blamed for rather fanciful interpretations of Nietzsche,[19] it is important to note that the idea that all talk of psychic reality is metaphorical is not limited to this text but pervades Nietzsche's psychological thinking. In arguably the most important passage on drives in *D*, Nietzsche explicitly affirms that all talk of the operation of drives is metaphor-

**18** The way that Nietzsche multiplies drives at will is perhaps itself a hint not to take his drive-talk too literally. A prime example is Nietzsche's talk of the philosopher's sceptical drive, his analytical drive and his drive to compare etc. (GM III 9, KSA 5, 357).

**19** The text was not intended for publication and is often used as a justification for "postmodern" or "post-structuralist" approaches to Nietzsche's thinking that find in the text a denial of truth similar to their own (Leiter 2002, 14 – 15; cf. Hödl 1997, 13). Approaching Nietzsche's later writings through the perspective of this early text is indeed problematic, as Maudemarie Clark has argued, at least if one does not take into account of the facts that 1) the text is not a denial of the possibility of scientific knowledge 2) his views on truth evolved considerably over the years (Clark 1990, 63 – 95). This is the case whether or not Clark misrepresents the positions of the "postmodernists" and whether or not she approaches the question of truth in Nietzsche's philosophy from an analytic perspective unsuited to the task, as has been suggested (cf. Hödl 1997, 17 – 18).

ical [*es ist alles Bilderrede*] (D 119, KSA 3, 112) and that what is really going on is perhaps unknowable, although felt (D 119, KSA 3, 113). A notable example of Nietzsche's metaphorical approach to the drives is that Nietzsche repeatedly insists that drives interpret the world; that drives reflect or even philosophize (D 119, KSA 3, 111–114; cf. BGE 6, KSA 5, 19–20). In light of this, one could close the discussion with the banal and unhelpful claim that Nietzsche's physiological terminology is metaphorical and could altogether be reinterpreted in terms of mental states accessible to conscious control. Such a move, however, ignores that Nietzsche most certainly is creating an opposition between the drives and rational, reflective consciousness. Precisely how this opposition should be conceived of is the decisive question.

To begin with, I identify the opposition between the drives and conscious control as a tension, and do not seek to resolve it in one direction or the other. Put differently, my approach is based on the intuition that the tension in question plays a constructive role in Nietzsche's thinking and on the fact that Nietzsche nowhere suggests that the tension can be fully resolved. It is clear enough that for Nietzsche the origin of metaphorization is in the affective body. The physical and physiological connotations of the word drive are of utmost importance, even if they would serve only to emphasize the bodily nature of the phenomena in question. While it is therefore unhelpful to think that one could remove the drives as a central element of Nietzsche's psychological thinking, the question is whether there are any grounds to generalize in the other direction, as if only the drives would matter. Specifically, it can be questioned whether it is possible to turn Nietzsche's discussions about drives into a coherent drive theory, according to which the operation of drives is mechanical and there is no room for consciously influencing one's drives. This is however precisely what the dominant approach in Anglophone scholarship on Nietzsche looks like. Therefore, in order to establish the foundation of an alternative approach, I will in the following section critically examine and evaluate the strongest attempt to cast Nietzsche's psychological thinking into the mould of drive theory. This is the paradigmatic account of Brian Leiter, which is built on the foundation of those passages in Nietzsche's oeuvre that go the furthest in questioning the status of conscious states.

## 3.3 Beyond Nietzsche's purported epiphenomenalism

It has now become necessary to engage the problem how to understand the tension between Nietzsche's emphasis on drives on the one hand and his equally strong concern with reorienting affective life on the other. This issue mirrors one of the most problematic questions in Nietzsche-scholarship, namely how to reconcile his fatalism with his emphasis on self-making. There is an extensive and fairly technical debate on this topic, further obscured by the tendency of interpreters not only to draw on contemporary philosophical positions to elucidate Nietzsche's statements through comparison but to claim that he in fact espouses one or another such posi-

tion.[20] Here I will limit the scope of the discussion by viewing it only from the perspective of philosophical psychology. Specifically, I aim to show what can be gained for a contextual account of Nietzsche's psychological thinking when one challenges the view that Nietzsche espoused epiphenomenalism. For the sake of clarity, I will primarily draw on *D* in the discussion, because this work has been identified as inaugurating the shift in emphasis toward the drives and because it contains the most illuminating passages on the topic. After introducing the problem and the currently dominant interpretation, I will develop a novel solution through a constructive critique of Robert Solomon's enlightening reading of Nietzsche's philosophy of emotions. Finally, I will reflect on the implications of adopting this new interpretation.

Nietzsche's works abound with vivid descriptions of mental states and exhortations to change the way we feel about things.[21] These descriptions and exhortations coexist with statements that drives determine actions and with genealogical explanations of specific actions in terms of drives. The philosophical and interpretative problem concerns their relation, and has often been stated thus: Does Nietzsche think that consciousness is epiphenomenal?

The dominant interpretation in Anglophone scholarship has been that in Nietzsche's view consciousness is epiphenomenal (e. g. Leiter 2002). In what specific sense is this the case? How should one understand his purported epiphenomenalism? According to the influential account of Leiter, Nietzsche thinks that a person's unconscious drives, i. e. physiological facts about that person, causally determine the person's mental states. Such physiological facts, or what Leiter calls type-facts, are practically unchanging and determine what kind of person one is and what one can become. So a particular person's conscious states might play a role in causal explanation, in so far as they are part of a causal chain leading to an action. Nevertheless, "the real story of the genesis of an action begins with the type-facts, which explain both consciousness *and* a person's actions". That means that type-facts are both causally primary and explanatorily primary with regard to consciousness and action; consciousness is in itself not causally efficacious. (Cf. Leiter 2002, 91–92.)

One can certainly find passages in *D* that at least suggest the possibility of such an interpretation (D 116, KSA 3, 108–109; D 129, KSA 3, 118–120; D 130, KSA 3, 120–122).[22] Still, this interpretation is best understood as a rationalization of Nietzsche's

**20** So in this case one does not only encounter the usual "he says this – no he says that" kind of debate in the literature, but also a debate about fundamental philosophical commitments and theories. Needless to say, Nietzsche did not care to provide a clear answer himself. For an introduction to this debate, see Leiter (1998) and Solomon (2002).

**21** A very clear example is the concluding sentence of aphorism 103 of *D*, "*Wir haben umzulernen, – um endlich, vielleicht sehr spät, noch mehr zu erreichen: umzufühlen*" (D 103, KSA 3, 92), which beyond any doubt suggests the possibility of changing one's affective constitution, at least over a long span of time.

**22** In these passages Nietzsche vehemently criticizes traditional understandings of free will, but does not affirm any definite opposing view and importantly qualifies his discussion of necessity with many a perhaps [*vielleicht*].

statements in one particular direction. Even if one accepts the thesis that he expressed epiphenomenalist views, one can question whether he did this because he assumed that there are inflexible, rigid type-facts that determine actions, instead of for strategic reasons. Leiter rhetorically recognizes that his interpretation has to be qualified at least in one regard; the environment (which for Leiter includes values) plays a causal role in shaping a person's life and his actions (Leiter 2002, 97). Still he denies that a person could gain any kind of autonomy through interactions with his environment,[23] because it "simply does not square with the theory of action that underlies the basic fatalistic doctrine" (Leiter 2002, 98). While Leiter's emphasis on type-facts can and should be challenged, let us for now be content with examining what follows from his premise.

What are we to make of Nietzsche's talk about self-mastery? In this view, "self-mastery is merely an effect of the interplay of certain drives" (Leiter 2002, 100). Consequently, there is no real tension in Nietzsche's writings, but only in the confused mind of the interpreter. In practice, Leiter's interpretative framework resolves any apparent contradictions within a single text as well as between texts by referring to an underlying theory of action that has been arrived at through an interpretation and rationalization of a few chosen passages.[24] Still, it is of no use to deny that the conclusions that Leiter draws can be drawn from the textual evidence. One can however ask two critical questions: Firstly, and most importantly, one can ask if such an interpretation does not clarify Nietzsche's psychological thinking at the expense of obscuring much of Nietzsche's philosophical project, not to speak of casting doubt on its viability. Secondly, and more modestly, one can ask if there is no other way to understand his emphasis on psychic forces that resist rational control than to conclude that Nietzsche thinks physiological facts should always be considered explanatorily primary.

A number of scholars have sought to challenge Leiter's interpretation of the statements that he bases his epiphenomenalist thesis on, most often drawing on additional textual evidence (cf. Katsafanas 2013 and Dries 2013). The problem with these challenges is that Leiter's conclusions can certainly be drawn from the passages he cites. The competing interpretations of what Nietzsche says are hardly more plausible than Leiter's and thus end up with at least equally implausible "Nietz-

**23** Leiter thus rejects the view that "while type-facts may circumscribe the range of possible trajectories, it now seems that a person can 'create' his life – and thus be morally responsible for it – insofar as he can create those values that (causally) determine which of the possible trajectories is in fact realized" (Leiter 2002, 98).

**24** Leiter draws primarily on *D* when justifying his account, but this same work contains passages that can be used to resist such a reading. Besides the already cited aphorism 103, which suggests that one can in a genuine sense learn to feel differently, the most obvious evidence is to be found in aphorism 104, in which Nietzsche states that all actions derive from evaluative judgements, either one's own or someone else's (D 104, KSA 3,92). Even the most minimalistic interpretation of this passage must admit that Nietzsche thinks one can "own" one's actions. I examine other relevant passages in *D* in the final section of this chapter (3.5), before the conclusion.

schean" psychological theories (e. g. Katsafanas 2016).[25] Perhaps a more fruitful approach would be to pay more heed to context and to what Nietzsche in fact does, instead of merely interpreting single statements. In this regard, I fully subscribe to Tom Stern's criticism of the dominant approach to Nietzsche's psychology, and in particular I want to follow up on his suggestion that what Nietzsche was trying to do might contradict any effort to force his thinking into the mould of drive theory (cf. Stern 2015, 139).[26] It certainly seems that Nietzsche was not too concerned about the theoretical problem of epiphenomenalism. As Peter Poellner correctly notes, he "explicitly *uses* explanations" that rely on conscious states as causes "on almost every page of his writings" and that "there are a plethora of passages indicating that Nietzsche, even in the later phase of his creative career, regards consciousness as efficacious" (Poellner 2009, 297). The key question then becomes, why Nietzsche nevertheless opposes the drives to conscious mental states. What kind of project or projects does Nietzsche pursue when employing the vocabulary of drives to question inherited conceptions of mental life?

Poellner regrettably evades this crucial question by identifying Nietzsche as a proto-phenomenologist, specifically as a forerunner of Husserlian phenomenology, for whom the mental is always primary.[27] Nietzsche's philosophical project can indeed be described as an attempt to redirect attention to what he poetically calls the earth but to equate this concern with Husserl's preoccupation with the "lifeworld" is an anachronism that only sows confusion. That Nietzsche was not too concerned with the theoretical problem of epiphenomenalism, does not mean that he was not deeply concerned with the more practical question of what role consciousness can play in shaping action. Just as Nietzsche's expressions of scepticism concerning the power of consciousness should not be interpreted as a fundamental commitment to a rigid theory of action, one should also resist the temptation to undo the tension in the opposite direction. Against both extremes, I argue that Nietzsche was well aware of a tension between bodily nature and conscious thought and that the tension plays a productive role in his philosophical writings. There is a danger

**25** Most problematically, Katsafanas presents his own theoretical construction as if it were nothing but an elucidation of Nietzsche's own theoretical commitments. I am willing to grant Katsafanas the use of the term Nietzschean, as he clearly builds his psychological theory on statements by Nietzsche, but only if one then distinguishes the "Nietzschean", as philosophy inspired by Nietzsche, from Nietzsche's actual intentions, which resist theorization.

**26** Brian Leiter has sought to defend his interpretation against exactly this kind of criticism by asserting that there is no fundamental conflict between the "Humean Nietzsche" of drive theory and the "Therapeutic Nietzsche", who speaks of revaluation and who aims to influence select readers. However, this entire defence rests on the implausible premise that the "Therapeutic Nietzsche" works within the framework of drive theory, and not the other way around. (Cf. Leiter 2013, 582–584.)

**27** Poellner goes as far as to assert that "Nietzsche not only pervasively uses and anticipates phenomenological modes of inquiry, but that, perhaps even more importantly his work contains the most powerful and perceptive statement of the implicit motivations of the 'phenomenological turn' in early twentieth-century continental philosophy" (Poellner 2009, 298).

that if one accepts either Poellner's or Leiter's view, one loses sight of this tension that influences Nietzsche's thinking far beyond his psychological speculations.

I already suggested that opposing drives and conscious thought might for Nietzsche at least in part be a strategic move. According to Bernard Williams, Nietzsche's statements suggesting epiphenomenalism are best read as parts of arguments against certain moral interpretations of psychology.[28] Robert Solomon also notes the polemical intent of such statements (Solomon 2003, 75). In order to pursue this thread, it is useful to turn from the abstract debate on epiphenomenalism to the question how the tension between drives and conscious states should be understood in the case of emotional experience. It is generally recognized in analytic scholarship that whatever other functions drives have in Nietzsche's psychological thinking, their primary functions is to influence emotional experience. According to Katsafanas: "Drives manifest themselves by coloring our view of the world, by generating perceptual saliences, by influencing our emotions and other attitudes, by fostering desires." (Katsafanas 2013, 743; cf. D 119, KSA 3, 113 – 114) Though the metaphor of colouring is not unproblematic and Nietzsche only occasionally uses it,[29] Katsafanas is right to point out that for Nietzsche there is a close connection between the drives and other affective phenomena, at least in the sense that the drives have something to do with the all-enveloping background of feeling through which one encounters the world. How specific drives relate to specific emotions is a different question altogether, though it is worth noting that another influential scholar goes as far as to claim: "Drives and affects are undistinguishable, for an 'affect' is simply what it feels like to be driven by a drive" (Constâncio 2011, 16). Be that as it may, these examples from contemporary scholarship open the possibility to look beyond Nietzsche's terminology and to consider the concepts he employs attempts to approach certain phenomena, among them not least the nature of feelings and motivational states and their relation to rational and non-rational aspects of consciousness. In the following section, I follow this line of thought by engaging Robert Solomon's reading of Nietzsche's philosophy of emotion, which is particularly interesting precisely because he dares to think beyond the terminology provided by Nietzsche.

**28** "Nietzsche's doubts about action are more usefully understood, I suggest, as doubts not about the very idea of anyone's doing anything, but rather about a morally significant interpretation of action, in terms of the will." (Williams 1994, 242 – 242)

**29** It must be said that probably the most common description of the role of moods and feelings in contemporary analytic philosophy involves "colouring our view of the world". The metaphor of colouring has been criticized for reducing feelings and moods to mere aesthetic phenomena that serve no important function (cf. Ratcliffe 2008, 47), but this criticism does not hit the target in the case of Nietzsche, for whom aesthetics is never mere aesthetics. Nietzsche himself employs the metaphor of colour occasionally, e. g. when he in *GS* writes that we lack a history of all that has given colour to life (GS 7, KSA 3, 378 – 379) or that a cold grey sentiment associated with the historical sense is only one colour of the new feeling [*Farbe dieses neues Gefühls*] (GS 337, KSA 3, 564 – 565).

## 3.4 Robert Solomon on the tension in Nietzsche's understanding of the emotions

We have seen that the concept of the drive is intimately associated with the body in Nietzsche. On the other hand, we have noted that there is no gulf between the physiological and the phenomenological; that drives are intimately related to what we have called mood. Robert Solomon suggests that the interpreter could in most cases replace the term drive with other terms such as passion, emotion and desire. In Solomon's view, such an approach would recover a rich understanding of psychic life in Nietzsche sadly obscured by his reliance on the theory of drives that was popular in the late 19th century (cf. Solomon 2003, 78). So instead of trying to build some kind of Nietzschean psychological theory, (which, as a drive theory, could only be mistaken in his view),[30] Solomon suggests readers should learn to appreciate Nietzsche's observations about the motivating forces driving human actions as well as the philosopher's emphasis on the value of living passionately. In this view, Nietzsche was no great psychological theorist but he did have a keen psychological eye. For Solomon, it follows that one therefore need not pay too much attention to Nietzsche's preferred conceptual apparatus; one should rather seek to draw insights from what Nietzsche is trying to say. This approach is understandable against the background of Solomon's own philosophical project, which includes making Nietzsche relevant to contemporary philosophy of emotions, but I will seek to show that it also provides important clues for scholarship that seeks to understand Nietzsche's psychological thinking in its own right.

Solomon's suggested strategy of reading is worth interrogating closely. While developing his strategy of reading Nietzsche's writings, Solomon identifies an internal contradiction in the philosopher's statements on emotion that should not seem too surprising when one takes into account the debate over epiphenomenalism. Nietzsche at times treats emotions as if they were first and foremost strategies or ways of engaging with the world, talking about the importance of cultivating the emotions and the possibility of spiritualizing passions (Solomon 2003, 79 – 81 and 83). The understanding of emotions implied by such talk is quite at odds with the view of given and fixed forces of nature, torrents and streams rushing up to take hold of the mind, which Solomon suggests is also present in Nietzsche's writings (Solomon 2003, 82 – 83). The first understanding of emotions gives room for conscious control, while the second one puts constraints on choice. Solomon undoubtedly detects a real tension in Nietzsche, but it is precisely here that one should halt, instead

**30** For Solomon's objections against psychological drive theories, see Solomon 2003, 76 – 78. I tend to agree with Solomon that trying to build some kind of comprehensive Nietzschean psychological theory is a futile effort, but I would add that trying to clarify his views to serve historical scholarship is a quite different and wholly legitimate endeavour. To what extent Nietzsche-scholarship and philosophers writing on Nietzsche have been engaged in the former effort, at the expense of the latter, is a question everyone involved in the discourse should ask himself.

of rushing onwards.[31] Solomon's eagerness to reclaim Nietzsche for himself is problematic. In order to be able to replace Nietzsche's drive-talk with his own vocabulary, Solomon has to overlook the differences between his own conception of an irrationalist "hydraulic model" of emotions and a more fundamental yet subtle constraint on choice presumed by Nietzsche. Therefore, we cannot follow Solomon without first examining the premises of his project. This strategy also allows us to better appreciate Nietzsche's efforts by contrasting his thinking with what is one of or perhaps even the most influential perspective in the philosophy of emotions.

Only against the background of Solomon's understanding of choice can one make sense of his reading of Nietzsche and judge to what extent it hits the mark. While Solomon did revise important details over the years, those aspects of his theory of emotion that most concern us here remained virtually unchanged and are most clearly expressed in an early article. In his classic article on "Emotions and Choice", Solomon sets out to develop an alternative against what he takes to be a dominant perception of emotions as physiological occurrences that happen to us (Solomon 1973, 20). Here I want to focus only on his rejection of the idea that emotions resist our control and on the question in what sense he instead argues that one can choose one's emotions. According to Solomon, views that emphasize the uncontrollability of emotions overlook that emotions are in most if perhaps not all cases intentional, i.e. about something. To paraphrase Solomon's example, I am angry at John for stealing my car. If I learn that John did not steal my car, that he only bought a car that looks exactly like mine, I won't be angry at him anymore. (Solomon 1973, 21–23). This means that emotions are judgements, specifically normative judgements. Solomon adds that not only are emotions about something (i.e. emotions are intentional) they are also about something in a specific situation (i.e. emotions are situational), so he ends up with the view that "to have an emotion is to hold a normative judgement about one's situation" (Solomon 1973, 27). So if emotions are judgements that one can in some sense choose, why is it that emotions are commonly considered irrational and beyond our control?

Solomon argues that the apparent irrationality of emotions shouldn't be confused with uncontrollability. Instead, the best explanation for the widespread view that emotions can resist our control is that emotions are bound to situations. Emotions are responses to situations, which for one or another reason (e.g. on grounds of being unusual) demand a quick response. So emotions are hasty judgements that are appropriate and rational in the situations in which they arise (Solomon 1973, 34–35). Because emotions are linked to situations, one cannot simply choose to feel angry without any reason, without being in a situation where anger is a possibly appropriate response (Solomon 1973, 31 and 40). What one can do is to become more self-aware about one's judgements, to strive towards making correct judgements

**31** The ambivalence Solomon detects in Nietzsche's philosophy of emotion is also reflected in Solomon's text with frequent exclamations of "and yet", "but despite" and so forth (cf. Solomon 2003).

about situations and (eventually) change what kind of judgements one tends to make in particular circumstances (Solomon 1973, 32).[32] Consequently, emotional control does not involve fighting against some natural force, but in various ways challenging the normative judgements that constitute emotional responses, and thus eventually changing the way one tends to act in any given situation.

Solomon's early view certainly captures something important about the role of emotions in everyday life even if it does not provide a full picture.[33] If one discounts fundamental objections to his approach,[34] I think there is only one issue that is of concern to us here. After initially opposing his view against theories that consider emotions to be occurrences beyond our control, Solomon ends up with a view in which the possibility to choose one's emotions is constrained to a great extent by the nature of the situation in which one finds oneself. For any given situation only a limited number of emotional responses are appropriate, after all. One can then ask if Solomon does not go too far in externalizing the reasons for the experience that emotions might resist conscious control. Even as Solomon would later revise and tone down some aspects of his theory of choice, he never recanted this externalization of the constraints on choice.[35] Nietzsche certainly emphasizes constraints on choosing one's emotions that have more to do with the individual facing a specific situation than with the situation itself, as I will soon show in more detail. Solomon is vaguely aware of this and it is for this reason that he brings the idea of hydraulic models of emotions into his discussion about the understanding of emotions that finds expression in Nietzsche's philosophical texts.

Solomon's talk of a hydraulic model refers to (mis-)understandings of emotion, in which emotions are thought of as fixed natural forces. Hydraulic metaphors of raging torrents and subterraneous streams are a common identifier of such understandings. The key problem with such metaphors is that torrents are wholly mindless even if they flow in specific directions. As natural forces, torrents of emotion have to be dealt with. One can perhaps resist a torrent, redirect it or try to cope with it, but

**32** "I can take any number of positive steps to change what I believe and what judgments I hold and tend to make. By forcing myself to be scrupulous in the search for evidence and knowledge of circumstance, and by training myself in self-understanding regarding my prejudices and influences, and by placing myself in appropriate circumstances, I can determine the kinds of judgments I will tend to make. I can do the same for my emotions." (Solomon 1973, 32)

**33** Solomon is well aware of this as he himself remarks that the entire problem of "unconscious emotions" falls beyond the scope of his article (Solomon 1973, 26).

**34** One implication of tying emotions to a certain kind of situations is that a large part of affective life falls outside the scope of the discussion on emotions. This could be contrasted with a more holistic account of all human experience as shaped by mood as we find in Heidegger, to name but one prominent example (cf. Heidegger 2006, 134–140).

**35** Or as Paul Griffiths puts it: "While Solomon emphasized the cultivation of appropriate emotion through enculturation, his existentialist emphasis on personal responsibility would have made him uneasy with any theory in which the emotions – or at least the normative standards governing them – are inscribed into the psychology of the individual by the cultural milieu." (Griffiths 2010)

one cannot be rid of it. One cannot choose not to have torrents of emotion raging through one's body. (Cf. Solomon 2003, 73–74.) Does Nietzsche's talk of drives commit him to such a hydraulic model?

Nietzsche certainly thinks of emotions as natural forces, but does he think of them as being of a fixed, unchanging nature? Despite occasionally employing hydraulic metaphors, it is my contention that Nietzsche's understanding of the "nature" of emotion differs from Solomon's hydraulic model. Unless one thinks of nature as inherently inflexible, there is no reason to see the bodily nature of emotion as necessarily constricting choice, if one takes the choice to involve choosing among alternative emotions that are appropriate responses in a given situation. If one look closer at what Nietzsche has to say about the relation of affective phenomena to conscious thought and compare it to Solomon's views, one will see that while Nietzsche complicates the question of choice in a different way, the consequences are strikingly similar to Solomon's.

As we have seen, Nietzsche suggests that drives primarily operate on a sub-conscious level, in and through our bodies. They become manifest as emotions and attitudes. That means that drives are accessible to consciousness at least insofar as they are felt; and thus to a certain extent open to conscious reflection. In fact, Nietzsche only means to say that we cannot with certainty know reflectively all of the drives which constitute our affect and thus guide our action in any specific situation. In other words, we cannot be aware of all of the factors influencing our emotional experiences, reactions and actions (D 119, KSA 3, 111). Nietzsche writes that "However far a man may go in self-knowledge, nothing however can be more incomplete than his image of the totality of drives which constitute his being." (Hollingdale transl./ Clark and Leiter 1997, 74; cf. D 119, KSA 3, 111) That would simply be too much for the conscious mind.[36] While such an understanding raises some initial doubts about the power of conscious reflection, the rather banal fact that we are not aware of the origin of all the content of our consciousness in itself renders neither choice impossible nor consciousness illusory. One does not have to draw on any advanced existentialist theory of freedom to account for that. One merely has to expand the notion of choice from a narrow conception of reflective deliberation to allow the felt body to play a more important role in choices. Such a view is fully compatible with Solomon's original understanding of emotion and choice, which emphasized that one has to go through a process of learning in order to be able to choose differently in any given situation. This is the case as long as Nietzsche allows for ways to consciously influence one's drives. There certainly are no philosophical reasons to rule out that possibility *a priori*. In this regard, it is worth noting that Solomon started emphasizing the bodily nature of emotion in his late work, in much the same way as

**36** This brings up the thorny issue of self-knowledge in Nietzsche. Suffice it to say that there is no consensus about what kind of self-knowledge Nietzsche considers possible. A strict reading of the passage in question would suggest that Nietzsche thinks only complete self-knowledge is impossible.

Nietzsche, but did not consider it an objection to his earlier views.[37] This strengthens our suspicion that the problem, which is at the basis of the tension apparent in Nietzsche's statements on the affective life, does not derive from Nietzsche accepting a hydraulic model of emotion or any strictly deterministic drive theory for that matter.

Solomon concedes that the hydraulic model does not fit Nietzsche too well. His "metaphors are not all so hydraulic" (Solomon 2003, 75).[38] Solomon also admits that Nietzschean drives can be acquired (Solomon 2003, 76). Indeed, Nietzsche talks a lot about the incorporation of ideas and their becoming sub-conscious instinct: this is one of the main themes of the *Gay Science* (GS 21, KSA 3, 391–393; cf. Franco 2011, 102). Recognition of these facts leads Solomon to resolve the tension he has described by correcting Nietzsche with existentialist terminology. There is, however, an important sense in which this move can only be considered an attempt to get rid of Nietzsche's recognition of certain constraints on choosing one's emotions that can only be understood as deriving from within us. Although I think it can be shown that Nietzsche's conception of natural forces does not imply rigidity, there is still an unresolved tension between the bodily nature of emotions and the possibility to choose one's emotions. This tension resides on a more fundamental level than the dichotomy of hydraulic and existentialist models of emotion allows for. Next, I will examine some particularly illuminating statements on the tension between consciously choosing one's emotions and forces constraining choice in *Daybreak*.

## 3.5 The history of emotions and the tension in question

Nietzsche's *Daybreak* is the work that is most often cited by scholars arguing for an epiphenomenalist interpretation (cf. Leiter 2002, 95 and 99–101). As I already noted, the text also contains statements that can be used to question that interpretation. Now I will examine three aphorisms that in my view indicate that Nietzsche is aware of a tension between choosing one's emotions and forces constraining choice. These aphorisms are unsystematic, and in this sense they do not differ from the evidence that the competing interpretations draw upon, but they do form a suggestive chain of thought and suffice to give an alternative picture that is more in tune with Nietzsche's critical projects. I want to pay particular attention to aphorisms 34, 35 and 38.

In aphorism 34, Nietzsche writes that moral feelings are apparently transmitted from parents to children when children notice strong sentiments for or against cer-

**37** A striking example of this Nietzschean emphasis on the body is Solomon's clarification that "the judgments that I claim are constitutive of emotion may be non-propositional and bodily as well as propositional and articulate. They manifest themselves as feelings." (Solomon 2004, 88)

**38** One could add that even when Nietzsche is at his most hydraulic, he allows for ways of manipulating the nature of the torrents and leaves room for the intellect to choose between competing drives (e.g. D 109, KSA 3, 96–99).

tain actions in their parents and copy their reactions.[39] Eventually practice makes specific feelings habitual and one learns to provide reasons for one's emotions. Nietzsche critically suggests that these reasons all too often only serve to justify emotional reactions after they take place, so in many cases habitual feelings are prior to any rational judgements. (D 34, KSA 3, 43) This, however, does not mean that feelings are not judgements, which becomes clear in the following aphorism that develops the theme:

> 35. *Feelings and their origination in judgments*. – 'Trust your feelings!' – But feelings are nothing final or original; behind feelings there stand judgments and evaluations which we inherit in the form of feelings (inclinations, aversions). The inspiration born of a feeling is the grandchild of a judgment – and often of a false judgment! – and in any event not a child of your own! To trust one's feelings – means to give more obedience to one's grandfather and grandmother and their grandparents than to the gods which are in *us:* our reason and our experience. (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 36; D 35, KSA 3, 43–44)

If there is one aphorism above others in Nietzsche that could be said to reflect Solomon's view of emotions as judgements then this would be it. The aphorism clearly states that feelings are judgements, but there is something that is even more important here. Firstly, Nietzsche claims that feelings are inherited. The relation between feelings and judgements is also familial; the inspiration that derives from feelings is a grandchild of a judgement [*Enkelkind eines Urtheils*]. The addition that the judgement that "one's" feeling depends on is not one's own, but of one's grandfather, grandmother and their grandparents, hammers the point home. While I think that it is reasonably clear that Nietzsche here primarily means to point to the historical dimension of feelings, to the cultural transmission described in the previous aphorism, the metaphor of inheritance is potentially misleading. The problem is that as Nietzsche does not specify the manner of inheritance, it cannot be ruled out that he also considers a biological transmission of acquired characteristics to be possible.[40] The second important point that merits commentary is the final suggestion that trusting one's feelings means obeying the human past instead of obeying one's own reason and experience. If the use of reason, which I take to entail conscious deliberation, had no power over the affects and no power to guide action,

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**39** "*Ersichtlich werden moralische Gefühle so übertragen, dass die Kinder bei den Erwachsenen starke Neigungen und Abneigungen gegen bestimmte Handlungen wahrnehmen und dass sie als geborene Affen diese Neigungen und Abneigungen nachmachen*" (D 34, KSA 3, 43).

**40** The view that acquired characteristics could be passed on from one generation to the next, associated with the name of Lamarck, remained widespread even after Darwin's theory gained ground. Nietzsche seems at times to have taken this idea very seriously as scientific fact (see Schacht 2013; for an opposite view see Clark 2013). This is not much of a problem for philosophical work that draws on Nietzsche, since passages that invite a Lamarckian interpretation can fairly easily be reread in terms of cultural transmission. It does however pose problems for a reading of Nietzsche's thinking that aims for historical accuracy.

it would be strange for Nietzsche to raise such a criticism. All in all, the aphorism fits Solomon's view that one is in some sense responsible for one's judgements, but it also complicates the picture by opening up a historical dimension.

In aphorism 38, Nietzsche seeks to draw attention to the way in which moral judgements transform drives. He opens the aphorism by claiming that the same drive, which in one cultural context expresses itself as a feeling of cowardice, can in a culture shaped by Christian morality become a pleasant feeling of humility. In themselves drives are immoral and only through moral judgements do they really become the feelings and emotions that we speak of. So moral judgements shape drives and give them a second nature [*zweite Natur*]. After making this initial point, Nietzsche devotes the remainder of the aphorism to historical examples. These examples are cursory and amount to little more than mere claims (to the effect) that the ancient Greeks felt both jealousy and hope differently than we do and that the Jews of the time of the prophets felt wrath as something divine.[41] (D 38, KSA 3, 45–46)

What is important is that Nietzsche speaks of drives as malleable. This foreshadows his discussion of the drives in his following work, *The Gay Science*. There Nietzsche explicitly states that consciousness is a fairly recent development within organic lifeforms and that therefore it is still weak (GS 11, KSA 3, 382). Consciousness itself, he thus presumes, springs forth from the operation of the organism and its drives. Nevertheless, he suggests that conscious experience and thought can alter the nature of the drives and perhaps even give birth to new drives under the right circumstances. Far from intending to deny the reality of consciousness, Nietzsche's criticism of the overvaluation of consciousness, his criticism of the idea that we already fully have consciousness, is meant to spur us to become more conscious (GS 11, KSA 3, 383). What follows for Nietzsche is a grand task to "incorporate knowledge" and to review all normative judgements, in order to open up new ways of affirming life (cf. Franco 2011, 101–103). That, however, is a story beyond the scope of our discussion here (see chapter 5), so let us try to return to the question concerning the role of choice in emotional experience.

Not only does Nietzsche acknowledge that under specific circumstances "emotions" might resist conscious control, appear to us as torrents and thereby restrict choice. He also implies that there is a more fundamental irrationality constraining what affective response one can choose. Nietzsche never systematically elaborates the implications of his historical perspective on the issue that today is put in terms of emotions and choice, but some implications are clear enough to be summar-

**41** In the Heidelberg-commentary on *D*, Jochen Schmidt helpfully points out that Nietzsche's examples about the Greeks rely on extreme overgeneralization; in fact, he presents Hesiod's rather personal view as the collective view of the Greeks. Nietzsche's example about the Israelites is similarly misleading (Schmidt and Kaufmann 2015, 128–132). This of course need not impact the philosophical point Nietzsche is trying to make, as there are very good reasons to think that the experience of emotions is shaped by historical forces; indeed, this is a trivial starting point for any history of emotions (cf. Plamper 2015).

ized thus: One cannot invent new feelings for any given situation and choose to feel whatever one wants. Most of our everyday affects are the results of untold years of natural and cultural history. One can choose not to let a "torrent" rage, but one cannot choose not to have affects at all. Choosing against one affect means choosing or giving into another affect. Being human means being affective, being in a mood. Besides disruptive or strong episodes of feeling, there is also always a background affectivity or mood structuring our perceptions and influencing choice even beyond the choice of emotions. Both the affects in the strict sense and background affectivity are mutable and the conscious cultivation of mood is possible. One should still not overestimate the power of consciousness, especially not that of the individual, for it is rare indeed in history that entirely new forms or directions of the emotions appear and leave a lasting legacy.

## 3.6 Conclusion

Returning to Solomon, one can conclude that he detects a real tension in Nietzsche's understanding of affective life, which has went unnoticed by scholars of Nietzsche's philosophy who tend to accept some form of drive theory without question (cf. Dries and Kail 2015).[42] The desire to resolve the tension is understandable. Still, Solomon goes too far by imposing a foreign framework onto Nietzsche; thereby correcting him with a more "existentialist" theory of emotions. This is insofar unproblematic, as Solomon is mostly concerned with reclaiming Nietzsche as an advocate of the passionate life (Solomon 2003, 3–5). For a contextual interpretation of Nietzsche's psychological thinking the tension presents a major challenge. Must one conclude that Nietzsche's philosophical psychology is just hopelessly confused and contradictory?

One can and must of course concede that Nietzsche's statements are confusing. This need not mean that his psychological thought is hopelessly confused. There is a real philosophical and existential problem at the basis of this confusion; it is a confusion that concerns the relation between nature, history and consciousness. The tension in Nietzsche's thinking about feeling is best not conceived of as one between a hydraulic and an existentialist model but rather as a tension between historical forces and the power of consciousness. Therefore, one should be careful not to reject an inquiry into Nietzsche's philosophical psychology as fruitless outright on account of his contradictory statements, and instead inquire into the problem. So let us ask one final time: does Nietzsche think that consciousness is epiphenomenal? I have suggested that for Nietzsche, the decisive issue is rather one of the relative strength

**42** Perhaps it would be more diplomatic if not more accurate to say that this tension in Nietzsche's understanding of affectivity has been overshadowed by an overtly abstract debate on Nietzsche's fatalism in general and his epiphenomenalism in philosophical psychology. That scholars and philosophers writing on Nietzsche tend to disregard all criticism of drive theories is nevertheless the main issue, and this justifies the polemical statement here.

of consciousness and of conscious thought compared to that of the drives and the power of history that they represent. That this solution to the problem of Nietzsche's purported epiphenomenalism goes some way towards explaining the prevalence of discussions about feeling in Nietzsche's philosophical writings is evident, for it follows that the life of feeling is a privileged domain between more or less unconscious drives and more or less conscious thought; a sign of the tension between body and embodied spirit. Nietzsche's position is one that might or might not be attractive to contemporary philosophers. What matters here is that Nietzsche can plausible be thought to have held such a view, and that this assumption is a good starting place for a contextual interpretation of his writings. Further evidence that Nietzsche in fact espoused such a view will be presented in the following chapters, along with discussions of the reasons that led him in the direction of developing such a view. Now it here only remains to outline the approach taken in the following chapters.

I would suggest that the tension in question is best explored on two levels; by taking account both of 1) Nietzsche's explicit psychological statements on the life of feeling and especially those statements dealing with the historical dimensions of feelings as well as the possibility of new configurations of feeling, and 2) his use of style, and of a variety of artistic means, in his writings in order to communicate mood and thereby open up new possibilities for philosophical thinking. In the following chapters, I limit my discussion by focusing primarily on Nietzsche's criticism of religion in the light of his communication of mood. This strategy is justified firstly because of the outstanding place that religion has in Nietzsche's writings both as inspiration and as target of critique and secondly because it allows to solve central problems in the scholarly literature on Nietzsche (as presented in the introduction of the study). To conclude: If Nietzsche's psychological thinking has played a marginal role in continental scholarship, Anglophone scholarship has been one-sided and obsessed with those aspects of his psychological thinking that are close to concerns in contemporary philosophy of mind and action. This focus has not resulted in a total neglect of mood, but it has subordinated the discussion about felt experience to the discussion about Nietzsche's assumed theory of drives. My question, the question of the historical dimension of affective phenomena and the possibilities of shaping the future of emotional experience, has been almost altogether neglected, although it is arguably of utmost importance to understanding Nietzsche's critical project concerning morality and religion. As I noted, Nietzsche never defines the concept of drive in his published work. Given the results of the investigation thus far, it is nevertheless worth noting, that when Nietzsche does define the closely related term instinct in a note from 1881, he speaks of instinct as a judgement that has become embodied.[43] This is of no small importance, for the evidence certainly points in the direction that Nietzsche thinks one can learn to judge differently.

**43** "*Ich rede von Instinkt, wenn irgend ein Urtheil (Geschmack in seiner untersten Stufe) einverleibt ist*" (NL 1881, 11[164], KSA 9, 505).

# 4 Nietzsche's psychology of religion in *Human, All Too Human* and *Daybreak*

This chapter is devoted to examining Nietzsche's psychological approach to religion in *HH* and *D*.

Although this involves clarification and reconstruction, the aim of the chapter is not primarily to present a summary of Nietzsche's views. A mere systematizing summary would run the risk of depriving the reader of a sense for the rich affective dimension of Nietzsche's text, which is precisely what concerns us. So besides presenting Nietzsche's thinking about the topic on the basis of the content of the works (sections 4.1 and 4.3), this chapter also explores what can be said about Nietzsche's use of mood in these two works and to what extent that should influence the interpretation of his remarks on religion (sections 4.2 and 4.4). These latter questions are pursued through a critical engagement with the work of Jacob Golomb (on *HH*) and Rebecca Bamford (on *D*). Many scholars have made scattered, cursory remarks about Nietzsche's use of affective means in his writings, but these two are the only scholars who have paid serious attention to Nietzsche's use of mood in these specific works. If indeed mood is central to the conception of these early works, there is reason to assume that it is of no small importance to examine its role thoroughly. The question of mood is worth more than a footnote or two, if one aims for a viable reading.

## 4.1 Schopenhauer's shadow and the independence of *HH*

The following foray into *Human, All Too Human* serves to outline the basics of Nietzsche's psychological approach to religion. The focus of the reading will be on questions of affectivity, which means I will necessarily ignore most of the work. The chosen approach is justified within the context of the work at hand as the chapter is meant to perform a preliminary function. This function consists in outlining the basics of Nietzsche's psychological approach to religion, before we move on to *D* and *GS*. Besides this pragmatic justification, there are more important reasons for the focus on affectivity. I will argue that the focus on affectivity improves our understanding of Nietzsche's departure from Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion. That matters because it is after all precisely this departure, which allows one to consider *HH* foundational for Nietzsche's development into an independent thinker. The focus on affectivity makes it possible to argue against the popular narrative which holds that as Nietzsche in *HH* distances himself from Schopenhauer's philosophy, he also seeks a perspective that renounces all ideals and denies the value of feelings.[1] If one would fully embrace that view, it would hardly make sense to speak

**1** E.g. Marco Brusotti contends that Nietzsche in *HH* seeks a perspective that is not only free from

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of Nietzsche giving any significant constructive role to feeling in that work, not to speak of him making use of mood. Therefore, I will begin by challenging that narrative, whereafter I will through an examination of the foundations of Nietzsche's psychological criticism move on to the question about the potential constructive role of mood in the work (section 4.2).

### 4.1.1 A turn against feeling?

What makes the narrative that Nietzsche turns against all feeling so compelling is that it not only superficially fits what we know about the circumstances which led to the creation of *HH* but that Nietzsche himself also suggests the possibility of such an interpretation. In his late work, *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche recounts that it was his sobering experience of the first Bayreuth Festival of 1876 that triggered the crisis that found its expression in *HH* (KSA 6, 323–324; cf. Young 2010, 224 and Franco 2011, 10). That the crisis was a matter of feeling and taste, more specifically a rejection of that which he encountered at the festival, is beyond doubt. Was it also a rejection of feeling more generally? The terse aphoristic style as well as the philosophical content of *HH*, especially its piercing psychological analyses of feelings, might tempt one to affirm that conclusion. In contrast to the baroque excesses of feeling displayed at Bayreuth, *HH* is in this view propagated by Nietzsche an exercise in self-restraint that puts an end to all "feminine" concerns about ideals and "beautiful feelings" (KSA 6, 327).[2] It is moreover a war, which is fought without any pathos, as he curiously writes, because fighting with pathos would still be "idealism" (KSA 6, 323). Despite such strong-worded statements, the narrative of a general turn against feeling gives at best a partial explanation of Nietzsche's Bayreuth-crisis.

There is another, more enlightening way of reading Nietzsche's crisis. Rather than being a turn away from strong feeling altogether, Nietzsche's turn away from the Wagnerians can be read as itself driven by a strong feeling. On this reading, what bothered Nietzsche about Bayreuth was not the displays of intense feeling per se, but his shock that what he considered the highest feelings were mingled with the lowest motivations. What he found was that Wagner had become "German" and succumbed to the impulse to please the crowd (cf. KSA 6, 323; cf. Janz 1978 I, 708). Nietzsche's error was to go to Bayreuth with an ideal in mind, as he himself attests in a note from 1878 (NL 1878, 30[1], KSA 8, 522). This was an ideal that he

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troubling affects (Brusotti 1997, 14), but also free of passions altogether, i.e. apathetic (Brusotti 1997, 228). Even though Brusotti is careful to point out that Nietzsche seems to have had doubts about the issue all along, Brusotti still emphasizes what he interprets as signs of how hard it was for Nietzsche to give up the goal of attaining such a perspective (Brusotti 1997, 188 and 630–632).

**2** "*Menschliches, Allzumenschliches, dies Denkmal einer rigorösen Selbstzucht, mit der ich bei mir allem eingeschleppten 'höheren Schwindel,' 'Idealismus,' 'schönen Gefühl,' und andren Weiblichkeiten ein jähes Ende bereitete*" (KSA 6, 327).

had himself elaborated and celebrated in the fourth untimely meditation, *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, which was specifically published for the occasion in 1876. This ideal Wagner was a cosmopolitan or over-German [*überdeutsch*] phenomenon, whose music was above all an expression of the "truth" of *pathos*, i.e. that honest passion is far better than moralistic hypocrisy and conformism (cf. RWB, KSA 1, 506–507; cf. Janz 1978 I, 712). After his arrival in Bayreuth, it did not take long for Nietzsche to realize that his ideal did not matter and that honesty in matters of feeling was out of the question in the company now gathered; the company of "important" persons such as princes and other wealthy sponsors.[3] This disappointment, however great it was, did not lead to a rejection of the value of feeling but to the task of purifying feeling. What Nietzsche craves is purity of feeling, and greatly aided by his escape into the mountains he finds within himself an affective ideal that matches his demands.[4] He then rereads and reinterprets Schopenhauer in the light of his new experience and it is this engagement with his former master, which finally allows him to develop into an independent thinker.

Against this background, I advance the thesis that Nietzsche's focus on affectivity in his analysis of the religious life is a direct result of his rereading and appropriation of Schopenhauer, and that Nietzsche's quarrel is not with heightened feeling per se but with metaphysical and religious interpretations of extraordinary emotions. Herein lies the independent scholarly interest of the ensuing discussion, if one were to disconnect it from the broader arguments of the study. To reiterate, I argue that Nietzsche does not question the value of intense feelings and that he instead only attacks misguided interpretations. That he does seek a certain distance from feeling is undeniable, but that does not contradict his aim. To the contrary, I will seek to show that one can plausibly assume that Nietzsche at least implicitly already in *HH* understands distance as pathos (cf. BGE 257, KSA 5, 205), and connects "being above" certain feelings with a specific affective ideal. Arguably, *HH* is to a great extent about articulating this affective ideal of distance, and arguably, Nietzsche struggles to express his experience and to transmit it to his friends and readers. Indeed, we will yet come to ask if he is perhaps right to doubt to what extent he can succeed. First of all, however, the foundations for the interpretation sketched here must be laid through an examination of the foundations of Nietzsche's psychological criticism.

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**3** "*die erbarmungswürdige Gesellschaft der Patronatsherrn und Patronatsweiblein*", as he noted in a first draft for the description of his crisis in *EH* (KSA 14, 492; cf. Janz 1978 I, 720).

**4** In fact, Nietzsche himself represented his turn away from the Wagnerians as such in his letters. E.g. in a letter to Mathilde Mayer he justifies his escape from Bayreuth in terms of the discovery of a mood that he metaphorically relates to the fresh mountain air [*Höhenluft*], a mood so promising that it compels him to break with the Wagnerians and seek solitude: "*ich bin auf einem Grad der Ehrlichkeit angelangt, wo ich nur die allerreinlichsten menschlichen Beziehungen ertrage*" (KGB II/5, Bf. 734). I present more evidence about this mood and discuss it in detail in the final parts of the discussion on *HH*.

### 4.1.2 The foundations of Nietzsche's psychological criticism

*HH* is notable for the reason that Nietzsche at the beginning provides a sketch of his method of doing philosophy.[5] Chapter one introduces the reader to a specific kind of philosophizing that Nietzsche calls historical philosophizing, though it could at least as well be called psychological philosophizing. This latter claim gains support from the very first two passages ("aphorisms") of *HH*, which announce the new program. The *Chemistry of concepts and sensations* that Nietzsche calls for is a critical practice, in which the focus of attention is on the construction of our concepts and feelings; be they of a moral, religious or scientific nature.[6] While this practice mostly results in penetrating psychological analyses of the origins of metaphysical and religious concepts, Nietzsche importantly justifies the new practice as an expression of historical sense. Attentiveness to the various elements that make up unified concepts (e. g. Selflessness, Love etc.) is according to him necessary because of a particular reason. Only such philosophizing avoids what he calls the original sin of philosophers, which is a lack of historical sense. Nietzsche then illustrates what he means by a lack of historical sense by mocking the method with which some philosophers treat the concept of the human: They take the man of today, find certain features and assume that these features have always belonged to mankind. Instead of taking the human beings one encounters in one's own day as paradigmatic ("the human" as *aeterna veritas*), Nietzsche insists one must as philosopher be sensitive to and open to the reality of change and aware of the historical conditions that shape what we call humanity. (HH I 1 and HH I 2, KSA 2, 23 – 25)

In itself, Nietzsche's call for more historical consciousness in philosophy is nothing revolutionary in the late 19th-century context. He is in fact unusually explicit about his indebtedness to contemporary thought in speaking of historical philosophy as the youngest of philosophical methods to have been developed, even though he at this point fails to mention anyone who would have put the method to practice. A clue can be found in the fact that he connects the necessity of historical philosophizing with the advancement of natural science, writing that the former can no longer be thought of in separation of the latter (HH I 1, KSA 2, 23). A quick glance at Nietzsche's reading is enlightening in this respect. Nietzsche might have made the connection between historical philosophizing and natural science at the very beginning of his turn towards philosophy. Nietzsche read the first edition of Friedrich Albert Lange's

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**5** Importantly, as Hödl emphasizes, Nietzsche does not abandon the central features of the critical program he explicates in *HH*, not even in his late works (Hödl 2009, 359). Likewise, Young cursorily notes that the basic thrust of *HH* is the same as in Nietzsche's later genealogical investigations (Young 2006, 62).

**6** A presupposition for the view advanced by Nietzsche is that all those moral, religious and scientific concepts that concern him are made up of analysable components. Aphorism 14 of book one is an attempt to explain how the perception of unity in concepts such as "moral feeling" or "religious feeling" arises in the first place (HH I 14, KSA 2, 35).

*History of Materialism* [*Geschichte des Materialismus*] in 1866, in which the neo-Kantian philosopher among other things discussed recent physiological and psychological research and reflected on their relevance to philosophy (cf. Brobjer 2008, 32–36). Although Lange's work was important in Nietzsche's philosophical development (cf. Stack 1983, 1–2), especially in the late 1860s, there is no evidence to suggest that he reread that book in the years directly leading up to the publication of *HH* (Brobjer 2008, 35). In those decisive years, however, Nietzsche became acquainted with the work of British anthropologists who sought to apply the idea of evolution to human history and society; not least Herbert Spencer, J. Lubbock and E.B. Tylor (cf. Orsucci 1996). That Nietzsche thought of the works of these thinkers as intimately connected with natural science can be sufficiently explained with reference to their content. In the case of Spencer, one can also add the fact that Nietzsche read his work as part of an edited series (*Internationale Wissenschaftliche Bibliothek*), which contained both natural and social science (cf. Brobjer 2008, 64–65). Closer to home, Paul Rée further familiarized Nietzsche with this kind of thinking. So what is it that sets our philosopher apart from others, who were keen to integrate the most recent findings of anthropology, psychology and historical methods into philosophy? In Nietzsche's hands the combination of psychological insight and historical method results in an intensity quite unlike anything to be found in his predecessors and contemporaries. This intensity is the result not of some improvement of the historical method by Nietzsche, but rather derives from the originality and boldness of his psychological vision; reflected in the uncompromising vehemence of his cultural criticism, which is especially evident in his reevaluation of the tradition regarding desire and mood.

The two opening aphorisms already suggest the most important target of his cultural criticism: narrow and outright false interpretations of "the human". How human life is interpreted is important, the aphorisms imply, because interpretations of what it is like to be human and how various phenomena are to be understood in fact shape what life is like. That Nietzsche in the second aphorism explicitly mentions religion, besides politics, as a force that has shaped humanity is an important indicator of that which is to come (HH I 2, KSA 2, 24–25). For once one recognizes that the idea of humanity that reigns in one's own day does not reveal the eternal truth about humans, as Nietzsche here does, a number of critical questions are made possible. How and why does the image of "the human" change? What are the historical and psychological roots of the contemporary construction of "the human"? What instincts, desires and moods does it express? Does it perhaps present a misshapen picture of "the human"? If so, what could be done to change the picture?

As hinted at above, the historical philosophizing that Nietzsche practices in *HH* cannot be disconnected from cultural criticism. This at first sight rather banal thesis hides a potential for great conflict, as it is necessary to specify what kind of culture is the target of criticism. That this is indeed the case can be seen in the work of Paul Franco, who most recently has defended the thesis that culture is the central concern

of *HH*. Franco is of course right to identify the theme of culture as central to *HH*, but his talk of a single *problem of culture* (Franco 2011, 16), specifically a problem of modern culture, suggests to me a more systematic treatise than Nietzsche in fact delivers. Are there not more than one *problems of culture* in *HH*, the most important of which arguably would be the problem of metaphysics?[7] In Franco's interpretation, metaphysics does form the "deepest substratum of Nietzsche's critical excavation of the problem of modern culture" (Franco 2011, 17). It is, however, anything but clear from Franco's examination of the issue what relations pertain between the different substrata of the purportedly singular problem of "modern culture" and whether they depend in some way on metaphysical errors in the deepest substratum. How, for example, do the chapters *Woman and Child* or *A Glance at the State* relate to metaphysics? Resolving the issue lies beyond the scope of this study. Here I will focus on the problem of metaphysics as a cultural problem, which certainly is one of the main concerns of the book.

Firstly, Nietzsche's concern with metaphysics needs to be specified. Nietzsche is not primarily concerned with metaphysics *per se*, as in classical questions of metaphysical philosophy, but rather focuses on metaphysical interpretations, i. e. metaphysics in and as culture. Characteristic of this psychological approach is his admission that there might be a metaphysical world, but that all attempts to gain knowledge of metaphysical worlds has relied on the very worst methods of reasoning. In short: metaphysical assumptions are the result of passion, error and self-deception [*Leidenschaft, Irrthum und Selbstbetrug*] (cf. HH I 9, KSA 2, 29 – 30). Secondly, Nietzsche's attack on the reasoning supporting metaphysics is not limited to the first chapter, *Of the First and Last Things*. Franco is of course quite correct in his assessment that the first chapter is primarily directed at Schopenhauer (Franco 2011, 17; cf. Heller 1972, 6). To this must be added that the concern with metaphysical interpretations and consequently the engagement with Schopenhauer resurfaces throughout the work, though it is most strongly present in chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4. Instead of systematically working my way through the entire work, I here want to follow one specific trace that is especially relevant for the understanding of Nietzsche's psychological criticism of religion. This is a trace, which leads straight back to Schopenhauer's philosophy.

In order to pick up the trace, it is necessary to return to the first aphorism. Nietzsche there contends that metaphysical philosophy avoided the difficult task of explaining how something could arise from its opposite, e. g. feeling life from

**7** Judging from the fact that quite a few commentators on *HH* focus exclusively on the problem of metaphysics (cf. Golomb 1989), one could mistakenly assume that there is a consensus. On this issue, I lean in favour of Young, who does not seek to subsume all the content of *HH* under one problem of culture, but nevertheless notes that the problem of metaphysics is central to Nietzsche's cultural criticism in the work. Young writes that "The fundamental aim of *Human*, we have seen, is to hunt down and destroy belief in a metaphysical world", and this is to be done "as a preliminary to constructing a new, post-metaphysical, 'rational' culture" (Young 2010, 249).

dead matter, intellect from ignorance, truth from lies and so forth, by simply denying that anything of value could have arisen from its opposite. Instead, metaphysical philosophy dreamt up a higher origin for all that which is valued more highly, thus positing a wondrous origin directly from the "thing in itself" (HH I 1, KSA 2, 23). It is precisely this interpretative tendency, or in more Nietzschean words: this method of knowledge, that is the main target of Nietzsche's attack on metaphysics. So what at first sight might seem an insignificant detail in the argument of the aphorism turns out to be the key to understanding the problem of metaphysics as Nietzsche presents it in *HH*.[8] Indeed, its relevance goes far beyond the practice of metaphysical philosophy. We will soon see that Nietzsche thinks this operation of positing a wondrous origin is at least as, if not more present in everyday life as in philosophical reflection and that he thinks his critique rings especially true of those ideas, experiences and emotions that are granted the highest value. Now, however, I will turn to examine the origins of this understanding of metaphysical reasoning, which are to be found in Schopenhauer. As will be shown, a close examination of Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion is essential for understanding Nietzsche's psychology of religion in *HH* and beyond. Such an examination is also particularly illuminating when it comes to understanding Nietzsche's appropriation of Schopenhauer's thinking in general.

### 4.1.3 Approaching Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion as the model for and target of Nietzsche's psychological criticism

Before I examine the most relevant passages of Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion in detail, some words about the methodical approach taken here are necessary. A good starting point is to be found in the principle that one must resist a naive understanding of the relation between source and influence in order to grasp the character of Nietzsche's reception of other writers. This is because he always reads others with his own projects in mind. So even when he seemingly merely quotes an author or reproduces a viewpoint, only the context of his own projects make his borrowings intelligible.

Even once one accepts that context is king, in the sense that Nietzsche's own projects take precedence over the intentions of his sources, there is in the case of his reception of Schopenhauer a specific tension that cannot be done away with easi-

**8** Notably, Nietzsche repeats exactly the same critique at the beginning of *Beyond Good and Evil*. There, in the second passage, he writes that inventing a divine origin for all that which is valued most highly is the defining mark of metaphysics. Such interpretation "*macht das typische Vorurteil aus, an dem sich die Metaphysiker aller Zeiten wiedererkennen lassen; diese Art von Wertschätzungen steht im Hintergrunde aller ihrer logischen Prozeduren*" (BGE 2, KSA 5, 16). This fact further testifies to the foundational role of *HH* for Nietzsche's later criticism and the importance Nietzsche attached to casting light on the reasoning that begets metaphysics.

ly. So one might correctly emphasize that Nietzsche's entire criticism of religion cannot be understood on the basis of one source (cf. Hödl 2009, 323). Nevertheless, as Hödl rightly insists, it is of crucial importance for the understanding of Nietzsche's thinking on religion to determine precisely how it relates to Schopenhauer, and this applies especially to the understanding of his early works (Hödl 2009, 321). The shadowy gloom of Schopenhauer's philosophy looms large over that period in which Nietzsche develops into an independent thinker. This means that reading Nietzsche with Schopenhauer in mind is a veritable balancing act. How can one avoid either understating or overstating Schopenhauer's influence? Julian Young, as a prominent example, goes too far as he attempts to understand most if not all of what Nietzsche has to say about religion from the perspective of Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion. In the process, Young elevates Schopenhauer to the status of a standard for judging the merits of Nietzsche's thinking (Young 2006, 10). Not only does this approach prevent Young from appreciating Nietzsche's thinking on religion in its own right, it also leads him to repeatedly overstate the influence of Schopenhauer.[9] To avoid overestimation, and in order not to give in to the opposite vice of understatement, I adopt an idea first presented by Hödl, who characterizes Nietzsche's reception of Schopenhauer as one of transforming appropriation [*anverwandelnde Übernahme*] (Hödl 2009, 321–330). This is an idea which deserves serious consideration and more attention than it has hitherto received.

The main thrust of Hödl's argument is that one must attend carefully to the manner in which Nietzsche relates to Schopenhauer (Hödl 2009, 321). According to Hödl, the textual evidence that bears on the issue of Nietzsche's appropriation of Schopenhauer testifies either of a rejection and move away from the core tenets of Schopenhauer's teaching on religion or of a transposition, in which the valuations are subverted (Hödl 2009, 330). This is the case even with those basic tenets of Schopenhauer's theory of religion that retain their importance for Nietzsche's thinking on religion all the way through the late works.[10] While Hödl, due to the nature of

**9** This is especially the case whenever Young discusses the "metaphysical need" in Nietzsche, an issue that I discuss in some detail below. Young's most egregious claim is that Nietzsche never truly abandons the idea that there is a religious need that has to be stilled and therefore comes up with a Dionysian pantheism to serve the function of religion in Schopenhauer's theory (Young 2006, 201). The problem with this claim is that Nietzsche clearly rejects the idea that that religion grows out of one immutable need; instead, religion is based on many different needs and desires. That these needs are historically mutable is something that Nietzsche emphasizes already in *HH*. Characteristically, Young mistakes the decisive aphorism expounding this historicist view for a discussion of a singular "metaphysical need" (HH I 27, KSA 2, 48; cf. Young 2006, 85).

**10** These basic tenets are: 1. religion is basically mythological and must be interpreted philosophically, 2. Christianity is a form of Platonism, just as religion is metaphysics for the people, 3. Christianity and Buddhism are pessimistic religions, and 4. Christian love is a kind of *Mitleid,* just as Schopenhauer understood it to be (Hödl 2009, 322). Contrary to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche rejects Christian *Mitleid*, pessimism and Platonism, and the manner in which he philosophically interprets religion is markedly different. So the foundation is intact, but the evaluation differs.

his research interest, uses the idea of transforming appropriation to allow for generalizations about the relation in which the younger philosopher stands to the older, I here intend to show how this idea can be applied in a specific context to a specific text. So in the following, I want make a specific claim plausible: a claim that concerns the manner in which Nietzsche appropriates elements of Schopenhauer's thinking for his own ends.

### 4.1.4 Nietzsche's appropriation of the "metaphysical need"

The most important expression of Schopenhauer's thinking on religion is to be found in chapter 17 of the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation* [*Die Welt als Wille und* Vorstellung].[11] This chapter is called "On the metaphysical need of man" [*Ueber das metaphysische Bedürfnis des Menschen*] (Schopenhauer 1999, 184). It could be assumed that Nietzsche was influenced by the chapter already based on the fact that he himself makes use of the term metaphysical need. It is, however, not the case, as Young asserts, that Nietzsche "refers constantly to 'the metaphysical need'" and that this presumed fact "shows the importance of this chapter as a background to understanding his own philosophy of religion" (Young 2006, 9). In fact, Nietzsche only five times explicitly mentions the metaphysical need in his published works (and all forms of spelling are here accounted for); thrice in *HH* (HH I 153, KSA 2, 145; twice in quotation marks: HH I 26, KSA 2, 47 and HH I 37, KSA 2, 61), once in *GS* (GS 151, KSA 3,494) and finally one last time in *EH* when describing *HH* as laying an axe at the roots of that "need" (KSA 6, 328). All of these cases express Nietzsche's rejection of the idea of a perennial metaphysical need. The only neutral use of a related term is the mention of a metaphysical drive [*metaphysische Trieb*] in *BT* (BT 23, KSA 1, 148), which also remains the only mention of such a drive in the published works. In the *Nachlass* of winter 1876 to summer 1877, Nietzsche twice mentions the metaphysical need, both times as "the so-called metaphysical need" (NL 1876, 19[85], KSA 8, 350 and NL 1876–77, 23[164], KSA 8, 464). The only other original mention in the *Nachlass*, also from the summer of 1877, explicitly criticizes the philosopher who on the basis of a false psychology turns everything into metaphysical need (NL 1877, 22[107], KSA 8, 399). Then there is finally one note from autumn 1880 which is in fact a sketch [*Vorstufe*] of the criticism of the metaphysical need found in *GS* (NL 1880, 6[290], KSA 9, 271–272, cf. GS 151, KSA 3,494), and that is all. A charitable interpretation of Young's assertion,

**11** Another important expression is the dialogue between Demopheles and Philaletes in chapter 15 "On Religion" [*Ueber Religion*] of *Parerga und Paralipomena II*. Philosophically, the dialogue adds little to the treatment of religion in *World as Will II*. The treatment there is also more clear and concise. Though Nietzsche most certainly read the *Parerga*-chapter, he made no annotations to it in the only surviving copy that was in his possession (Brobjer 2008, 125). For pragmatic reasons, I therefore focus on chapter 17 of *World as Will II*.

one that would broadly keep his intention intact, could point to the fact that Nietzsche does again and again return to the question what kind of impulses, instincts and needs are at work in religious persons, i. e. what it is that drives people to act religiously. A case in point would be Nietzsche's discussion in his major work on the genealogy of morality of what is perhaps best described as a need for meaning (GM III 1, KSA 5, 339 and 411–412).[12] In this sense, there is a continuing engagement with questions raised by Schopenhauer's theory of religion, but only because Nietzsche considers said theory so unsatisfying. What Nietzsche is after is a more fitting psychology of religion.

For our task here, which is to establish in which sense Nietzsche relies on Schopenhauer in his discussion of religion in *HH*, considerations about Nietzsche's alternative explanations are as of yet of a secondary importance. The key issue here is that his rather rare references to the metaphysical need cannot be used as evidence in an argument about the importance of chapter 17 of *World as Will II* as a background for the understanding of Nietzsche's thinking on religion in *HH*, and even less can they be used as evidence for more general claims about Nietzsche's relation to Schopenhauer. This is because Nietzsche has by the time of *HH* decisively rejected any positive use of the term metaphysical need; a rejection which is reflected in the fact that he no longer uses the term after *GS*. Therefore, I here take a different approach to establishing the indebtedness of Nietzsche's thinking in *HH* to Schopenhauer. I intend to make plausible that some of the critical manoeuvres Nietzsche makes in *HH* can only be understood against the background of the Schopenhauer-chapter. Thus, I will draw on evidence from within the text to support the view prevalent in historical scholarship that Nietzsche not only read but studied the chapter carefully.[13]

According to Schopenhauer, religion is about the thing-in-itself [*das Ding an sich*] just as philosophy but caters to the populace that is unable to think their way to the truth. If the common folk can't think properly, they certainly can feel. Religion represents and connects to the thing-in-itself through allegory. In this view, mysteries, obscure rites and even absurdities are not corruptions of religion. Schopenhauer explicitly writes of such aspects of religion that they are the only way that one can make the common folk feel what they can't grasp in thought; namely that there is

**12** In a late note from autumn 1887, Nietzsche also explicitly connects the felt need for another world with a failure to find meaning within this world (cf. NL 1887, 9[73], KSA 12, 374).

**13** In the case of *HH*, the prevalent view is supported by the fact that Nietzsche made extensive annotations when he reread the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation* in 1875 (Brobjer 2008, 125). More generally, it can be added that: "Nietzsche continued to read, annotate, and make excerpts from Schopenhauer's writings almost every year, even after his break with Schopenhauer, to the very end" and that "Most of Nietzsche's continued reading of Schopenhauer was of his two main works, *Die Welt* and *Parerga*" (Brobjer 2008, 32).

a wholly other realm beyond appearance (Schopenhauer 1999, 192).[14] So the point of allegory, for Schopenhauer, is to allow the believer to feel, to intuit, the presence of a more fundamental, completely different level of reality.

Nietzsche of course rejects Schopenhauer's theory of the allegorical nature of religion in *HH* (HH I 110, KSA 2, 109 – 111), a fact which has not escaped the notice of scholars (cf. Hödl 2007, 155 and Franco 2011, 36). Nevertheless, Nietzsche grants Schopenhauer's model a paradigmatic status insofar as metaphysical and religious reasoning is concerned. He admits as much in the very same aphorism that criticizes the allegorical interpretation of religion, when he writes that through Schopenhauer's interpretation of religion very much can be gained for the understanding of religion (HH I 110, KSA 2, 110).[15] As I understand Nietzsche, he thinks that Schopenhauer is not simply plain wrong. He rather thinks that Schopenhauer's thinking builds on and repeats an erroneous way of thinking typical of religion. So in a sense, one could say that Nietzsche treats Schopenhauer not only as a philosopher who presented a theory of religion but as a high priest, in whose thinking religious passions are articulated in philosophical terms. Less dramatically stated, Nietzsche perceives an affinity between Schopenhauer's thinking on religion and religious thinking in general.

Now we can begin to see why it is that in Nietzsche's own elaborations in *HH* the Schopenhauerian structure remains intact, although the thing-in-itself is removed from the picture. For what remains when that which allegory supposedly gets at is removed? Simply feeling. More precisely: all that in metaphysics, religion and art which makes one feel as if there were another world beyond this one, all those experiences which lead one to posit a metaphysical world, all that which in Schopenhauer's view makes the existence of a metaphysical world something that can be felt. In other words, all that remains which leads one to speak of a metaphysical need in the first place. No wonder then that Nietzsche devotes special attention to religious interpretations of feeling-states in his discussion on religion in *HH*. For in order to liberate himself and his readers from the Schopenhauerian view that certain experiences truly allow one to intuit a metaphysical world, Nietzsche has to argue that what really is going on is interpretation, and false interpretation at that. Then there still remains the task to explain, why certain affective experiences are prone to be interpreted falsely in the first place. Both of these critical tasks are present in *HH*, though the focus is overwhelmingly on the former. To conclude: Even as Nietzsche's indebtedness to Schopenhauer has been recognized in scholarship, this important affective aspect has been overlooked with the result that Nietzsche's

**14** "*diese sind eben der Stämpel ihrer allegorischen Natur und die allein passende Art, dem gemeinen Sinn und rohen Verstande fühlbar zu machen, was ihm unbegreiflich wäre, nämlich daß die Religion im Grunde von einer ganz andern, von einer Ordnung der Dinge an sich handelt*" (Schopenhauer 1999, 192).
**15** He writes specifically that "... we can gain a great deal for the understanding of Christianity and other religions from Schopenhauer's religious-moral interpretation of human beings and the world..." (Handwerk 1997, 87; HH I 110, KSA 2, 110).

focus on emotions in *HH* must seem arbitrary if not incomprehensible. That Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer's allegorical understanding of religion has led scholars to ignore the role played by feeling in the very passage in which Schopenhauer writes about allegory. As a consequence, it has not been adequately recognized, in what specific sense Nietzsche's psychological take on religion in *HH* draws on Schopenhauer's thinking. The following interpretation of Nietzsche's psychology of religion in *HH* is in this sense to be understood as a contribution to recognize not only the ways in which he distances himself from Schopenhauer's philosophy, but also how he remains tied to it.[16]

### 4.1.5 Nietzsche's psychology of religion and salvation

In the chapter *The Religious Life*, Nietzsche leads the reader into the topic of religious interpretations of emotions through a brief discussion of pain. When beset by pain, he claims in aphorism 108, one can either seek to rid the cause of the ill or reinterpret the experience. This second way, namely that of reinterpretation, is the way of both religion and art. At first Nietzsche speaks of reinterpretation as a matter of justifying pain, e. g. with reference to God's justice. Then Nietzsche adds the really interesting observation: changing one's judgement about a painful experience is only one part of the picture, one can also seek to transform the emotional experience more directly. Tragic art, he writes, has its origin in a "a pleasure in pain, in emotion generally" (Handwerk 1997, 85; HH I 108, KSA 2, 107). Although this statement that one can take pleasure in emotion for its own sake, even if the emotion were painful, is about tragic art it is also of utmost importance to Nietzsche's reflections on religion in *HH*. For in this work, analysing such transformations of emotions through interpretations is a crucial ingredient of Nietzsche's formula for challenging Schopenhauer's view that certain experiences in fact point toward a realm behind appearance.

Throughout the chapter there are a few longer passages as well as shorter aphorisms that seem to stand on their own; digressions unconnected to the more systematic chains of thought. Nevertheless, most of them contribute to the discussion about the interpretation of emotion. One such freestanding aphorism is Nr. 120, in which Nietzsche mocks "all religions" for making use of the all too human tendency to think that those opinions which please the emotions also must be true (HH I 120, KSA 2, 120). Such aphorisms reinforce the criticism of the more systematic passages. This is the case even in those aphorisms that concern the "truth" of religions and religious interpretations of nature. The key reason for Nietzsche to reject the Schopenhauerian understanding of the allegorical nature of religion is that one does not need

**16** When it comes to the interpretation of *HH*, Peter Heller was the first to recognize the importance of such an endeavour, when he in a footnote tentatively suggested that interpreters should not only spell out those points in which Nietzsche distances himself from Schopenhauer but also the affinities that remain (Heller 1972, 6).

to assume that religion has any meaningful relation to truth in order to explain religion. The origin of religion is not to be found in a realm of metaphysical truth but in emotion that guides reason astray; "For every religion has been born out of fear and need" (Handwerk 1997, 88; HH I 110, KSA 2, 110). Nietzsche's reflections on the cognitive aspects of religion can hardly be considered original when one takes account of his knowledge of the leading British anthropologists of his time (cf. HH I 111, KSA 2, 112–116; Orsucci 1996). What merits attention here is rather to what use Nietzsche puts his reading. Nietzsche effectively creates an analogy between erroneous interpretations of nature and erroneous interpretations of our inner nature. The error-theory of religious cognition that Nietzsche advances thus serves an important role in his argument about the interpretation of emotional states. In aphorism 126 Nietzsche explicitly talks about the *The art and force of false interpretation* in this sense, when he asserts that all those extraordinary experiences that are associated with saints are well-known pathological states that are only interpreted religiously (HH I 126, KSA 2, 122). What emerges here is an alternative interpretive scheme, which builds on Schopenhauer's theory of religion, while rejecting its "truth".

The passages starting with aphorism 132, *Of the Christian need for salvation*, are of a more systematic character, and provide a particular example in which Nietzsche applies his interpretative scheme and develops his argument.[17] It is noteworthy that Nietzsche explicitly sets his psychological explanation apart from the psychological approach taken by Schleiermacher, whose influence on 19th-century German thinking about religion should not be underestimated (see chapter 2 of this study). Curiously, Nietzsche's only objection to that tradition relates to what he perceives to be the intentions of its practitioners. So even as Schleiermacher purported to explain religious feelings, Nietzsche contends, the goal was always to support the Christian religion. This goal, it is implied, distorted the interpretation. Needless to say, Nietzsche dares a different interpretation of religious feelings, one that is not bound by such a goal. Still, Nietzsche cannot be seen as being entirely opposed to said tradition since he implicitly agrees that religious feeling is the proper object of the psychology of religion. (Cf. HH I 132, KSA 2, 125–126.)

Basically, Nietzsche claims that the need for salvation can only arise if one is dissatisfied with oneself. Simply being dissatisfied, however, is not enough. The Christian compares himself with his God, an ideal that is completely free from egoistic motives. Doing so he puts himself into a state in which he necessarily feels that he is bad: Being incapable of fully non-egoistic actions, he begins to loathe himself and fear the retribution of his ideal. Thankfully, there is salvation. The feeling of despising himself is not constant, but eventually gives way to a freer disposition. The natural feeling of self-love reappears, but is not interpreted as such. The joyful mood is instead interpreted as a gift from God, as grace, as a foretaste of salvation. The felt

**17** Because of the systematic character of the discussion, some scholars speak of Nietzsche developing a psychology of the need for salvation (cf. Hödl 2007, 153).

love is interpreted as Love, an external power with a divine origin. (HH I 132–135, KSA 2, 125–129)

We are not here concerned with the question to what extent Nietzsche's depiction hits the spot; suffice it to say that it is hard to be contented with his explanation, as there would be so much more to say about the issue. Instead, we want to note how the passages in question form a particularly potent example of Nietzsche's interpretive scheme. First, he examines the cognitive and affective parts and moments that make up this particular psychological "need". Then he shows how the religious interpretation of the feelings involved covers up the actual origins of the feelings. This is done by coming up with a "wondrous origin" that hides its complex natural origin. In conclusion, Nietzsche writes that a false psychology is a presupposition for being Christian and feeling a need for salvation. And what is it that makes a psychology false? Fantastic interpretations of psychic processes, "a certain kind of fantasizing in the interpretation of motives and events" (Handwerk 1997, 104; HH I 135, KSA 2, 129), which on the grounds of its centrality to the whole chapter and its importance in the preceding passages, I take above all to refer to the tendency of positing a "wondrous origin" in another world for all extraordinary experiences. This is according to Nietzsche the process whereby experience is transformed into religious experience and emotion into religious emotion.

After the passages on salvation, Nietzsche continues his analysis of the religious life with an examination of asceticism and sainthood. There is no reason to examine these passages in detail at this point (see section 4.2.5), as Nietzsche basically repeats the same pattern of interpretation. In all ascetic practices, however complex and hard to explain, he discovers the same glorying in emotion for its own sake, "pleasure in *emotion as such*" (Handwerk 1997, 107; HH I 140, KSA 2, 133). Nietzsche sums it up in aphorisms 142 and 143: The saintly person's state of mind is made up of components that in themselves are familiar, but take on a different colour when they are put together and interpreted religiously. Along with unsurprising virtuous feelings such as humility, other feelings such as egoism, vengefulness and lust to rule are some of the components of saintliness. In the saintly person's mind and more crucially in the minds of religiously minded interpreters these components give way to the overall impression of holiness, which of course is of divine origin. Thus, the historical importance of saints is tied to religious belief in general: the belief in saints supports belief in God and vice versa. (HH I 142 and HH I 143, KSA 2, 137–139)

Nietzsche does not as rigidly apply such an interpretative scheme in any of his later works. Nevertheless, the results of his application of the method of historical philosophizing laid the groundwork for his later critical efforts. Two ideas that surface in *HH* are especially instructive in this regard, and worth noting. Firstly, Nietzsche seems to suggest in *HH* that intense emotional experiences are especially prone to be interpreted religiously. But why would this be the case? *HH* provides no clear answer, so we will leave that question for now and content ourselves with not-

ing that *HH* contains the seeds of an explosive idea.[18] Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Nietzsche's idea that the interpretation of feeling can transform feeling has radical consequences once thought through. Due to this foundational idea, it is no wonder that Nietzsche's historical psychologizing leads him to a diagnosis and criticism of the spiritual-affective predicament, the mood, of his own time. Although Nietzsche later expands on and improves the diagnosis, this early expression is worth looking into, if only to appreciate the development of his thinking the better.

### 4.1.6 The history of emotions and Nietzsche's diagnosis of his time

Already the second aphorism of the third chapter, *Sorrow is knowledge*, implicitly relies on the idea that the cultural and religious education of the past have made modern humans especially soft. Bereft of religious consolation, Nietzsche bluntly states that contemporary humanity is at risk when facing the harshness of reality, especially the well-founded knowledge presented by modern science. Nietzsche then abandons the topic as fast as he introduced it by referring to the possibility of a lighthearted, cheerful response to knowledge, but the historical problem hinted at here informs much of his later thinking on the issue, especially in *D* and *GS* (HH I 109, KSA 2, 108 – 109).

In aphorism 130 Nietzsche again approaches the emotional legacy of thousands of years of religious education. He writes about religious feelings that were created and nurtured long ago in the past by religious cults. He specifically mentions the Catholic church as an organization that had mastered all the means to transport humans into moods and states of mind beyond the everyday. This original process of cultural creation is according to him the source of many moods [*Stimmungen*] of the sublime kind, of feelings of hope and premonition that "now exist in the soul". He furthermore notes that even as the religious foundations of such feeling-states have crumbled, the results of this process remain with us. (HH I 130, KSA 2, 123) Such moods, he writes, can now be encountered in the arts, especially in music, but also in philosophy wherever the author plays with metaphysical hopes (HH I 131, KSA 2, 124). So Nietzsche at first look seems to imply that we are not easily rid of emotions that have become part of our cultural heritage. Such an interpretation is still only partially true. One must indeed beware of such an interpretation, however tempting it is. According to Nietzsche, it is strictly speaking not the case that the emotional configurations of the past would determine the future directions of feeling. In the very same aphorism in which he describes various *Religious afterpains* he speaks of the taste for religious feelings as a passing need, as "an acquired and

**18** I return to the question and discuss Nietzsche's late thinking on the matter in chapter 7 amidst the discussion on Nietzsche's late ideal.

consequently also a transitory need" (Handwerk 1997, 99; HH I 131, KSA 2, 124).[19] It is near at hand to add that the taste that Nietzsche diagnoses in (himself and) his contemporaries might suffer the same fate as the taste for antique sacrificial rituals. In aphorism 112, Nietzsche muses on the fact that "we" (i. e. he and his contemporaries) no longer are able to fully understand how in certain times obscenity could go together with religious feeling; e. g. in Dinoysian rites as well as in medieval Easter-plays. The historical record testifies that such combinations of feeling have existed, but we cannot bring ourselves to anything resembling the feeling that must have been felt. Similarly, Nietzsche concludes, combinations of feeling that still exist in his day, such as a union of the sublime and the burlesque, might not be understood in the future (HH I 112, KSA 2, 116). It is striking that Nietzsche here only mentions the possibility of feelings being lost to posterity. By the same logic, however, it should be possible that entirely new combinations of feeling arise, and perhaps even new feelings; feelings so distinct from past experiences that new names are needed for them.

There is thus an uncertainty in Nietzsche's take on the history of emotions in *HH* that deserves to be spelled out in detail. Nietzsche suggests that at least some religious emotions have a history in the sense that they were born in a specific time and will pass away some day. That means that some emotions would never have been felt if it were not for centuries of religious practice. If "religious emotions" are in a sense creations of religious practice, can the interpretation of feelings in fact give birth to new feelings? Or is it after all only the case that various practices can condition or influence the way specific emotions are felt, thus transforming them? Are there only "natural", basic emotions that are interpreted in various ways or are at least some emotions better understood as cultural constructions in a more thoroughgoing sense? Nietzsche never articulated such purely theoretical questions, yet the issue is of utmost importance in his later projects. Instead of providing a theoretical answer, answers emerge in his cultural criticism. In the case of the third chapter of *HH*, all there is to say is that it would seem that Nietzsche prefers to speak of interpretation rather than of creation. Since these questions define the limits of cultural criticism when it comes to emotions, we will pursue them further by considering what Nietzsche has to say about the history of emotions in chapters four and five. These chapters are particularly interesting, because Nietzsche in chapter four deals with art and artists and in chapter five with what he considers higher culture.

**19** "*eines gewordenen und folglich auch vergänglichen Bedürfnisses*" (HH I 131, KSA 2, 124). A similar rejection of the idea of a universal metaphysical need can be found in the chapter on the state, where he describes the needs that the "universal" Catholic church served as fantastic creations: "*auf Fiktionen beruhenden Bedürfnissen, welche es, wo sie noch nicht vorhanden waren, erst erzeugen musste (Bedürfniss der Erlösung)*" (HH I 476, KSA 2, 311).

### 4.1.7 The history of emotions in chapters four and five: From art to higher culture

The discussion on art in *HH* sets off with yet another reminder of the problem introduced in aphorism 1, i. e. the problem of assuming a wondrous origin for that which is valued. This time the focus is on the "perfect" artwork. For some reason, Nietzsche suggests, "we" are accustomed not to let questions about origins interfere with our experience of art; instead, "we" act as if that which is perfect cannot have become. In other words, we would prefer to blend out any knowledge of the process of artistic creation. One would rather believe, and perhaps the artist would rather have one believe (cf. HH I 155, KSA 2, 146), that the artwork has its origin in improvisation, a miracle-like instant of creation (HH I 145, KSA 2, 141). Nietzsche does not here use the word inspiration, but that ideas of inspiration are the main target can be seen in aphorisms 155 and 156 that repeat and build on the criticism of the opening aphorism. But why is it so hard to entertain a rational view when faced with great art? What psychic mechanism is it that supports mystifying interpretations? The best Nietzsche has to offer for an answer is the suggestion that "we" seem still to be captives of an age-old mythological impression (HH I 145, KSA 2, 141).

So the fourth chapter opens up with a strong statement of the power that historical forces wield over us, and much of the chapter continues in the same vein. The weight that Nietzsche gives to art in his critical project derives from what he takes to be the ability of art to wake up such historical forces within us (HH I 147, KSA 2 142–143). This potential makes art dangerous, in the same way as religion, because it works to temporarily ease spirits by turning them away from their predicament in time, instead of striving to overcome the conditions in their time that create the need to be "eased" (HH I 148, KSA 2, 143). His earlier and later writings considered, it is remarkable that Nietzsche here denies artistic creation the possibility of present- and future-orientation.[20] He goes so far as to describe the artist as necessarily turned toward the past (HH I 148, KSA 2, 143). That he then finds the backward looking gaze of art troublesome is understandable, since he takes the past to be above all religious.

In aphorism 150, Nietzsche explicitly diagnoses his own time as one in which art has taken a wealth of religious feeling upon itself, though he does add that similar

**20** That art can show the way toward a desirable future is a conviction that informs the entirety of *The Birth of Tragedy*. According to Franco, Nietzsche still subscribes to this view in the fourth untimely meditation of 1876, *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, where he ascribes Wagner's art the potential to initiate a "reform of the world" (Franco 2011, 10). Janz sceptically notes that Nietzsche's comments in that direction can be read as referring to himself, and that he might actually at this point already deny art and Wagner a stake in the future (Janz 1978 I, 712–713). Be that as it may, one must concede, as Janz does, that when it actually comes to opening the future, Nietzsche relies on artistic means, not least the fictional character *Zarathustra* (Janz 1978 I, 713). The conviction that opening the future is a creative process, a process at least akin to artistic creation if it cannot after all be called artistic creation, informs Nietzsche's thinking from *GS* onward (cf. GS 58, KSA 3, 422).

transfers of feeling have to a lesser extent taken place in politics and even in science (HH I 150, KSA 2, 144; cf. HH I 472, KSA 2, 304). It is above all in art that the "metaphysical need" troubles the free spirit, as aphorism 153 shows. In this aphorism that undoubtedly contains an autobiographical element, Nietzsche writes of the "strength of the metaphysical need", and admits that the highest artistic expressions bring to life a long-silenced and almost broken "metaphysical string" in the free spirit. He illustrates this by mentioning how certain parts of Beethoven's ninth symphony elicit a feeling of floating far above the earth with "the dream of immortality" in one's heart. Such an experience creates a longing in the free spirit for the person who could lead him back to metaphysics or religion (HH I 153, KSA 2, 145). Nietzsche's choice of words comes close to validating the Schopenhauerian interpretation that through music one can experience the timelessness of the thing-in-itself. Indeed, it is almost as if he would after all accept the existence of a metaphysical need and the aesthetics of redemption through art. Yet at the end of the aphorism, Nietzsche plays down any hope that he might return to the Schopenhauerian view by bluntly stating that in such cases where art plays on metaphysical hopes the intellectual character of the thinker is put to the test. Intellectual integrity must triumph over vague longings (HH I 153, KSA 2, 145). It is in this sense that the title (*Art weighs down the thinker's heart*) of the aphorism should be understood; art troubles the heart of the thinker by waking up religious and/or metaphysical feelings of past times. That the task is not simply to consign religious feelings to the past but to become aware of their historicity in order that they might lose their power to compel is a thought that appears frequently in the aphorisms of chapters four and five.

In *HH*, Nietzsche denies art any constructive role in working for the future and even goes so far as to suggest that art is coming to an end. (HH I 222, KSA 2, 185–186 and HH I 223, KSA 2, 186). In the historical scheme of *HH*, scientific man is an outgrowth of and development beyond artistic man. Artistic man in his turn would seem to have inherited a wealth of religious feeling from religious man.[21] Yet these are not the rudiments of a straightforward replacement theory. Nietzsche does not make the simplistic claim that scientific man replaces artistic man who replaced religious man. As a type, scientific man does not act out the same drives as any of the types from which it has developed. Though he too has inherited a wealth of religious feeling, he is not defined by this inheritance. The higher culture (of scientific man) that Nietzsche describes in the fifth chapter is characterized by a multitude of drives, and is therefore according to him misunderstood by those scholars

**21** "*Man könnte die Kunst aufgeben, würde damit aber nicht die von ihr gelernte Fähigkeit einbüssen: ebenso wie man die Religion aufgegeben hat, nicht aber die durch sie erworbenen Gemüths-Steigerungen und Erhebungen. Wie die bildende Kunst und die Musik der Maassstab des durch die Religion wirklich erworbenen und hinzugewonnenen Gefühls-Reichthumes ist, so würde nach einem Verschwinden der Kunst die von ihr gepflanzte Intensität und Vielartigkeit der Lebensfreude immer noch Befriedigung fordern. Der wissenschaftliche Mensch ist die Weiterentwickelung des künstlerischen.*" (HH I 222, KSA 2, 185)

[*Gelehrte*] who besides a drive for knowledge [*Wissenstrieb*] only have an acquired religious drive. In this sense, he disapprovingly mentions those would see only a misplaced search for religious feeling in modern science: "Indeed, people who are only religious understand even science as a search for religious feeling..." (Handwerk 1997, 190; HH I 281, KSA 2, 230)

How then does the free spirit go about with his problematic inheritance? What will Nietzsche's scientific man do with the wealth of feeling that he inherits? In *HH* it would seem above all that he will treat them as objects of knowledge and reflect upon them. This reflection is at once both self-reflection and reflection on the past. As objects of knowledge, religious feelings lose their immediate power to compel; i. e. their power to bind the free spirit to a religious point of view. Nevertheless, the historical sense of the free spirit allows him to see their value. This value he expresses with striking metaphors:

> What is best in us has perhaps been inherited from the sensations of earlier times, which we can scarcely approach in an immediate way any more; the sun has already gone down, but the heaven of our life still glows and shines from its presence, even though we no longer see it. (Handwerk 1997, 152; HH I 223, KSA 2, 186)

In other words, our most noble sentiments derive from a past that is becoming increasingly distant. Does that mean that all higher feelings could be lost in the future? This question is at the heart of the important final aphorism of chapter five, which similarly emphasizes the value of religious and artistic passions as objects of knowledge.

The aphorism, entitled *Forward*, views the task of the free spirit from the perspective of an open future. From this viewpoint, the religious heritage of the free spirit is nothing to scorn. After all, such feelings might one day no longer be accessible. As long as they are accessible, and as long as they are viewed from a distance, they allow the free spirit a fuller understanding of the past. Importantly, Nietzsche underlines that this understanding reveals not only where mankind can no longer go in the future but also where it must not go. That which motivates this claim is a vision of the future. Living only for knowledge, the free spirit will in self-reflection see the emergence of future cultures. Irritatingly, Nietzsche does not specify how this is to be understood. It is near at hand to suggest that because self-reflection here refers to the kind of reflection on morality, on feelings and on knowledge that he has practised in *HH*, new moralities, new feelings and new kinds of knowledge will emerge out of it. The evidence is too scarce, however, to say anything definite about how the "new" is here to be understood. What he does manage to convey through his presentation is his conviction that there is joy in this vision. Switching to the personal level at the end of the aphorism, Nietzsche praises the ideal of knowledge in colourful language ("no honey is sweeter than knowledge" etc.) and goes as far as to promise the free spirit a good death: "Toward the light – your final movement; an exulting shout of knowledge – your final sound." (Handwerk 1997, 194 – 196; HH I 292, KSA 2, 235 – 237)

Now we can see that Nietzsche denies the artist any stake in working for the future only to give this task to the free spirit or "the scientific man". The intensity of feeling that characterizes religious and artistic man is in no way lessened, it is rather taken to the next level and heightened in self-reflection. The self-reflective activity of the free spirit, which on the basis of the aphorisms examined can hardly be considered dispassionate, contributes to bringing forth "future humanity". Still, one cannot help but notice that there is something missing here; namely a stronger statement of an active creation of the future and a vision of how this is to be done.

### 4.1.8 Conclusion: Nietzsche's attack on religion and metaphysics in *HH*

The focus of Nietzsche's attack on metaphysics and religion in *HH* is on feeling. He turns feelings that are prone to be interpreted metaphysically into objects of knowledge in order to reflect on them. In this project, he makes use of Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion. While Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer's theory of the allegorical nature of religion in so far as it assumes that religion really connects the believer to metaphysical truth, he does think religion is primarily about making one feel as if there were a "higher reality". In this sense, and in this sense only, Schopenhauer's metaphysics provides the foundation for Nietzsche's psychology of religion. That Nietzsche's psychology of religion in *HH* is an achievement of independent thinking is beyond any doubt, which shows how fitting the idea of transforming appropriation is when trying to understand the relation between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer.

At the core of Nietzsche's criticism of religion in *HH* there is an unresolved tension. On the one hand, Nietzsche implies that acquiring knowledge into the origin of one's religious needs is enough to make them disappear, as if those affective forces which make up the "metaphysical need" were like unto some common delusion that reason can effortlessly dispel. This crudeness is expressed occasionally in concluding sentences, e. g. "with the insight into this origin, that belief falls away" (Handwerk 1997, 102; HH I 133, KSA 2, 127) or "With the insight into this confusion of reason and imagination, one ceases to be a Christian." (Handwerk 1997, 104; HH I 135, KSA 2, 129) Such statements contrast with and possibly contradict what Nietzsche on the other hand emphasizes repeatedly, which is that religion continues to wield an immense power through emotions, first and foremost those encountered in the arts. Perhaps the statements quoted above are best read as indicating only a distancing that is a first step; a distancing that allows one to no longer call oneself a believer. The real task, however, concerns the emotional legacy of the past; the configuration of mood bequeathed by tradition. Given that religion, and especially that which Nietzsche considers problematic and worth questioning about religion, is more a matter of feeling than propositional belief, one can ask whether a merely intellectual attack on religion is ever enough. This ambivalence serves well as a sceptical starting point for the following investigation into what has been called Nietzsche's use of mood in *HH*.

## 4.2 Nietzsche's use of mood in *HH*

Does Nietzsche make creative use of his psychological thinking about mood in his writing in *HH* in the sense of trying to influence the reader? If yes, how exactly and to what end? Is understanding the mood or moods that are expressed in *HH* essential to understanding the philosophical project of the book? Can Nietzsche's criticism of religion in the work be fully understood if one ignores the question of mood altogether? Jacob Golomb has presented a thesis regarding Nietzsche's use of mood in *HH* that can be read as an attempt to answer precisely those questions, which means that it is of great interest to us and cannot be overlooked (Golomb 1989).[22] According to Golomb, Nietzsche uses mood in *HH* to freeze the metaphysical need (Golomb 1989, 162). A critical engagement with Golomb's efforts presents an opportunity to highlight some of the methodological and interpretative problems involved in placing mood at the centre of investigation. Despite the critical emphasis that characterizes the sections on his work, an emphasis which is to be understood as much as self-criticism as criticism of Golomb's scholarship, I will seek to expand and develop Golomb's arguments where possible. In other words, I begin by interrogating Golomb's work, whereafter I expand on his analysis in order to provide as full a picture as possible of the role of mood in *HH*.

### 4.2.1 Jacob Golomb's thesis on Nietzsche's use of mood

According to Golomb, Nietzsche's use of psychology in *HH* is misunderstood if one only thinks of it as a matter of him using psychological knowledge to argue against metaphysics. Of course, this is something that Nietzsche does but he also makes use of psychology in a sense that has little to do with the refutation of specific metaphysical beliefs. Instead the "main concern in his application of the psychologistic method is to evoke a mood of deep suspicion and distrust regarding metaphysics" (Golomb 1989, 169). By instilling a mood of doubt in the reader, Nietzsche would in this view seek to effect an affective transformation that would make a direct refutation of metaphysical arguments unnecessary (cf. Golomb 1989, 170). The result would be a freezing of the metaphysical need from which all interest in metaphysical questions springs.

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**22** Golomb presents his ideas on mood in *HH* as part of a larger thesis about the therapeutic aims of Nietzsche's philosophizing, which involves 1) using mood to "freeze" destructive habits and 2) opening a psychological perspective that entices the reader to reactivate suppressed power (Golomb 1989, 14–15 and 20). There as well as in a later publication, Golomb at times seems to imply that his thesis about Nietzsche's use of mood to freeze the metaphysical need applies not only to *HH* but to Nietzsche's philosophy more generally (Golomb 1989, 14–16; cf. Golomb 1999, 2–6). For reasons of clarity, I will here restrict the discussion to *HH*, as Golomb's reading of the work is the foundation for his more ambitious thesis about the therapeutic aims of Nietzsche's philosophy.

This aspect of Nietzsche's historical philosophizing, or what Golomb calls his "psychologistic method", intuitively hits the spot, i.e. it catches at least some of what is going on in *HH*. The scholar still hast to ask on what grounds the claim rests. The lack of clear evidence for Golomb's thesis is problematic. Golomb himself recognizes the difficulty by stating that as Nietzsche did not "articulate his method explicitly", one must inductively reconstruct his method by analysing his writings, especially those that deal with psychological themes (cf. Golomb 1989, 162). There are three fundamental problems with this approach; two of a general nature and a third relating to the manner in which he undertakes the reconstruction. The first problem is that Nietzsche does at least provide sketches of the method he calls historical philosophizing (cf. HH I 1 and HH I 2, KSA 2, 23–25) and nowhere mentions that the goal of this method would be to instill a mood of doubt. The second problem is that the procedure amounts to a reconstruction of authorial intention on the basis of nothing more than a reading of the authored book. While such an approach cannot be rejected *a priori*, it does provide reason to put the evidence presented under close scrutiny and to ask if there is any additional evidence that should be taken into account. The third and final problem is that in this particular case it also seems that Golomb, when formulating his thesis, has not so much relied on the contents of *HH* as on Nietzsche's own later statements concerning the book.

The interpretation of *HH* as "freezing the metaphysical need" has its roots in Nietzsche's own interpretation of the work in *Ecce Homo*, which was completed in 1888 (cf. Golomb 1989, 172). There, about eleven years after the publication of the first version of *HH* in 1877, Nietzsche looks back at his earlier works with a marked distance. Much of what he has to say is hard to disagree with. Compared to *BT*, and even to the untimely meditations, the tone of the work has undergone a marked change. Nietzsche writes: "The tone, the timbre is completely different: people will find the book clever, cool, perhaps harsh and mocking." (Large 2007, 55; KSA 6, 323) This description is true to much of the work, though we will yet come to ask if there is not more to say about the matter. At this point, the most urgent question that vexes the scholar is whether one can with any certainty determine if the cool tone was put into the work intentionally and if it was made thus to achieve a specific effect. If the answer is positive one must inquire how it was achieved; whether through the philosophical contents alone, or whether it also depends on the manner of presentation, i.e. choice of style, tone and perhaps even the aphoristic form. To these questions one finds no answers in *EH*. There Nietzsche simply describes what happens in the work, as if it were from the outside:

> One error after another is calmly put on ice; the ideal is not refuted – *it dies of exposure*... Here, for example, 'the genius' is freezing; a *long way* further on freezes 'the saint'; beneath a thick icicle 'the hero' is freezing; in the end 'belief', so-called 'conviction' freezes, even 'pity' is growing considerably cooler – almost everywhere 'the thing in itself' is freezing to death...
> (Large 2007, 56; KSA 6, 323)

To find out whether or not there are any unambiguous answers to our questions in the original publication itself, we will now examine the text of *HH;* beginning with some general observations and a particularly promising aphorism, before examining those passages that Golomb draws on to support his thesis.

### 4.2.2 Aphorism 38 and the temperature of *HH*

Not a single passage in *HH* mentions the freezing of beliefs, feelings or needs through the word employed in EH [*erfrieren*], but the work does contain vocabulary suggestive of coldness. Most notably, Nietzsche does at one point employ words such as wintery [*winterlich*], cool [*kühl*] and cold [*kalt*] in an important discussion on the usefulness (and harm) of psychological observation. Aphorism 38 of book one is indeed particularly instructive for any reconstruction of authorial intention, when it comes to Nietzsche's possible use of mood in the work. Nietzsche here presents his view on the nature of scientific inquiry in general. Science, he writes, as the reflection of nature in concepts [*Nachahmung der Natur in Begriffen*], does not have any final goals. If science has done any good, it has done so unintentionally, he consequently contends. This scientific view of things, he continues, might seem too cold [*zu winterlich*], for some people, but there are people for whom almost no air is cold and clear enough as well as people who would desperately need some cooling down. Before ending the passage he repeats this emphasis on relativity by writing that as there are individuals and even peoples that are so serious as to need trivialities, there are others that are so irritable and excitable as to need heavy burdens as a matter of health. Nietzsche finally asks whether not the more spiritual humans of his own time, adding that the appearance of this time suggests to him a world more and more on fire, should seek out all cooling means at hand in order to stay so moderate and composed as they still are, so that they eventually might serve as a mirror (i. e. as self-reflection) of the time. (HH I 38, KSA 2, 61–62)

Let us pause to consider the significance of this passage. Two points that can be made on the basis of the passage strike me as particularly fruitful for finding answers to our questions. Firstly, there is reason to assume that whether any particular perspective (and by extension: any text!) is felt in a particular way, say as cold or hot, depends in Nietzsche's view on the one who would come in touch with the perspective. In a sense then, coolness is relative. So the text of *HH* will seem cool to many,[23] but Nietzsche leaves the possibility open that his own perspective on his writing in *HH* might be different. Secondly, there is the suggestion that the spiritual natures, among whom Nietzsche as author obviously counts himself, can be seen as useful,

**23** Notice that Nietzsche in *EH* does not write that the tone of the book is cool, but that it will be considered cool: "people will find the book" (Large 2007, 55); "*man wird das Buch…*" (KSA 6, 323). This later assessment reflects the reception of the work, which Nietzsche feared and anticipated in the passage in *HH*.

as serving an important function: the image that they cast can serve the time by providing opportunities for self-reflection. It is near at hand to conclude that the image of the spiritual natures is reflected in their work. So if we now combine these two points and apply them to *HH*, we can conclude that Nietzsche's writing in *HH* shows his own attitude and that many, particularly in his own time, will find the affective landscape reflected in his writing cold and uninhabitable, but that the interpretation of the mood of the text finally depends on the perspective of the reader. It is precisely this latter idea that allows for the possibility to use mood artistically to guide the reader to an affective perspective, through which the philosophical content of the work appears more understandable. But is there any suggestion in the passage that Nietzsche in fact would make such use of mood?

On the basis of this single passage, no far-reaching conclusions can be made. In fact, one might argue, given the centrality of the metaphor of mirroring in the passage, that the tone of the work is a simple reflection of the mood of the author. If indeed one would take Nietzsche to be striving towards the same objectivity as science, then one might conclude that the affective tone of the writing is nothing more than an unintentional result. The tone merely reflects the objectivity of science and there is no conscious effort on Nietzsche's part to lead the reader to the same state. On the other hand, the latter part of the passage with its talk of reaching for any means that could serve the purpose of cooling down and the clue that the coolness of the spiritual nature could do a service to a world that seems to be on fire, does suggest a more active role in guiding the reader. Though these two perspectives do not necessarily contradict each other, there is no denying that there is a marked tension between them. Put differently, it might be necessary to specify how "guiding the reader" should be understood, whether as an attempt at manipulation of the reader's emotions or as an open-ended communication that requires an active effort by the reader. There is also as of yet no clarity what this "cooling down" actually involves and what the resulting coolness consists of. Therefore, we will continue by discussing more evidence; specifically that evidence which Golomb relies on.

### 4.2.3 Textual evidence about Nietzsche's use of mood

There are only two aphorisms in *HH* where one can find the phrase "to put on ice" [*auf Eis legen*]; of which only one in the original publication of 1877, the other in *The Wanderer and his Shadow*. I will examine this latter aphorism first, as it plays an important role in Golomb's argument. The aphorism in *WS*, *Upon the ground of disgrace*, concerns the question how best to rid people of views one would rather see eliminated. Nietzsche explicitly chastises those who are not content to simply refute a belief but seek also to evoke a negative affective response in the person who holds the belief in order to prevent the belief from rising again. Instead of what he deems to be a

counterproductive approach of throwing dirt on ideas,[24] he recommends one to put beliefs on ice; if need be again and again. There is no suggestion that this would imply anything else (e. g. a different kind of affective manipulation) than simply sticking to a refutation of the beliefs that one wants to be rid of: if the belief arises again one should simply repeat the process patiently. The exhortation to put what one wants to set aside on ice again and again, certainly suggest a process of painstaking repetition. Such a reading gives a plausible explanation for the maxim that Nietzsche offers to conclude the aphorism: "One refutation is no refutation at all" (Handwerk 2012, 242; HH II, WS 211, KSA 2, 644). In this light it is hard to see how this aphorism could be used to support the claim that "Nietzsche preferred the method of freezing psychologization to rational disputation" (cf. Golomb 1989, 165).[25] In any case: To take the passage (HH II, WS 211, KSA 2, 644) from the middle of *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, the last text to be added to *HH*,[26] to support an argument concerning the method of the entirety of *HH*, as Golomb does, is questionable to say the least. There is also a further problem with Golomb's interpretation that makes his statement doubly misleading.

Golomb's statement is doubly misleading, since it presupposes that the psychology that Nietzsche practices in *HH* is somehow opposed to rational disputation and the refutation of beliefs. Here I take it that Golomb follows Nietzsche's comments in *EH*, where he declares that in *HH* errors are not refuted, but frozen (KSA 6, 323).[27] This reinterpretation does not capture all the uses of the word "refute" [*widerlegen*] in *HH*. In aphorism 9 of chapter one it is precisely the application of the psychological method that refutes metaphysics; when one has uncovered the faulty methods of

**24** Cf. HH II, WS 211, KSA 2, 644. Nietzsche is undoubtedly himself guilty of this error of mocking the targets of his criticism, though this "vice" is not as pronounced in *HH* as e. g. in the last works.

**25** Another passage that Golomb refers to in support of the idea that the goal of Nietzsche's "psychologization" is to instill mood and that this is thoroughly distinct from rational refutation does contain a suggestion that a thorough mistrust in metaphysics would have the same consequences as if all metaphysics were refuted. However, the passage, read contextually, is really about Nietzsche wanting to challenge one to think what the consequences would be, if a sceptical sentiment would take hold of humanity. In other words: the aphorism is concerned with a hypothetical situation, not the method of *HH* (HH I 21, KSA 2, 42–43; cf. Golomb 1989, 169).

**26** *WS* was originally presented in 1880 as an independent work unrelated to *HH* and only added to *HH* in 1886, together with *Mixed Opinions and Maxims*, to form volume two of the book (cf. Young 2010, 277).

**27** Another instance that could be used to support Golomb's contention can be found in WS 82 (HH II, WS 82, KSA 2, 589). There Nietzsche takes to task those who think it is necessary to refute a party or religion, after one has left it. According to him, it is enough to see what brought one to the party or religion in the first place, what motivations held one there and finally what motivations drove one away. Here, Nietzsche seems to employ the term "refute" in a very strict sense; restricting its use to matters of "pure" *Erkenntnis*.

reasoning that metaphysics relies on one has refuted metaphysics.[28] It is certainly the case that Nietzsche seeks to replace metaphysical reasoning with historical and psychological reasoning, but this does not imply rejecting the value of rational disputation. In fact, Nietzsche takes the capacity to distance oneself from one's own thoughts, the ability to "put them on ice", as a prerequisite of disputation. The short aphorism 315 of book one boldly declares: "*Requisite for disputing.* – Anyone who does not know how to put his thoughts on ice should not head into the heat of battle." (HH I 315, KSA 2, 315) This short aphorism, the only one containing the phrase "put on ice" [*auf Eis legen*] in the original publication, expands and clarifies the notion of putting one's beliefs on ice. On the basis of it, one can surmise that one should not only learn to view thoughts one wants to be rid of from a distance; it is useful to be able to view even one's most cherished thoughts from the same distance. In the following, I will examine passages that spell out the ideal which forms the basis for this view.

In his discussion on the merits of "freezing psychologization", Golomb does refer to some passages in the originally published work that better serve his end (cf. Golomb 1989, 173 – 174). For Nietzsche, psychological observation can serve to ease the burden of life (HH I 35, KSA 2, 57). How does psychology serve this end? Golomb speaks of the effect of "psychologization" as a "cooling" down and refers to aphorism 56 of book one (HH I 56, KSA 2, 75; cf. Golomb 1989, 173). This topic certainly deserves a more thorough exposition than that provided by Golomb who contents himself with a simple reference to the aphorism. The aphorism, entitled *Triumph of knowledge over radical evil*, describes the benefits of the perspective open to one who has passed through the stage of believing in the metaphysical reality of evil and who on account of his experiences no longer desires much more from things than knowledge. Such a person finds peace easily, as having knowledge as his only goal cools him down.[29] In itself, this single aphorism offers little more than a description of a particular path to inner peace, to freedom from illusions, albeit one might add that there probably is an autobiographical background to it. No far-reaching conclusions to our questions can be drawn on account of it. There is however a more thorough discussion of the ideal of calm in *HH* that has much to offer us; a passage which incidentally Golomb does not discuss.

The ideal of calm is more clearly spelled out in an earlier aphorism, aphorism 34 of chapter one; *For reassurance* [*Zur Beruhigung*], in which Nietzsche thematizes the

**28** "*hat man sie widerlegt*" (HH I 9, KSA 2, 29). This use of the term resembles what Nietzsche writes about historical refutation [*historische Widerlegung*] in *D* (D 95, KSA 3, 86 – 87, cf. section 4.3.3 of this study).

**29** "the single goal that fully governs him, to know at all times as well as he possibly can, will make him cool and will calm all the savagery in his disposition" (Handwerk 1997, 56; HH I 56, KSA 2, 75). It cannot be emphasized enough that the removal of "savagery" is not to be understood as a removal of all powerful feeling. As we have already seen, "living for knowledge" crucially involves reflecting on one's feelings.

effect of knowledge on the free spirit. He deceptively begins by asking a series of pessimistic questions that culminate in the question whether the quest for knowledge does not end in despair. He then cuts this pessimistic tirade short in order to declare that he believes the effect of knowledge to be a matter of temperament. Nietzsche surmises that the reaction he initially described was only one of many possibilities, and goes on to describe an alternative in which the confrontation and preoccupation with knowledge leads the way to a form of life freer from troubling affects.[30] Such a reaction to knowledge requires a good temperament: "a stable, mild, and basically cheerful soul, a mood that would not need to be on guard against pranks and sudden outbursts" (Handwerk 1997, 41–42; HH I 34, KSA 2, 53–55). A liberated spirit with this kind of temperament would not rage at having once been bound. He would have to renounce much of what is commonly valued and be content to dwell in a free and fearless mood above customs and morality, living only for knowledge. This state Nietzsche conceives of as a joyful state, as he declares in a sentence that is crucial to our endeavour: "He is glad to share the joy of this state and he has perhaps nothing else to share" (Handwerk 1997, 41–42; HH I 34, KSA 2, 53–55).

Is this not the evidence we have been looking for? Is this aphorism not proof that Nietzsche tried to communicate a specific mood through *HH?* Does it not suggest that this mood is more important than anything else in the book, perhaps the only thing he has to communicate? Does it not imply that he wants to lead his readers toward this ideal? Not necessarily, and therefore the questions are worth examining closely and critically before jumping to conclusions.

First of all, one would have to assume that the state that Nietzsche describes is an autobiographical confession, and an honest one. Secondly, one would have to understand his words as a meta-commentary on *HH* and take them to mean that he seeks to share and transmit a certain mood to his readers through his writing. The first claim is problematic, but not indefensible. The main problem is whether one should identify the calm and joyful response as Nietzsche's own response to knowledge. One might claim that the latter alternative (good temperament – joyful mood) presented in the aphorism should not be mistaken for Nietzsche's own response as little as the first alternative (melancholic temperament – despair) should.[31] Be that as

**30** The key question here is how to understand Nietzsche's words of a life "more purified of affects" [*von Affecten reineres Leben*] (Handwerk 1997, 42; HH I 34, KSA 2, 53–55). As the aphorism shows, Nietzsche thinks that knowledge can both purify and weaken violent passions. The question is whether these two necessarily go together; whether purification always entails weakening. While Nietzsche seems unable to make up his mind in *HH*, I think that the metaphor of distancing makes most sense of his statements. Nietzsche strives for a certain distance from his own passions, but this distance is itself an affective state; an all-enveloping mood. Be that as it may, it is certainly not the case that Nietzsche's ideal would be a life totally bereft of feeling, as the final part of the aphorism shows.
**31** Marco Brusotti notes that Nietzsche's self-understanding only shines through indirectly in *HH*. Still he somewhat hesitantly concludes that Nietzsche in *HH* seems to count himself among those with a good temperament. Relevant evidence can be found in unpublished writings from the period in which Nietzsche attests to having a good temperament (Brusotti 1997, 176–177; see especially foot-

it may, this objection can be seen as irrelevant as one might counter it by insisting that it is enough that Nietzsche holds out the calm response as an ideal.[32] It stands to reason that Nietzsche would not want to lead the reader to his own possibly conflicted state of mind, but towards an ideal state perhaps more reflective of his "higher self".[33] Though the possible difference between Nietzsche's ideal and his actual temperament is an interesting issue, it is my contention that it does not complicate the question of authorial intention in any significant sense. The difference between an all-too-human *Herr Nietzsche* and an ideal philosopher-author of the text dissolves when one recognizes that the latter can be reduced to the intentions of the human, all too human thinker. This difference does, however, raise the possibility of a dissonance between intent and achievement. I will return to this question at a later stage; for now it is time to move on to the second claim.

In lack of unambiguous evidence, there is greater reason to doubt the second claim, i. e. that the passage should be understood as a meta-commentary on *HH*. Nevertheless, even the most sceptical interpreter should concede that the passage provides the best indirect evidence that can be found in the content of the book, besides that provided by aphorism 38. This is because it makes sense to understand the discussion of knowledge and responses to knowledge in the passage as directly related to the knowledge that Nietzsche's book contains – and the possible responses to the book. This analogy is not some far-fetched speculation, but follows from the recognition that Nietzsche's inquiries in *HH* generate precisely the kind of knowledge that is potentially tragic and that through *HH* the reader becomes acquainted with such knowledge. Let us provisionally accept the premise that the passage can be read in this way and see where it leads.

If one accepts the premise that the passage can be read as a meta-commentary on *HH*, then there is still the problem of establishing that the passage shows that Nietzsche sought to communicate a specific mood to his readers. A close reading of the passage reveals that what the hypothetical free spirit gladly communicates is his joy at his calm state of mind. The free spirit can show his own joy in what he does, in his writing, but once again it is not clear if he seeks to lead the reader

note 319; cf. KGB II/5, Bf. 734). Brusotti notes further that this self-evaluation contrasts with the one in *Daybreak*, where Nietzsche practically admits that he has a melancholic temperament (Brusotti 1997, 178).

**32** That Nietzsche indeed held a good, i. e. calm, lofty and joyful, temperament as an ideal in *HH* can be backed up with textual evidence. This short aphorism can be considered typical: "*Das Eine, was Noth thut. – Eins muss man haben: entweder einen von Natur leichten Sinn oder einen durch Kunst und Wissen erleichterten Sinn.*" (HH I 486, KSA 2, 317)

**33** The idea of a "true self" or a "higher self" of aspiration plays a central role in Nietzsche's untimely meditations on Schopenhauer and Wagner (cf. Young 2010, 520). Young in his turn paid homage to this idea, and emphasized the importance of it to Nietzsche, by allowing it to structure much of his own biographical narrative of Nietzsche's life and aspirations. This hermeneutic is certainly justified from a biographical perspective, as it can hardly be denied that Nietzsche's life was a life of constant striving, despite the philosophical Nietzsche's protestations to the contrary (cf. KSA 6, 294 – 295).

to the same attitude. The least that can be said about aphorism 34 is that if indeed the free spirit seeks to communicate a mood it would be primarily that of joy. This is quite at odds with the emphasis in Golomb's thesis that Nietzsche seeks to instill a cold mood of suspicion towards metaphysics, though admittedly the two should perhaps be seen as complimentary; i.e. as a union of joy and doubt. Yet on the basis of the whole of the passage in question, one might equally well support the thesis that Nietzsche does not seek to instill any specific mood in the reader through the philosophical content of the work, since how the reader responds to knowledge is in the end a matter of the temperament of the reader. Despite the solid textual foundation that it rests on, it is hard to content oneself with this last objection. This is not least because the philosophical content strictly understood, i.e. the statements contained in the passages, is not the only aspect that should be considered when discussing Nietzsche's use of mood in any of his works. We are here faced with a larger interpretative problem. There is a need to specify, how one conceives of Nietzsche's communication of mood in his writings; in specific texts understood as wholes as well as in single passages. The key question in this regard is not the abstract one whether Nietzsche merely holds out possibilities for contemplation or actively seeks to force the reader to inhabit an affective perspective. It is rather the problem of distinguishing where Nietzsche merely holds out possibilities for contemplation from those affects and moods that Nietzsche considers desirable and would have his readers open up to. Needless to say, no generalizations can be made on the basis of single passages and any credible interpretation must be contextual in the sense that it takes into account all evidence concerning Nietzsche's intentions.

We here seem to have reached the limits of the method that we have utilized thus far. Following the example of Golomb, we have drawn attention to and analysed passages in *HH* in order to find answers to our questions. No conclusive answers have been found. Golomb argued that Nietzsche uses mood to instill doubt in the reader, but on the basis of the contents alone, one might equally well support the thesis that Nietzsche's focus in *HH* is more on analysing feelings than on manipulating them. However, not all evidence has been exhausted yet. It is quite curious and irritating that despite the emphasis he places on the role of mood in *HH*, Golomb has nothing to say about the tone of the work. That Golomb does not go into a detailed discussion about the aphoristic form is not the problem.[34] The question of tone is distinct from the question of form. Both questions concern style, but the question of tone is arguably primary in any discussion on the communication of mood. That is because no form is in itself an expression of a specific mood, though form can certainly facilitate the communication of affect. When I now ask about the tone of *HH*, I refrain from

**34** One can even question whether it is instructive at all to speak of aphorisms in the case of *HH*, even if Nietzsche himself spoke of the passages in the work using that term (cf. Franco 2011, 13). Hödl goes as far as to write of *HH* as a work that is wrongly called a book of aphorisms (Hödl 2007, 152). Whatever the passages that make up *HH* are called, I do not see how this stylistic choice would in itself reveal anything about Nietzsche's communication of mood.

making any claims about authorial intention. That means that the approach is initially purely descriptive. It is my contention that an inquiry into tone that proceeds cautiously can deliver important if inconclusive results, and should not simply be rejected outright on account of its subjectivity.

### 4.2.4 A general characterization of the tone of *HH*

What is the tone of *HH* like? In *EH*, Nietzsche writes that one will find the tone of the book "clever, cool, perhaps harsh and mocking" (Large 2007, 55; KSA 6, 323). Does this assertion fully capture the tone of *HH*, or is there more to be said about the matter? Does the tone not guide the reader to the joyful ideal of lofty calm and inner peace? Does it not also open up a mood of suspicion for metaphysics? There would at least have to be some detectable glimmer of joy in the text for one to take seriously the claim that the free spirit enjoys his viewpoint and seeks to communicate his joy (HH I 34, KSA 2, 55). To point this out and to ask such questions need not mean denying that the tone of *HH* is best described as cool, but it does mean adding something to the description. In other words, there is no reason to accept *EH* as dogma, even if it serves well as a starting point for an inquiry that aims for a full picture of the tone of *HH*.

Before trying to answer these questions, it has to be asked whether and in what sense *HH* forms a whole. The scholarly consensus is that the text of *HH* as presented in the KSA does not form a whole, though it should be mentioned that Paul Franco has sought to argue against the consensus and for the coherence of the entire work (Franco 2011, 14–16).[35] A quick consideration of the two texts added to *HH* in 1886 should be enough to cast aside any doubts about the consensus view. On this issue, I share Julian Young's judgement. Young calls *Mixed Opinions and Maxims* (1879) "a fairly random collection of bits and pieces that didn't find their way into the main work", but recognizes that it "shares the same theoretical outlook" as *HH* (Young 2010, 275). It should be added that not only does the theoretical outlook remain largely in tune with the earlier books; so does the tone. *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (1880), on the other hand, is quite different both in tone and content (cf. Young 2010, 277–289).[36] These considerations support the consensus view, and

**35** I raise initial doubts about Franco's position in the discussion on the "problem of culture" in section 4.1.2.

**36** The ideal of living only for knowledge seems to have been supplanted by an ideal of living for joy. Perhaps it would be best to say that the ideal of living for joy has been superimposed on the former ideal, which was already characterized as a joyful one. The solitary *Freigeist* has the right to say "*dass er um der Freudigkeit willen lebe und um keines weiteren Zieles willen; und in jedem anderen Munde wäre sein Wahlspruch gefährlich: Frieden um mich und ein Wohlgefallen an allen nächsten Dingen.*" (HH II, WS 350, KSA 2, 702) The focus is no longer on scientific knowledge but on the "nearest things" that provide the means to joy (cf. Brusotti 1997, 134). Consequently, there is also a change in the char-

allow us to restrict our focus to the original 1878 publication, which includes those chapters that are of greatest relevance to us.

At a first glance, volume one of *HH* is remarkably balanced compared to some of Nietzsche's later writings, even if one excludes the *Antichrist* and *Ecce Homo* from one's survey. Whereas there is no escaping the impression that the author of the later works is passionately concerned about the things he writes about, this work mostly does suggest that the author dwells far above the things he writes about, gazing down at them from a distance. There is also a joy present in the work that at times becomes very explicit (e. g. HH I 291 and HH I 292, KSA 2, 234 – 237), but mostly stays in the background. To be absolutely clear, I am not denying that one might be able to detect slight changes in tone between the chapters. More importantly, however, not everything within the most serious chapters of volume one is that cool and dispassionate. Is there not also uneasiness and irritation? This is arguably the case in the chapter on the state but it is especially troublesome in the chapter that is centred on the question of religion, which I will now revisit. The reason for focusing on the chapter on religion is that the role of politics and the state in Nietzsche's philosophical projects stands in question, so much so that now and again the question is asked, whether Nietzsche can be considered a political thinker at all. That Nietzsche is an important thinker on religion is beyond any doubt, and as has been mentioned some even go as far as calling him an essentially religious thinker (cf. Young 2006, 201). That is not to say that nothing could be gained from an analysis of the tone in which Nietzsche writes on the state and politics; in fact, such an investigation could reveal issues obscured by a one-sided focus on the content of what he has to say. Here, anyhow, it is justified to limit the discussion to the topic of religion and those parts of Nietzsche's text that are of direct relevance to the questions of this study.

### 4.2.5 The unbalanced tone of chapter three: The trouble with the ascetic

The chapter *The Religious Life* is not that balanced despite the rational explanatory schema that underlies it. This can be shown by careful consideration of Nietzsche's treatment of the Christian ascetic in aphorisms 136 to 144, the greater part of which exhibits a tone that is best described as feverish. The starting point of Nietzsche's discussion, and by Nietzsche I here and in what follows obviously refer first and foremost to the persona created within the text of *HH*, is to be found in what seems to be a thinly veiled irritation with the fact that science had as of then not been able to provide an explanation for asceticism. Nietzsche takes this task upon himself; the task to cast a scientific light on the nature of asceticism. Because he explicitly men-

acter of the joy that is aspired to, as the emphasis is no longer on the absence of disturbing passion but on a rejoicing in the "nearest things". Arguably, the tone of *WS* reflects this change.

tions the idea of science as a reflection of nature [*Nachahmung der Natur*] in the passage (HH I 136, KSA 2, 130), one would expect a treatment in tune with the dispassionate spirit of objective science (cf. HH I 38, KSA 2, 61–62). We have already established the underlying rational schema which structures Nietzsche's analysis; his method of explaining complex phenomena through the elements that make them up. Now we focus on the manner in which he presents his analyses, how he puts the schema into his text. This is an important question, for what he provides is far from a dispassionate analysis. Indeed, his "analysis" is more akin to an exorcism, in which he doesn't spare words of contempt.

Nietzsche first fixes his eye on how ascetics turn their spite and wrath against themselves, and gives a few examples that are described with a marked scorn to illustrate his point. Without justifying his interpretation he suddenly exclaims: "This shattering of oneself, this mockery of one's own nature, this *spernere se sperni* of which religions have made so much is really a very high degree of vanity", adding: "The whole morality of the Sermon on the Mount fits in here" (Handwerk 1997, 105; HH I 137, KSA 2, 130–131). The impression is that the author seeks to shock the reader through this statement, which in its own time could only have come across as mockery, but the absence of any justification for his conclusions is quite telling.

Nietzsche deals similarly with a related component of asceticism and sainthood, charitable self-denial. Acting for the good of others, even when it might be detrimental to others, is not limited to saints, but the saint has made it his trademark. Such acts Nietzsche explains with reference to the feeling that accompanies them and results from them. His treatment is so cursory as to be unsatisfactory: it is hard to escape the impression that what matters to Nietzsche here is not the evidence but arriving at the conclusion: "It is therefore really only the discharge of his emotion that matters to him" (Handwerk 1997, 106; HH I 138, KSA 2, 131–132). There is really no argument as to in what sense the ascetic differs from anyone else in this regard, only the assertion that the ascetic in fact tries to make his own life easy by renouncing care about all that is mortal (HH I 139, KSA 2, 133).

In the following aphorism, Nietzsche explicitly connects the ascetics' purported lust for emotion for its own sake with weakness of the nerves. It serves to counter the boredom to which their own spiritual laziness and their self-imposed submission under a foreign will has led them. (HH I 140, KSA 2, 133–134). The choice of words in this aphorism, as in selected parts of the broader discussion, does speak of a contempt that is more powerful than the ideal of scientific calm. The next aphorism exhibits the same vehemence: through convoluted sentences Nietzsche moves from a discussion about the sexual impulse to generalizations about the nature of the feeling of sinfulness in order to finally suggest, but without explicating how, that there is a historical connection between Christianity and societal decadence. If there is one thing that deserves specific attention it would be that Nietzsche seems particularly incensed about what he takes to be the use to which psychology was put to by ascetics. In the hands of ascetics, psychology was used to make people feel sinful. Yet instead of focusing on explaining how such a use of psychology could

be effective in the first place, or what use of psychology would be preferable, Nietzsche simply focuses on complaining about how ascetics chastise all that is natural (HH I 141, KSA 2, 134–137).

In a final attempt to reassure that there is nothing special about ascetics, Nietzsche asserts that the world-historical importance of those deemed holy is not to be found in themselves, but in the fact that they are deemed holy by people. In Nietzsche's own words, the saint matters not because of what he or she is, but rather because what he or she means. (HH I 143, KSA 2, 139)

In a peculiar twist, the last aphorism of *The Religious Life*, which also finishes off the discussion on ascetics and saints, seems to recover at least something of the calm, objective spirit that Nietzsche associates with science. It is almost as if he would be startled by and recoil at what he has written in the preceding pages. Recognizing that the picture he has painted of the saint, which he says has painted according to the average of the type, can be contrasted with presentations that produce a more pleasant response, he nevertheless proceeds to defend his approach (HH I 144, KSA 2, 139). This defence is not without irony, and it does not suggest that Nietzsche would recant anything. Indeed he does not. He merely relativizes his take on ascetics by adding that his explanation does not take into account singular exceptions to the rule, exceptions which he suggests could be viewed in a more sympathetic light. The big difference to the preceding passages is in the tone, which is once again balanced and even charitable, while simultaneously suggesting that the author gazes down at the issue from an ironic distance. The ironic tone shines especially clearly through the text when Nietzsche mentions the founder of Christianity as being one of those exceptional creatures whose delusions cast streams of light over their entire character. Quite aware that the notion of the founder of Christianity being delusional was still considered scandalous by many in his day, Nietzsche adds that one should not judge him too harshly for his delusion, since antiquity did not lack its fair share of sons of God (HH I 144, KSA 2, 139–140).

This recovery of tone in the final aphorism does not change the overall impression that an explanation of the elements that ascetics and saints are made of, such as self-denial and self-hatred, is only of secondary importance, the attack against them primary. Most of the text on ascetics and saints expresses an irritation, which does not suggest that the author would be above all of that he writes about. There is more here than the irritation of the reader and more than what is captured in the quip in *EH* that one might find the tone "*harsh and mocking*" (KSA 6, 323). Nietzsche's treatment of the ascetic is cursory and forced; passionate, not calm. What are we to make out of this? One fruitful alternative is to point out that Nietzsche might not seriously strive to be dispassionate, and that what is more important is his desire to express a distance. There is certainly something to this explanation, as Nietzsche very vehemently seeks to distance himself from asceticism. Notwithstanding the passages in question, Nietzsche does on the whole manage to maintain a tone that expresses a certain aloofness, a distant joy, throughout *HH*.

### 4.2.6 The ideal of calm and the mood of *HH*

To conclude, Nietzsche's writing in *HH* manifests a mood of distanced suspicion in metaphysics, a mood that at times rises to become lofty and joyful. It is also the case that it is accompanied by a more agitated mood of irritation with metaphysics (and religion, morality, as well as the state of culture) that now and again gains the upper hand. This contrasts with Nietzsche's own later assessment that a nobility of spirit always has the upper hand in the work. In *EH* he writes: "A certain intellectuality of noble taste seems to be continually keeping the upper hand over a more passionate current beneath it." (Large 2007, 55; KSA 6, 323) To me it seems that Nietzsche, given how he presents himself in *HH*, can be said to be unable to fully keep his passion in check and to live up to his ideal. Nevertheless, the later admission that there is a passionate current at work in *HH* is already an important concession and an indication that one cannot view the work solely through the ideal of distance and calm. The ideal of calm is problematic.

That Nietzsche declares a state of mind akin to *apatheia* (Brusotti 1997, 228) a personal ideal in *HH* does not necessarily imply that his writing expresses that ideal fully. More disturbingly, one might from within Nietzsche's philosophy even question whether this need for peace is not a symptom of something else. This, I would argue, is precisely the question that Nietzsche asks of himself in the years following the 1878 publication. The claim that there is more to the tone of *HH* than calm, to which we arrived through the analysis of Nietzsche's treatment of asceticism, can be supported by earlier evidence than that provided by his description of the tone in *EH*. Already during his free-spirit period, Nietzsche comes to realize that he is in the grips of a violent passion. He comes to see that his preoccupation with knowledge is at odds with the ideal of calm, as this preoccupation is itself the result of a passion. This passion he dubs the passion for knowledge [*die Leidenschaft der Erkenntnis*] (Brusotti 1997, 13).[37]

This serves as a reminder of an issue, which cannot be emphasized enough: Nietzsche's self-presentation, his own interpretation of his texts, has to be challenged and weighed against all evidence available to scholarship. For example, when Nietzsche writes in the 1886 foreword to *HH* II about the whole of *HH* that it has "something of the almost cheerful and inquisitive coldness of the psychologist" (Handwerk 2012, 5; KSA 2, 371),[38] we can agree but note that this something does not

**37** According to Brusotti, the first reinterpretation can be dated to summer 1880 (Brusotti 1997, 640). See also Brusotti's chapter "Die neue Leidenschaft setzt sich durch" (Brusotti 1997, 168). I have suggested, that the seeds of this "reinterpretation" are already present in the first version of *HH*. Therefore, it is not so much a reinterpretation as a rationalization in a specific direction. This rationalization then leads Nietzsche to disengage the ideal of distance from the ideal of calm, which is a very important step towards *D*, *GS* and the arrival of Zarathustra.

**38** "*Etwas von der heiteren und neugierigen Kälte des Psychologen*" (KSA 2, 371).

completely express the mood of the work.[39] When he goes on about the things discussed in *HH* as already then having been behind him and below him, one can calmly observe that this is simply not the case as he returns to the very same problems of metaphysics and religion in his later writings. To mention but one example, one can think of the relation between science and asceticism, which gains a far more thoroughgoing treatment in *The Genealogy of Morals*. Such discrepancy gives rise to a new critical question that must be taken into account by scholars concerned with Nietzsche and mood. Given that Nietzsche aspires to communicate mood, how well does he succeed? Now one might object that there is no reason to raise such a question at all, or at least not at this point. The critic can point to the fact that in the case of *HH*, it has not been possible to establish the intention of the author with any certainty. One might therefore conclude that the question to what extent Nietzsche succeeds to communicate mood is superfluous as the question itself rests on a too shaky foundation. That conclusion would be as premature as the question, because there is still one category of evidence that has not been examined yet and which can help solve the problem concerning authorial intention; namely Nietzsche's notes and letters.

### 4.2.7 Evidence about Nietzsche's use of mood in *HH* from his notes and letters

From the period surrounding the original publication of *HH*, spring-summer 1878, there is a very short yet extremely suggestive notebook entry.[40] It is the metaphor of mountain air [*Höhenluft*], which makes this note so interesting and so deserving of attention. After all, it is precisely this metaphor that Nietzsche employs in *EH* to characterize his philosophy; and specifically what his writings communicate (KSA 6, 258 – 259). Already in this early note, Nietzsche understands his own philosophy as a philosophy of mountain air. Substantially, he establishes an analogy between those who seek out the alpine air of the Engadine in search of a cure for their ailments and those "patients", presumably his readers, whom he would send to his own air; to the heights of his philosophy. The implication is that his work has a therapeutic aim. This is not to say that a therapeutic aim would be the only aim of his philosophizing at this stage, but that he clearly sees his thinking as having therapeutic potential. So what is the illness that his patients suffer from and who are the patients? Given Nietzsche's preoccupations in the period and considering the content of *HH*, it is safe to say that whatever one calls the disease its main symptoms are false interpretations of the human predicament in general and metaphysical in-

**39** "*Auf ihm, als einem Buche 'für freie Geister', liegt Etwas von der beinahe heiteren und neugierigen Kälte des Psychologen, welche eine Menge schmerzlicher Dinge, die er unter sich hat, hinter sich hat, nachträglich für sich noch feststellt und gleichsam mit irgend einer Nadelspitze fest sticht*" (KSA 2, 371).
**40** "*Ich sehe die Leidenden, die in die Höhenluft des Engadin sich begeben. Auch ich sende die Patienten in meine Höhenluft – welcher Art ist ihre Krankheit?*" (NL 1878, 27[21], KSA 8, 490)

terpretations of all human things in particular. One might conclude that all those for whom he writes are potential patients, but the question is whether Nietzsche did not have a more specific group in mind; namely the Wagnerians. In a remarkable passage of *EH*, Nietzsche seems to recall that his first discovery of and initial fascination with the air of the heights coincided with his turn away from all that which the word Bayreuth signifies, as he explicitly opposes the Wagnerian swamp with the air of the Engadine, where one dwells "6000 feet above Bayreuth".[41] That there indeed is an intimate connection between the anti-ideal, or idealization of the air of the heights, and his Bayreuth-crisis finds support from Nietzsche's letters, in which he mentions this mountain air. These letters shed much light on Nietzsche's intentions and leave little doubt that he sought to guide his readers to this experience.

The first letter that merits attention is one that Nietzsche wrote to Heinrich Köselitz on 31 May 1878. The focus of the letter is on the reception of his latest work. As *HH* philosophically meant a decisive break with Schopenhauer, it personally meant an irreparable break with Wagner and his followers. In this sense, Nietzsche contrasts the reception of *HH* in the Wagnerian circle with that of Rée and Burckhardt. Whereas the Wagnerians responded to his turn against Schopenhauer with lack of understanding and outright distaste, a response Nietzsche likens to excommunication, the latter two scholars reportedly responded with joy (KGB II/5, Bf. 723). This latter response, the letter reveals, has given him reason to think about the preconditions for his work having an impact. Specifically, he writes, the response shows what kind of readers are ready for his work.[42] What makes the letter even more interesting to us is that Nietzsche not only hints at what kind of reader would be the ideal reader of his work, but also reveals what kind of a response he considers ideal. This he does by imagining what the effect of the book would be upon one who would spend as

**41** In the passage, Nietzsche praises his purported ability to bring forth the best in those who come close to him: "Whatever the instrument – even if it is as out of tune as only the instrument 'man' can go out of tune – I would have to be ill not to succeed in getting something listenable-to out of it. And how often have I heard from the 'instruments' themselves that they have never heard themselves sounding like that… The finest example of this was perhaps Heinrich von Stein, who died unforgivably young: once, after carefully obtaining permission, he turned up in Sils-Maria for three days, explaining to everyone that he had not come for the Engadine. For those three days it was as though this splendid man, who had waded with all the impetuous naivety of a Prussian junker into the Wagnerian swamp (– and the Dühringian one, too!), had been transformed by a storm-wind of freedom, like someone who is suddenly raised up to his height and given wings. I always told him it was the good air up there that was doing it and everyone was affected in the same way – we were not 6,000 feet above Bayreuth for nothing – but he wouldn't believe me…" (Large 2007, 11; KSA 6, 269 – 270) The comedy of this hyperbolic passage is only heightened by Nietzsche's deliberate mixing up of the influence of the physical air of the heights with that of his own presence as a kind of being of the mountain air. He wants to be understood as one with the elemental forces of the alpine nature.

**42** "*wie die Menschen beschaffen sein müßten, wenn mein Buch eine schnelle Wirkung thun sollte*" (KGB II/5, Bf. 723). How does one create people with good temperament, "*wie erzeugt man Menschen mit gutem Temperament?*", Nietzsche also asks in a note, which was written in the summer of 1879 (NL 40[27], KSA8, 583).

much time with it as his friend and editor Köselitz: new thoughts, new feelings and a stronger mood, as if one would find oneself in lighter mountain air.[43]

Directly after mentioning this powerful mood that he associates with the air of the heights, Nietzsche expresses his joy at hearing Rée's reaction to the book; namely that it put him in a mood of productive enjoyment [*Stimmung produktiven Genießens*] (KGB II/5, Bf. 723). Nietzsche then explicitly affirms that to inspire readers to think independently and become productive was the best he hoped to achieve. Not only does the letter testify of the importance he attached to enabling a specific mood [*Stimmung*], it further points to mountain air, the air of the heights, as the key metaphor for a more encompassing affective ideal. Importantly, the letter suggests that the ideal is not something that the reader can or should slavishly submit to. It is not a mood that can be forced upon a reader. It is rather a mood that frees thinking. As such, it is made up of feelings of independence, of distance, of being above. Because of this, it requires a lot from the one who would inhabit it. Not least does it presuppose what Nietzsche calls a good temperament. We can nevertheless now conclude that his insistence that the effect of knowledge (cf. HH I 34, KSA 2, 53 – 55), varies according to temperament doesn't exclude the attempt to communicate a specific mood. For there are individuals who are ready for this communication, and there will perhaps be more in the future. It is for these free spirits that Nietzsche claims to write, as the subtitle of *HH* states that it is a "book for free spirits", and it is they who will gain from being immersed in the fresh air of the heights.

The contention that Nietzsche indeed had a specific "ideal" in mind finds further support in Nietzsche's reply to a letter by Erwin Rohde, which he sent shortly after receiving Rohde's letter on 16 June 1878 (see KGB II/5, Bf. 727). This letter testifies of the same concern with reception as the letter to Köselitz. One could even go so far as to claim that it shows Nietzsche desired to control the way his work was read, since he gives instructions to guide the interpretation. Justifiably fearing that his friend's sympathies are still with the Wagnerians, he bids Rohde to at least take a look at the book and read some passages, in the hope that he might eventually come to grasp it as a whole. Why would it be so important to grasp the work as a whole? Nietzsche insists that if Rohde were to see the whole as a whole he would finally be able to understand the experience that grounds the work, and thus he could take part in the joy of the author. In fact, Nietzsche speaks of this experience as the highest joy that he has thus far felt. In the process, he expressly forbids his friend to ponder about how the book came to be.[44] After distancing his work from

**43** "*Ja, wenn man soviel eindringenden Ernstes und auch soviel Zeit einem solchen Erzeugniß weihen wollte wie Ihre Güte gethan, so käme wohl etwas dabei heraus: nämlich Neues an Gedanken und Gefühlen und eine kräftigere Stimmung, wie als ob man in leichter gewordene Luft der Höhe gerathen sei.*" (KGB II/5, Bf. 723)

**44** "*Grüble nicht über die Entstehung eines solchen Buches nach, sondern fahre fort, dies und jenes Dir herauszulangen. Vielleicht kommt dann auch einmal die Stunde, wo Du mit Deiner schönen konstruktiven Phantasie das Ganze als Ganzes schaust und an dem größten Glücke, das ich bisher genoß, teil-*

Reé, Nietzsche returns to mood at the end of the letter with an evocation of this "highest feeling of joy". He expresses the wish that Rohde could feel what he feels since having established an ideal of life. And what is this ideal? That is left unspecified, but he importantly associates it with the fresh air of the heights and a mild warmth.[45] Perhaps it is nothing other than the mountain air-experience itself, translated into a philosophical mode of life. In *HH*, this ideal is to "live for knowledge". The least that can be said is that the ideal in question leaves metaphysical ideals and associated experiences behind in favour of a more intense experience of life.

It is quite telling that when Nietzsche in a letter to Mathilde Maier, an acquaintance from the Bayreuth-circle, tries to justify his attack on metaphysics, to make it understandable, he does so with reference to the mountain air [*Höhenluft*] that he dwells in. The most striking claim of the letter is the assertion that this new mood allows him to be free of vindictiveness. Instead, he associates the air of the heights with a mild mood [*Stimmung*] towards all those humans who still live in the haze of the valleys; a rather thinly veiled reference to all those such as the Wagnerians, who are in the grips of metaphysical philosophy. Furthermore, he writes that this new mood allows him to be far closer to the Greeks than ever before and truly live the pursuit of wisdom. Again, as in the letter to Rohde, he emphasizes the authority of his feeling: if only Mathilde could through his words understand [*nachempfinden*] the experience of his change, she would wish to experience something similar. Finally, he foresees that he will have to dwell alone, in order to one-day return as a philosopher of life. (Cf. KGB II/5, Bf. 734.)

Nietzsche does not only speak in this way, emphasizing mood, because he would believe that the recipients of his letters value feeling above all. There is much more reason to believe that Nietzsche honestly tries to speak if not of a decisive change in his life then at least of something he considers of great value. Together, these letters indicate that he had fixed his eyes on a specific affective ideal and wanted to communicate it. However, all of the letters were written after the publication of the finished volume. Therefore, their importance could be challenged by claiming that they do not say that much about the philosopher's intentions when writing *HH* as much as of a changing interpretation of the work post-publication. Besides that, this purported ideal of mountain air remains obscure; the best that has been provided are rather vague phenomenological descriptions. Both of these objections are worth considering, but they do not present a serious challenge to the plausibility of the thesis advanced here. Much can be gained by considering Nietzsche's first use of mountain

*nehmen kannst*." (KGB II/5, Bf. 727) The real reason for this plea is revealed in the following paragraph, in which Nietzsche insists that the philosophical outlook presented in *HH* is his own and not that of Reé; an outlook that he embraced independently before becoming better acquainted with his new friend in autumn 1876 (Ibid.).

**45** "*Fühltest Du nur, was ich jetzt fühle, seitdem ich mein Lebensideal endlich aufgestellt habe – die frische reine Höhenluft, die milde Wärme um mich – Du würdest Dich sehr, sehr Deines Freundes freuen können. Und es kommt der Tag.*" (KGB II/5, Bf. 727)

air [*Höhenluft*] as a metaphor in a note from a notebook dated to the end of 1876 to summer 1877.[46] Though the metaphor is not described in any more detail in this note, the note provides important clues for interpretation. Even if the ideal mood were phenomenologically as distant and unaccessible to the reader as before, the way Nietzsche ties his discussion to a historical situation points directly toward what Nietzsche had in mind. In a situation where religious notions of God, sin, salvation and the like have been discarded, he here claims, a passing sickness will require replacements for the lost attachments. When he goes on to speak of philosophies that serve as "transitional climates" for those not yet ready for pure mountain air, it is near at hand to think of metaphysical philosophies such as Schopenhauer's, in which religious evaluations and intuitions are presented as rational philosophy. Be that as it may, it seems clear enough that Nietzsche himself wants to show the way onward from "transitional climates". In this sense, the note can be used to understand how Nietzsche situates his own philosophical project historically. In *HH*, Nietzsche deals coldly with those who would satisfy religious needs through philosophy and put modern concepts in the place of God. Instead of serving as a transitional climate, the point of *HH* is to guide those who are ready toward the true mountain air. In this sense, *HH* is but the first necessary step on a journey, and Nietzsche is clearly aware of this.

This applies even more so to this first mention of the metaphor. Nietzsche even seems at a loss to describe the mountain air at all. The analogy to the Greeks doesn't lead anywhere. A plausible way to make sense of this lack of precision from within Nietzsche's own thinking is to assume that this is precisely because the experience is something new, something young. It does not derive from the past, but speaks of the future. The new feeling, the new affective ideal is not something always and anywhere accessible, but is tied to the historical situation, which makes it possible. This first metaphorical use puts the eponymous experience into the historical context of the decline of Christianity, which Nietzsche is a few years thereafter to thematize as the death of God. Although the note itself doesn't provide a phenomenological description of the experience, it allows us to read Nietzsche's philosophical project from *HH* onward as a drive toward a real engagement with and proper appreciation of mountain air. In this interpretation, Nietzsche's message is that the philosophy of the future will be characterized by a new kind emotional foundation. Against this background, the objection that the concept is vague loses its edge. What is to be ex-

**46** "*Geistige Übergangsclimata. – Wir haben uns freigemacht von vielen Vorstellungen – Gott ewiges Leben vergeltende jenseitige und diesseitige Gerechtigkeit, Sünde Erlöser Erlösungsbedürftigkeit –; eine Art vorübergehende Krankheit verlangt einen Ersatz an die leeren Stellen hin, die Haut schaudert etwas vor Frost, weil sie früher hier bekleidet war. Da giebt es Philosophien, welche gleichsam Übergangsclimata darstellen, für die, welche die frische Höhenluft noch nicht direct vertragen. – Vergleiche, wie die griechischen Philosophensekten als Übergangsklimata dienen: die alte Polis und deren Bildung wirkt noch in ihnen nach: wozu soll aber übergegangen werden? – es ist wohl nicht gefunden. Oder war es der Sophist, der volle Freigeist?*" (NL 1876–77, 23[110], KSA 8, 442)

pected of Nietzsche is not an exhaustive description but an engagement with this experience in his writings. On account of the evidence, one can conclude that Nietzsche for the first time sought to express this idea and ideal of mood in *HH*. As an expression, it must perhaps be deemed incomplete and unsatisfactory, but then again *HH* was not the last time Nietzsche sought to express his ideal.

### 4.2.8 Conclusion

The critical engagement with Jacob Golomb's work has provided a clear view of the methodological problems involved in questioning Nietzsche's use of mood. The most important lesson has been that it is crucial to reconstruct Nietzsche's intentions and to interpret the affective dimension of his writings in the light of his projects. In this regard, the case of *HH* has shown that Nietzsche's letters can provide invaluable evidence when it comes to understanding what Nietzsche is trying to achieve through his writings.

In *HH*, Nietzsche sought to communicate the experience of a crisis, which culminated in finding a new affective ideal. This intention is also reflected in the tone of the work, which is for the most part distant and cool yet simultaneously joyful. That Nietzsche has not fully recovered from or rather overcome his crisis is also apparent from passages which betray an irritation that is hard to reconcile with what Nietzsche writes of the new ideal. Nevertheless, Nietzsche's criticism of religion in *HH* is misunderstood if it is read only as a negative rejection of religious feeling. It is much more fruitful to recognize that Nietzsche admits the value of religious feelings, because reflection on such feelings has allowed him to find the way toward a new affective ideal. In other words, Nietzsche's destructive criticism is to be understood through his productive intention. In this regard, one can indeed conclude that the philosophical content of *HH* can be understood better, when one takes account of the role that mood plays in the work. As to Nietzsche's ideal mood, there are signs in *HH*, but especially in the letters, that Nietzsche understood the engagement with the new experience to be a momentous task. This idea of a task most probably contributed to Nietzsche's decision to leave his Basel professorship and to seek the solitude of the mountains, as he suggests in *EH* (KSA 6, 324 – 326). The question is, to what extent Nietzsche's understanding of the air of the heights changes over the years, and how it influences his writings. This is the question for the following chapters. For now it must suffice to note, that there is a passage in *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, which strongly suggests that when Nietzsche from now onwards contemplated the question of style, it was primarily as a question concerning the communication of mood:

> 88. *Instruction in the best style.* – Instruction in style can, on the one hand, be instruction on how to find the expression that will let us convey any mood to the reader and hearer; or else instruction on how to find the expression for a human's most desirable mood, the one that it is there-

> fore most desirable to communicate and convey: the mood of a human who is moved from the depths of his heart, spiritually joyful, bright and sincere, someone who has overcome his passions. This will be instruction in the best style: it corresponds to the good human being. (Handwerk 2012, 197; HH II, WS 88, KSA 2, 593)[47]

## 4.3 Religion and emotion in *Daybreak*

Commentators who focus on religion have not had much to say about *Daybreak*. A notable example is Julian Young who devotes only 1½ pages to *D* in his comprehensive overview study of Nietzsche's philosophy of religion (Young 2006, 86 – 87). The most likely reason for this neglect is that *D* is often considered a transitional work and nothing more when it comes to the criticism of religion. This judgement is understandable; *D* certainly is a transitional work. Still, it is not merely a transitional work. It is much more because of its foundational importance to Nietzsche's mature psychological thinking, which is comparable to that of *HH*. Not only does Nietzsche here present that possibility of interpretation that has led to the debate about his "drive psychology", his ideal mood is also crystallized. Therefore, it is near at hand to infer that a second reason for the neglect is that the relevance of Nietzsche's psychological thinking for his criticism of religion has been underestimated. In no way do I thereby intend to challenge the obvious fact that the main focus of the work is on moral prejudices as the subtitle suggests. Indeed, the published work is restrained in its focus and surprisingly so when compared to other works of Nietzsche (think of *HH*, *GS* etc.). But then again, moral prejudices are inextricably tied to moral feelings and the history of religion, which makes both affectivity and religion central concerns of the work. As I have already dealt with Nietzsche's thinking on affectivity in *D* (see chapter 3), I will here limit the discussion to those aspects which are of greatest relevance for understanding his criticism of religion. The discussion is guided by the conviction that carefully taking account of the development of Nietzsche's thinking as expressed in the published work is necessary in order to understand what he sought to achieve in his next work, in *GS*, and with the statement that God is dead which is found therein. I will therefore begin by examining the concerns that guide his treatment of religion in *D*, as well as the most important psychological statements, and then move on to the question concerning Nietzsche's possible "use of mood" in the work.

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**47** It is interesting to note that Nietzsche in this aphorism opposes mood [*Stimmung*] and [*Leidenschaft*] in the sense that one still dwells in mood after one has "overcome" all passion. While this single aphorism from *WS* should not be granted any special authority, it fits the interpretation that Nietzsche never sought to free himself from all feeling.

### 4.3.1 The problem of religious decline

The period between the publication of *HH* and *GS* is one in which there are important developments in Nietzsche's thinking on affectivity that directly impact his thinking on religion. These developments, which more specifically concern the consequences of religious decline, have been discussed extensively by Marco Brusotti. Since his magisterial study *Die Leidenschaft der Erkenntnis* (1997) is not as well known in Anglophone scholarship as it should be, it is necessary to give a very short summary of one aspect of his research which is of direct concern here. The lasting value of this study is to have convincingly shown that Nietzsche was preoccupied with religious decline in the years following the publication of *HH*. In the notes from the period, Nietzsche goes as far as to envision a substitute "religion", an atheistic new religion [*religion nouvelle*] (NL 1880 – 81, 8[94], KSA 9, 402 – 403) or a religion of boldness [*Religion der Tapferkeit*] (NL 1880 – 81, 8[1], KSA 9, 384), though at other times he explicitly states he does not wish to see the rise of an atheistic religion even if he considers such a development probable (NL 1880, 7[111], KSA 9, 341). Brusotti's interpretation of this preoccupation is nevertheless far from unproblematic. According to Brusotti, Nietzsche fears that he has underestimated the consequences of secularization.[48] As a response to secularization, which here refers specifically to the crisis of the affects and ideals that have sustained Christianity in Europe, Nietzsche struggles to find a proper affective response. In trying to explain why Nietzsche thinks that the response to secularization has to be above all affective, Brusotti relies on Nietzsche's idea that the fight against Christianity, which is indebted to a religious passion for truth, had until then produced a productive affective tension in the European spirit. As a consequence of a serious decline, this tension might disappear and the consequence would be a catastrophic form of nihilism (Brusotti 1997, 647). While this interpretation is suggestive, it is hardly plausible as it relies more on Nietzsche's later remarks about such a tension (cf. BGE Foreword, KSA 5, 12 – 13) than on the scattered remarks that Nietzsche makes about such an affective tension in the period surrounding the publication of *D*.[49] On the basis of the available evidence, all that can be said about the matter with any certainty is that Nietzsche thinks the proper response to secularization must avoid the danger of a general weakening of affect inherent in the process (cf. Brusotti 1997, 195 – 212; cf. 385 and 647).

There is another way of reading Nietzsche's preoccupation with religious decline, in the light of which Nietzsche's affirmation of affect is more understandable. On this reading, Nietzsche sees religious decline not only as a threat but as an opportunity. The threat is simultaneously a creative opportunity. One can even ask if he doesn't play up the threat on purpose, in order to justify the need for a grand re-

**48** Nietzsche never himself used the German terms for secularization [*Säkularisierung/Säkularisation*], which means that I here follow Brusotti's use of the term.

**49** These questions are most clearly addressed in Nietzsche's comparison with Pascal in the *Nachlass* of *D* (NL 1880, 7[262], KSA 9, 372; cf. Brusotti 1997, 385; Hödl 2009, 419).

valuation. This revaluation would then be the new dawn, which the title *Daybreak* [*Morgenröte*] symbolizes. Needless to say, this reading is not so much an alternative to Brusotti's as a necessary complement. Brusotti draws more on Nietzsche's more pessimistic assessments contained in the notebooks from the period surrounding *D* than the affirming spirit of the published work. That the spirit of *D* is one of affirmation does speak volumes about how Nietzsche wanted to present himself. On this point, Brusotti's treatise can in fact be used to support the reading sketched out above. On the basis of Brusotti's investigations and the rather scant evidence provided by Nietzsche's notes, it is near at hand to explain the emphasis on affect in terms of that subtle change in Nietzsche's self-understanding, which led him to re-evaluate his former striving for peace as being a result of a violent passion for knowledge (cf. Brusotti 1997, 168). Far from rejecting this affect, he affirms it and this affirmation grounds his take on affectivity in *D*. So what is clear is that in *D* at the latest, Nietzsche no longer strives towards a form of life freer from affects in the sense of passion [*Leidenschaft*] (cf. Brusotti 1997, 642), and instead considers the weakening of affects a positive danger. This does not mean, as I hope to show through textual evidence, that he has become any less suspicious about feelings and especially "high feelings". Nevertheless, Nietzsche's disparaging of striving for emotion for its own sake is a thing of the past and is replaced with a more pronounced, but nevertheless conditional appreciation of the resources present in religion. Though Nietzsche vehemently disagrees with the use to which they are put, Nietzsche values the higher feelings cultivated in religious practice as potential building blocks for a future culture. This future-oriented vision about the value of inherited feelings is far more explicit in *D* than in *HH*. With this greater appreciation comes the insight that an intellectual critique of religion is not enough to overcome the religious past, at least not if a diminishment of human life is to be avoided. Therefore, the key question of *D* is, what will replace moral and religious feelings? What will ground a flourishing life instead of moral and religious feelings?

### 4.3.2 Reinterpreting and transforming feeling

On the basis of his interpretation, Brusotti suggests that *D* can be read as having the goal of transforming feeling (Brusotti 1997, 640 – 641). While this is a claim that I think requires more textual evidence than provided by Brusotti, especially there is a need to specify how Nietzsche would have mood transformed, it is certainly a solid starting point to recognize that Nietzsche contemplates the possibility of getting rid of certain moral feelings and the possibility of transforming feeling. This focus on feeling is present already in the opening aphorism, in which Nietzsche rhetorically asks whether not the good historian constantly contradicts, in the sense that any history that deals with origins contradicts the feeling that those things we think of as rational can't have an irrational origin (D 1, KSA 3, 19). This short opening aphorism of *D*, which is reminiscent of the opening of *HH*, points out a conflict between the

historical sense of the free spirit and inherited ways of feeling. The target is the entire domain of morality. For those things "we" think of as rational, the rationality of which things Nietzsche here sets out to question, are of course rules of morality and associated moral feelings. The important explanatory aphorism on the "*morality of custom*" is exemplary in this regard. There Nietzsche suggests that the advanced moral sense [*Gefühl der Sittlichkeit*] of his own time derives from the distant past; from fear for the commands of a higher power that must be obeyed without question (D 9, KSA 3, 21–24) In effect, Nietzsche claims that even the morality of his own day is based on a feeling for custom [*Gefühl für die Sitte*], obeying inherited rules without question, which is destructive insofar as it works against revising moral rules on the basis of experience (D 19, KSA 3, 32). Where is Nietzsche going with all this? Having hinted at the possibility of revising customs and moral rules, how does he seek a way forward?

The big picture, into which Nietzsche's more specific discussions of moral feelings fit, can be gleaned from his words about living in a moral *interregnum*. The basic idea here is that of a power vacuum, in which it is not clear if there is any commanding morality. In this *interregnum*, he writes, the old moral feelings and judgements have already lost much of their binding power but new ideals are yet to arise. Therefore, he asks who could tell, what will one day replace moral feelings. There is no explicit answer and the sceptical tone of the aphorism suggests that the answer is no-one. Yet this does not mean that Nietzsche would forsake the task of striving for a specific future. Quite to the contrary, he adds that only the sciences can one day provide the groundwork for new ideals, if not the ideals themselves. Only against this background does Nietzsche's following assertion make sense: that living in the *interregnum* means that one can live either in a manner oriented toward the past or in an anticipatory, forward-looking mode. That no one can tell what will replace moral feelings, that the future is truly open from the human perspective, means that those who would live for the future are fated to be experiments. In this sense, Nietzsche bids the free spirit to embrace his fate and to desire the experimental life. (Cf. D 453, KSA 3, 274.)

The alliance between scepticism and future-orientation, as in denying that the shape of the future can be known while simultaneously showing the way towards a specific possible future, that the aphorism espouses seems uneasy at best. On a reading emphasizing the sceptical element, one could claim that Nietzsche in fact advances an individualistic morality for free spirits. Indeed, he calls for the free spirits to be their own masters in the *interregnum* (D 453, KSA 3, 274). Still, his emphasis on the sciences suggests that the experimental life that he envisions is defined by the task to devise ideals that take account of scientific knowledge. Importantly he singles out physiology, medicine and what he calls the sciences of society and loneliness [*Gesellschafts- und Einsamkeitslehre*]. This latter path of engaging with those sciences that have most to say about human life is the one that Nietzsche himself pursues in *D* and beyond, on the way to a new dawn; yet this is perhaps nothing more than his

own path. How does religion relate to this task? Is the religious past only an obstacle, or are there valuable resources in the religious inheritance?

### 4.3.3 Religion and the new dawn

When it comes to religion, *D* expands on the program of *HH*. Only against the background of *HH* can one fully appreciate what Nietzsche means when he speaks of historical refutation as the final refutation of faith in God (D 95, KSA 3, 86 – 87). The historical method, which as we have seen in the analysis of *HH* includes psychological analysis, can be used to question the origin of faith in God. According to Nietzsche, this new way is the tune of the day. Such questioning, he claims, renders a rational proof of the non-existence of God unnecessary (D 95, KSA 3, 86). Unfortunately, Nietzsche does not specify exactly why this is the case. This is one of those cases in which the philosopher challenges his reader to fill the missing part and to make up his/her own mind. Against the background of *HH*, it is plausible to see the conclusion as following from a specific understanding of the historical method. The historical method subjects its objects to time, which precludes any possibility of a metaphysics of all that which is timeless, unchanging and immortal. If belief in God requires accepting, as Nietzsche seems to think at least the Christian idea of God does, that the idea of God comes straight from God (as revelation), then showing that the idea of God has a natural origin and has developed gradually is tantamount to a refutation. This argument is supported by Nietzsche's concluding remarks that it was a prejudice of the atheists of former times to believe that a certain kind of rational refutation of theological proofs of God was enough. As the atheists failed to see that new and better arguments for the existence of God could always be devised in the future, they failed to clear the air (D 95, KSA 3, 87). So in a sense the atheists that Nietzsche has in mind were caught up in a game that they could not win; a game wedded to theological method; to methods of reasoning honed in theological schools for centuries. Where they should have attacked the methods of theological reasoning, they were content to refute the results of such reasoning, i. e. the proofs of the existence of god. Contrary to such an approach, Nietzsche trusts the historical method itself to provide the best refutation of theological and metaphysical reasoning (cf. HH I 9, KSA 2, 29 – 30).

The most important issue which Nietzsche left unclear in *HH* was what the consequences of such historical and psychological philosophizing look like. What are the emotional consequences and the consequences for values, when the foundations of a dominant religion are eroded? This remains much the same in *D*, as aphorism 453 on the *moral interregnum* shows (D 453, KSA 3, 274). That the question did preoccupy Nietzsche can be deduced from the fact that the aphorism following the one on historical refutation, the final aphorism of the first book of *D*, deals with the issue. What is remarkable is that it does so in a rather strange way. Nietzsche's speculative comparison of the then current European situation with the Indian situation that led to

the rise of Buddhism thousands of years ago does little to illuminate the future of Europe. What happens when the old morality is abandoned, "– *well, what will come then?*" (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 55). Although Nietzsche bids the reader to wait and see, he specifies that one has to wait and see that Europe first repeats the steps that India took. This means that after a significant number of people have thrown away belief in God/s and traditional mores, as Nietzsche thinks was the case in India before the rise of Buddhism and as he thinks is the case in the Europe of his day, they should give each other a sign to recognize one another and become a force to be reckoned with. (D 96, KSA 3, 87–88)

On the one hand, one can see the aphorism as a rather futile attempt by Nietzsche to comprehend the situation facing himself and his time through analogy. Read that way, it raises questions about Nietzsche's historical sense. For who could say in advance what the future will look like? (cf. D 453, KSA 3, 274). On the other hand, one can see the analogy as an excuse for presenting the demand that those who no longer believe in inherited notions such as "God" should become aware of their historical situation and conscious of themselves as a force to be reckoned with. This is nothing less than a vision of an international community of free spirits, if not an atheistic religion. Nietzsche's decision not to refrain from presenting a vision of the future development of European culture can thus be read in terms of an attempt to actively influence the shape of the future. So here again, Nietzsche is concerned with the new dawn to come and again he does not say anything specific about this coming time. There is not much to be found on the topic in the passages that directly deal with religion, but there are passages that reveal how the new vision relates to that religiously sanctioned morality which it supersedes. If one were to single out one passage, that above others helps to clarify Nietzsche's position, it would be aphorism 103.

In aphorism 103, Nietzsche clarifies in what sense he denies morality. He explicitly distances his view from a universal scepticism concerning moral motivations. So it is not always the case that a person explaining his actions in moral terms is deceiving himself and others as to the true motivations of his actions.[50] This idea conforms to the interpretation I developed in chapter three that Nietzsche thinks it is admissible to refer to conscious mental states as influencing action and doesn't view all action through a rigid drive theory. Because deception is still always a possibility, (after all one cannot access the phenomenal world of another person), Nietzsche (invoking the spirit of La Rochefoucauld) does go on to suggest that that a certain doubt regarding the stated motivations of people is only healthy. His own position, however, is

**50** Clark and Leiter here read Nietzsche as rejecting the view he advanced in *HH* that all actions are egoistic (Clark and Leiter 1997, xxiv–xxv). I think there is more reason to speak of clarification than rejection, as Nietzsche nowhere in *HH* makes a systematical case for the kind of psychological egoism that Clark and Leiter presuppose. The perspective that he strives for is rather one that makes the distinction between selfishness and selflessness redundant. For a similar critique, see Franco 2011, 26–29.

rather to question that moral actions would be based on any moral truth about the world. According to Nietzsche there is no reason to question that people have moral feelings, and act according to them. He specifically mentions that countless people feel immoral, but criticizes them for thinking of their emotional state as expressing a truth about themselves and about the world. A good example would be the jump from feeling immoral to believing that one is immoral and depraved and that this is the way the world is because of original sin. He also makes clear that critiquing morality in this way does not mean to turn everything on its head. Many actions deemed moral should be encouraged, but for other reasons than strictly moral ones. This requires learning anew in order to feel anew: "We have to learn to think differently – in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: to feel differently." (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 60; D 103, KSA 3, 91–92)[51]

The aphorism shows beyond any doubt that one goal of the critique of morality in *D* is to make it possible to feel differently about matters usually thought of as moral. Since morality shapes so much of experience, this goal amounts to nothing less than feeling differently about existence more generally. Is feeling differently then the ultimate goal of Nietzsche's criticism, the most important goal among many goals, or perhaps just one goal among equally important goals? Because Nietzsche's explicit statements on the topic are so cursory in *D*, it is on their basis next to impossible to ascertain whether Nietzsche here even considers feeling differently as a goal in its own right, or whether it is rather a sign of something else, e. g. that one has internalized the idea that there are no moral truths. On the grounds that Nietzsche already in the period surrounding the publication of *HH* understands his philosophy as the pursuit of a mountain air ideal, and because his later thought culminates in thinking what he deems the highest possible affirmation, an affective stance toward the earth informed by the thought of Eternal Recurrence, it is justified to assume provisionally that enabling the transformation of feeling was the most important goal of *D*. Before looking more closely at the evidence concerning authorial intention, and what can be gained from an interpretation of Nietzsche's use of mood, there is one final issue that has to be sorted out. Any further discussion about Nietzsche's project of transforming feeling presupposes that Nietzsche does not simply reject the value of high feelings and strive for a general cooling down of affect.

In the discussion on *HH*, it was established that Nietzsche thinks that above all those accomplishments, experiences and states of mind that are granted the highest value are associated with a higher world. In short, all higher feelings are given a supernatural origin. In *HH*, this knowledge led to a sceptical stance towards all extraordinary feelings, especially those associated with religion. The free spirit nevertheless acknowledges the value of such feelings for contemplation, and perhaps even

**51** "*umzulernen – um endlich, vielleicht sehr spät, noch mehr zu erreichen: umzufühlen*" (D 103, KSA 3, 92).

sees a role for them in the future. In *D*, Nietzsche repeats the same basic criticism,[52] concluding that: "wherever a man's feelings are *exalted*, that imaginary world is involved in some way" (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 24–25; D 33, KSA 3, 42). Furthermore, he writes:

> It is a sad fact, but for the moment the man of science has to be suspicious of all higher feelings, so greatly are they nourished by delusion and nonsense. It is not that they are thus in themselves, or must always remain thus: but of all the gradual purifications awaiting mankind, the purification of the higher feelings will certainly be one of the most gradual. (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 25; D 33, KSA 3, 42–43)

While this passage, which echoes *HH*, clarifies that the attack on metaphysical interpretations is not intended to be an attack on exalted states of mind, it simultaneously points out that such feelings are through historical associations so entwined with religion and metaphysics that they must for the time being be viewed with suspicion. The aphorism proves that Nietzsche is just as suspicious of high feelings in *D* as in *HH*, and yet it also shows that he is even more aware of their value. That the free spirit does not deny the value of high feelings is apparent from the regret that he expresses at the necessity of viewing such emotional states with suspicion. Nevertheless, this regret does not speak of nostalgia nor does it imply that the free spirit seeks to rid himself of such feelings; it is rather meant to point out that the purification of feeling is a task that has only become more pressing. In contrast to *HH*, where purification is associated with calm contemplation which turns feelings into objects of knowledge, purification in *D* is best understood as an active and creative process of transformation. This interpretation finds support in the oft-cited aphorism 210:

> 210. *The thing itself.* – Formerly we asked: what is the laughable? as though there were things external to us to which the laughable adhered as a quality, and we exhausted ourselves in suggestions (one theologian even opined that it was 'the naivety of sin'.) Now we ask: what is laughter? How does laughter originate? We have thought the matter over and finally decided that there is nothing good, nothing beautiful, nothing sublime, nothing evil in itself, but that there are states of soul in which we impose such words upon things external to and within us. We have again taken back the predicates of things, or at least remembered that it was we who lent them to them: – let us take care that this insight does not deprive us of the capacity to lend, and that we have not become at the same time richer and greedier. (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 133; D 210, KSA 3, 189)

First of all, there is an interesting parallel here to the aphorism on the historical refutation of faith in God. Today it is asked how laughter arises and one enquires into its origin. In this case, however, applying the historical method does not result in a ref-

**52** "*So verachtet der Mensch im Banne der Sittlichkeit der Sitte erstens die Ursachen, zweitens die Folgen, drittens die Wirklichkeit, und spinnt alle seine höheren Empfindungen (der Ehrfurcht, der Erhabenheit, des Stolzes, der Dankbarkeit, der Liebe) an eine eingebildete Welt an: die sogenannte höhere Welt.*" (D 33, KSA 3, 42)

utation of laughter. To the contrary, the aphorism emphasizes the value of the ability to have states [*Zustände*], from which to value things. Losing the affective capacity to value would indeed be a diminishment. So instead of removing emotion or turning emotions only into objects of knowledge, the affects have to be transformed. To what extent this is a matter of redirecting emotions is an interesting question, especially when it comes to religious feelings. The affective configuration that supports belief in God is something that has developed historically through religious practice over a long time span. Does Nietzsche call free spirits to redirect those feelings that have been directed at the idea of God? Such an endeavour sounds Feuerbachian, in the sense of taking back the predicates of God and redirecting them at humanity (cf. Feuerbach 1849).[53] While the analogy can initially help to grasp what Nietzsche is after, it is not adequate to describe what Nietzsche is doing. Already in *HH*, Nietzsche was extremely critical of efforts to transfer religious feelings to such domains as art and politics. Instead of simply redirecting religious feelings for God, Nietzsche would see such feelings transformed at the root. In *D,* such radical transformation goes by the name of purification. Hödl (2009, 311 and 426) and Brusotti (1997, 408 – 409 and 423) have drawn similar conclusions, though they correctly note that Nietzsche's vocabulary at times comes deceptively close to suggesting the adoption of a Feuerbachian perspective.

Now that it has been established that Nietzsche does not reject the value of high feelings, and instead calls for a purification of exalted states, it is possible to turn to the question, what role mood plays in the philosophical project of *Daybreak*.

## 4.4 Nietzsche's use of mood in *D*

The very same questions that were asked about *HH* are worth asking about *D*. Does Nietzsche make use of mood in his writing in *D?* And if yes, how and to what end? How does this use of mood relate to the philosophical project of *D?* Is understanding the mood or moods that are expressed in *D* essential to understanding its philosophical contents?

As was the case with *HH*, the most instructive evidence can be found in Nietzsche's letters. A key difference between *HH* and *D* is that in the case of the latter work there is far more evidence that directly bears on the question of authorial intention that precedes the publication of the book. The most interesting discussion in this regard is the one that Nietzsche was having with Köselitz in February 1881. This dis-

**53** Nietzsche became acquainted with Feuerbach's work *The Essence of Christianity* [*Das Wesen des Christentums*], or at least the most important of its arguments, during his school-years in *Schulpforta*, which can be seen in texts by the 17-year old student, as Hödl points out (Hödl 2009, 214 – 215; cf. Young 2010, 36). Insofar as one can speak of lasting influence, it has to do with Nietzsche's adoption and development of Feuerbach's idea that all conceptions of God are human creations, projections of desires of the heart (cf. Hödl 2009, 221).

cussion was above all concerned with the choice of title. In a postcard sent to Köselitz on 22 February 1881, Nietzsche explains why he has chosen to change the title of the work (KGB III/1, Bf. 83). Despite what he takes to be the less good taste of the title "*Eine Morgenröte*", its too enthusiastic, too oriental connotations, he favours it because he thinks it leads the reader to expect a more joyful mood in the book. With the title "*Eine Morgenröte*", he suggests, one sets out to read the work in a different mood than if the title would not raise the expectation of a new dawn. He even goes as far as to suggest that without the promise of a glorious dawn the book would come across as too bleak.[54] Whether Nietzsche here refers only to the title or also to the numerous aphorisms suggesting that a new dawn is near cannot be said with any certainty; let it nevertheless be said that there are good grounds to pay attention to the matter: Indeed, I will argue that raising expectations is perhaps the single most powerful trick that Nietzsche uses to enable a redirection of mood in *D*. For now it is enough to note that these considerations of mood that spoke in favour of the title outweighed all the downsides, and only for this reason do we know the work with the title *Daybreak*. Already on account of this letter alone, one is tempted to conclude that Nietzsche, by the time of *D*, was not only fully aware of the power of mood but that he also put this knowledge into practice. The discussion with Köselitz continues after the publication, and further strengthens that conclusion.

Writing to Köselitz about *D*, Nietzsche exhorts his friend to read it as a whole and to try to make a whole out of it, as an expression of a passionate state.[55] What can be made out of the fact that Nietzsche wanted his friend to read his newly published work as expressing a passionate state? Whether this fact can be generalized, and turned into the form that *D* expresses mood and Nietzsche meant it to do so, is a more difficult question. There is of course the problem, which Brusotti has drawn attention to, that Nietzsche seems to contradict himself (Brusotti 1997, 22). Indeed, only about two months after the letter quoted above Nietzsche complains to Köselitz about being an aphoristic human [*Aphorismus-Mensch*], bound to write in a fragmentary mode that only suggests that the text makes up a whole, or even worse: that the text only suggests the need for a whole (KGB III/1, Bf. 143). In addition to this letter, there is also the *digression* inserted into the book itself, which states:

> *Digression.* – A book such as this is not for reading straight through or reading aloud but for dipping into, especially when out walking or on a journey; you must be able to stick your

**54** "*Titel! Der zweite 'E<ine> Morgenr<öthe>' ist um einen Grad zu schwärmerisch, orientalisch und weniger guten Geschmacks: aber das wird durch den Vortheil aufgewogen, daß man eine freudigere Stimmung im Buche voraussetzt als beim andern Titel, man liest in anderem Zustande; es kommt dem Buche zu statten, welches, ohne das Bischen Aussicht auf den Morgen, doch gar zu düster wäre! – Anmaaßend klingt der andre Titel auch, ach, was liegt noch daran! Ein wenig Anmaaßung mehr oder weniger bei solch einem Buche!*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 83)

**55** "*lesen Sie es als Ganzes und versuchen Sie ein Ganzes für sich daraus zu machen – nämlich einen leidenschaftlichen Zustand*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 119).

> head into it and out of it again and again and discover nothing familiar around you. (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 191; D 454, KSA 3, 274)

Nietzsche seems to contradict himself. Nevertheless, Brusotti argues that Nietzsche meant the work to form a whole. According to Brusotti, each passage of *D* is meant to express the passionate state that Nietzsche wanted his friend Köselitz to grasp. In this view, it is the task of the reader to realize the entirety of the passionate state behind each and every aphorism. On account of letter 119 (to Köselitz) and despite the aphoristic form, Brusotti thus concludes (on behalf of Nietzsche!) that only through the passion of knowledge is the work made a whole.[56] While the evidence of Nietzsche's letters is compelling, Brusotti does not back up his thesis with enough textual evidence from within *D*. From Brusotti's treatment of the issue it is still unclear exactly what role mood plays in *D* and what its philosophical status is. I will delve deeper into these issues through engaging the work of Rebecca Bamford, who has written in more detail on Nietzsche's use of mood in *D* (Bamford 2014).

### 4.4.1 Rebecca Bamford's thesis about Nietzsche's use of mood

Apparently unaware of Golomb's very similar efforts regarding *HH*, Rebecca Bamford seeks to tease out an understanding of the way Nietzsche uses mood in *D* from the aphorisms that make up the work.[57] In her paper "Mood and Aphorism in Nietzsche's Campaign Against Morality" she advances the thesis that "Nietzsche uses mood (*Stimmung*) to identify, and counter, the highly problematic and deeply entrenched authority of the morality of custom" (Bamford 2014, 56). Unlike Golomb, Bamford explicitly presents her thesis as a contribution to answering the question why Nietzsche uses the aphoristic form (Bamford 2014, 55). Consequently, she not only pays attention to the content of the aphorisms but thematizes "performative" aspects of Nietzsche's writing as well. That does not mean that her work would be any less problematic; to the contrary. Nevertheless, it is definitely worth interrogating.

Bamford is right to stress the affective dimension of *D*. As our brief discussion has shown, there is ample evidence that Nietzsche considers feelings of utmost importance to those problems of morality that concern him. Bamford's recognition of the philosophical importance that Nietzsche attaches to feelings is a welcome corrective to the overtly cognitive perspective on *D* taken by Clark and Leiter in their influ-

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**56** "*Nur durch die Leidenschaft der Erkenntnis ist Morgenröthe ein Ganzes: durch die Leidenschaft des Autors und durch die des Lesers*." (Brusotti 1997, 22)

**57** This is not the only similarity between the two. Bamford's remarks on Nietzsche's use of mood in *D* are best understood against the background of her reading of the work as a therapeutic narrative (Bamford 2015). Likewise, Golomb's thesis about Nietzsche's use of mood in *HH* is part of his larger argument about the therapeutic intentions of Nietzsche's philosophy (cf. Golomb 1989).

ential introduction that has defined the Anglophone reception of the book.[58] It is however precisely there where Bamford goes beyond a mere recognition of the importance of affects in Nietzsche's thinking towards a positive thesis about Nietzsche's use of mood that the evidence that she presents has to be examined carefully. There is good reason to begin by emphasizing a specific problem that Bamford downplays. If one looks at Nietzsche's statements on mood [*Stimmung*] in *D* one can detect an ambivalence in his thinking on the use of mood; an uneasiness about the role of affectivity in thought. This ambivalence is present in aphorism 28 (D 28, KSA 3, 38), which Bamford grants a key role in her argument and which should be given careful consideration in any interpretation of Nietzsche's thinking on mood (cf. Bamford 2014, 66 – 67). For the sake of clarity, here is the entire aphorism:

> 28. *Mood as argument*. – 'What is the cause of a cheerful resolution for action?' – mankind has been much exercised by this question. The oldest and still the most common answer is: 'God is the cause; it is his way of telling us he approves of our intention.' When in former times one consulted the oracle over something one proposed to do, what one wanted from it was this feeling of cheerful resolution; and anyone who stood in doubt before several possible courses of action advised himself thus: 'I shall do that which engenders this feeling.' One thus decided, not for the most reasonable course, but for that course the image of which inspired the soul with hope and courage. The good mood was placed on the scales as an argument and outweighed rationality: it did so because it was interpreted superstitiously as the effect of a god who promises success and who in this manner gives expression to his reason as the highest rationality. Now consider the consequences of such a prejudice when clever and power-hungry men availed themselves – and continue to avail themselves – of it! 'Create a mood!' – one will then require no reasons and conquer all objections! (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 22; D 28, KSA 3, 38)

The least that must be said on the basis of the aphorism is that Nietzsche is aware of the possibility of using mood as a tool of manipulation; he is in other words aware of the power of mood. To conclude on the basis of the aphorism, that he himself would endorse this kind of use of mood is dubious, if not out of the question. It can reasonably be assumed, granted that one takes his emphasis on intellectual integrity [*Redlichkeit*][59] at face value, that he would reject the use of mood in place of argument in a philosophical context. I read Bamford as not necessarily falling into this trap when she suggests that the aphorism leaves open the possibility of a positive use of mood (Bamford 2014, 67). Indeed, there is no reason to assume that there is an unresolvable contradiction between this aphorism and any possible positive use of mood by Nietzsche. What bothers Nietzsche most about the use of mood that he criticizes

**58** The deficiencies of the perspective adopted by Clark and Leiter will be shown in the following discussion on the specific case of superstitious fear.

**59** See the similar aphorism 543. *Do not make passion an argument for the truth* [*Nicht die Leidenschaft zum Argument der Wahrheit machen*] (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 216 – 217; D 543, KSA 3, 313 – 314). See also Brusotti on the concepts *Redlichkeit* and *Leidenschaft der Redlichkeit* (Brusotti 1997).

is that it rests on and supports metaphysical, "superstitious" interpretations of mood. The key question is to what use mood is put: Perhaps mood can play another role in philosophy than that of simply overriding arguments? Perhaps mood can be used to provide an affective background sense against which an argument or series of arguments can better be understood? Perhaps using mood is the only way to work against an established mood that hinders free thinking about any number of issues? Or perhaps mood can simply be used to compliment arguments and give them life? Such questions might have crossed Nietzsche's mind, but it is best to refrain from any claims of the sort unless there is reasonably acceptable evidence to support them. How exactly Nietzsche put his thinking on mood into practice has to be proven. The next logical step is to look for passages in which Nietzsche in fact does make use of mood. Before we examine the evidence for any positive use of mood by Nietzsche, we must digress to consider the presuppositions that Bamford's thesis rests on.

### 4.4.2 The presuppositions of Bamford's thesis

Bamford assumes that Nietzsche is using mood to counter another mood; the "mood of fear" (Bamford 2014, 61). According to Bamford, he takes it that the mood of fear supports morality by preventing new feelings from developing. Why would this be the case? I will here expand on Bamford's cursory remarks, since this issue is foundational for her case. In this reading of Nietzsche, fear plays a decisive role in morality, as it is really fear that lies at the root of the prohibition to revise morals. So fear begets unconditional obedience to custom, and obedience to custom prevents even harmful customs from being corrected (cf. D 19, KSA 3, 32). This fear is deeply rooted and therefore best understood as a mood, which means that it cannot be fought against only through reason but also requires a reorientation of affect (cf. Bamford 2014, 74). Against this background, the idea of using mood against the mood of fear is understandable. Such a use of mood against mood would not contradict Nietzsche's distaste against the way the power-hungry use mood as a tool of manipulation, because it is a case in which mere rational arguments are not enough to defeat a harmful and false understanding of morality. This idea, that Nietzsche seeks to use mood against mood, is the starting point for Bamford's discussion of Nietzsche's use of mood in *D*. The sceptical reader might however ask: does such talk about a mood of fear make sense in the first place?

Bamford's talk of a "mood of fear" is not as problematic as it at first sounds, and it is certainly no reason to dismiss her argument. That most philosophers (other than Heideggerians)[60] do not consider fear a mood is irrelevant, as Nietzsche himself does

**60** Heidegger infamously treats fear as a mood [*Stimmung*] in *Sein und Zeit* (cf. Heidegger 2006, 140). Quite a few phenomenologically inclined philosophers have followed in his footsteps, e. g. Lars

not make any clear cut distinctions between affects, moods, and states. He does indeed repeatedly suggest, as Bamford rightly points out, that superstitious fear is one of the pillars sustaining customary morality (cf. D 9, KSA 3, 22; D 23, KSA 3, 34; D 104, KSA 3, 92). From Nietzsche's discussion it is clear that this fear is ever-present in cultures that rely on customary morality. Clark and Leiter also recognize that superstitious fear supports the morality of custom, but write about it as a matter of superstitious beliefs to be rid of through rational arguments (Clark and Leiter 1997, xxxiii and xxxiv). This failure to acknowledge that Nietzsche clearly does not think rational arguments to be enough is understandable given the misleading translation of *D* 103 that Clark and Leiter use to support their interpretation (cf. Clark and Leiter 1997, xxxiii). The translation imputes that "We have to learn to think differently – in order at least, perhaps very late on, to achieve even more: to feel differently", which implies that thinking differently is enough to feel differently in the future. The original German edition speaks about the necessity to learn anew [*umzulernen*], which can be understood in a much broader sense than merely thinking differently. In particular, there is reason to believe that Nietzsche thought the process of learning anew to be affective through and through and as much a matter of practice as of critical cognition. In any case, the evidence that Nietzsche believed that merely thinking differently is not enough is overwhelming, which would seem to support Bamford's starting point. In the following, I will examine a particular case, which supports Bamford's reading against Clark and Leiter but also complicates the picture that the mood of fear would be the only affective constraint that prevents a dawn of transformed feelings.

According to Nietzsche, fear is not the only feeling preventing new post-moral interpretations of feelings from developing. The aphorism *The brake* (D 32, KSA 3, 41) makes the case that pride also serves this function. In fact, Nietzsche quite a few times indicates that as the archaic sense for the sanctity of all custom has been weakened (D 9, KSA 3, 21–24), the role played by fear has also been diminished even if moral fear is still active in and around us and not entirely a thing of the past (cf. D 5, KSA 3, 20; D 10, KSA 3, 24; D 18, KSA 3, 30–32; D 551, KSA 3, 551). Most certainly, Nietzsche assumes that the free spirits he describes no longer think of themselves as bound by conventional morality. Why would people, including some who think of themselves as free spirits, then in Nietzsche's own time still act in accordance with moral conventions, even when it harms themselves and perhaps even when they no longer think that it is rational to do so? Nietzsche's answer in aphorism 32 is that these people would rather suffer because of their morality than be rid of their self-imposed suffering, because this suffering provides the sublime feeling of being in contact with a truer world, a higher or deeper reality. He sees pride at work

Svendsen whom Bamford mentions to justify her approach (Bamford 2014, 61). Of course, a sole reference to one contemporary philosopher is not much of a justification. In this case, however, I think one need not look beyond Nietzsche's own thinking for a sufficient justification.

in this choice, pride resisting a younger yet more truthful understanding of morality. The implication is clear: That there is a new understanding of morality that has at least for some people already replaced older understandings of morality (presumably based on obedience and fear) does not matter much if it remains a matter of the head and not also a matter of the heart. Nietzsche ends the aphorism by asking what power one should use to set aside this constraining pride; this brake. "More pride? A new pride?", he asks, clearly aware that an intellectual attack against such pride is not going to be enough. (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 24; D 32, KSA 3, 41)

Unsurprisingly, Clark and Leiter overlook this important aphorism in their discussion on what it takes to get rid of superstitious beliefs (Clark and Leiter 1997). More alarmingly, Bamford also ignores the aphorism. In the light of this aphorism, Bamford's starting point seems incomplete and her thesis consequently has to be adjusted. If Nietzsche indeed uses mood to counter the morality of custom, the mood in question would have to be one that not only counters (superstitious) fear, but also works against the kind of pride described in aphorism 32. Alternatively, there would have to be at least two different moods at work, a first one that allows one to move beyond fear and another that enables one to set aside a perverse pride in one's suffering for morality. This second alternative does not present any serious problems as long as the moods in question are not thought of as entirely opposed (cf. HH I 14, KSA 2, 35) because that would threaten the unity of the work, which Nietzsche himself wanted his friend Köselitz to read as expressing one passionate state of mind [*einen leidenschaftlichen Zustand*] (KGB III/1, Bf. 119). Now that the presuppositions of Bamford's thesis have been examined, it still remains to be seen what evidence can be found that Nietzsche in fact makes use of mood in *D* to further his ends.

### 4.4.3 Interruptions and expectations? Nietzsche's techniques of communicating mood in *D*

Bamford claims that in *D 146*, besides arguing against the morality of custom, "Nietzsche shows how mood can be used performatively to campaign against morality" (Bamford 2014, 68). This claim rests on Nietzsche's self-interruption at the very end of the aphorism; his exclamation "but now not a word more! A glance is enough; you have understood me" (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 92; D 146, KSA 3, 138). According to Bamford, Nietzsche interrupts himself after having criticized moralistic understandings of compassion just as he is about to present an alternative moral vision. In this view then, Nietzsche interrupts himself when he is about to "adopt problematic moral talk" and this interruption "performs" resistance to the authority of morality (Bamford 2014, 68). Bamford is certainly right that something important about Nietzsche's use of mood can be learned from aphorism 146, and self-interruption does play an important role in some other important aphorisms

of *D*, not least in aphorism 96 (D 96, KSA 3, 87–88). However, a closer look at both of these aphorisms reveals that Bamford's interpretation is problematic; in other words, I will argue that Bamford is right about aphorism 146 being a good example of Nietzsche's use of mood for the wrong reasons.

The main problem in both cases is that Nietzsche actually gives a glimpse of his alternative vision before interrupting himself, and there is no reason to read his interruptions as repudiations. In aphorism 146 he triumphantly asks whether his desire to move beyond a simplistic understanding of pity [*Mitleid*] towards a vision in which great sacrifices that serve the future good of humanity are sanctioned is not itself already the expression of a higher and freer mood [*Stimmung*] (D 146, KSA 3, 138). In aphorism 96, as we have seen, he even goes on to give specific instructions based on his vision of the future (i.e. that nonbelievers should give each other a sign) (D 96, KSA 3, 88). Strategic interruptions and sceptical cautions need not indicate anything else than that the time is not yet ripe to give definite answers, as the aphorism on living in a *moral interregnum* suggests (D 453, KSA 3, 274). In general, Nietzsche is not as adverse to "moral talk" in *D* as Bamford suggests, at least not to all kinds of speaking about morality. Vehemently objecting to a morality based on obedience and metaphysical ideas in no ways rules out talk about desirable conditions, virtues and actions.[61] Indeed, an even more daring thesis about Nietzsche's use of mood can be advanced on the basis of the aphorisms in question. What unites all these three aphorisms is that Nietzsche plays with the expectations of the reader; and by raising expectations shapes the mood of the reader. In this perspective, Nietzsche's navigation between scepticism regarding that which is to come and the affirmation of a specific vision of the future can be viewed as a strategic technique to communicate a mood of joy without giving up scepticism. Bamford does not even consider this alternative explanation for Nietzsche's self-interruption at the end of aphorism 146. Instead, she quickly moves forward and simply notes that "performative claims" that serve the same end she thinks the self-interruption serves are found in numerous aphorisms of *D*.

To further strengthen my interpretation, I will compare aphorism 96 with two equally important aphorisms that exemplify Nietzsche's "use of mood". The final aphorisms of books one, two and five, "*In hoc signo Vinces*" (D 96, KSA 3, 87–88), *Distant prospect* (D 148, KSA 3, 139–140) and *We aeronauts of the spirit* (D 575, KSA 3, 331), all exhibit the same pattern. All of these aphorisms present visions of a future to desire, a future to strive for. Aphorism 96 holds out the possibility of European free spirits becoming conscious of their collective power. Aphorism 148 ends by suggesting that the revaluation of egoistic action will lend a perspective that purifies the world of evil by abolishing the moral idea of evil. Aphorism 575, which closes the entire book, finally presents the free spirit with a vision of more mighty spirits who

**61** After all, Nietzsche doesn't shy away from assembling a list of his very own personal cardinal virtues (see D 556, KSA 3, 325).

will strive in the same direction and reach ever further. By presenting such visions, Nietzsche is countering the idea that moving beyond conventional morality would inevitably lead an individual or a community to a bleak wasteland. Of course, no one can say with certainty that it does not. After all, Nietzsche presents the move beyond conventional morality as an experiment! What matters is that the experiment cannot even begin as long as one is convinced that the end result is catastrophic. Where do the birds that cherish the free air and open seas fly? What is their destination? Perhaps that matters little as long as they're driven by their desire, worth more than any other desire,[62] this joy of striving ever higher in clear air. Any ultimate "what for?" is replaced with a provisional answer: for the views, for the joy. By providing glimpses of a glorious dawn, through this mood of joy, Nietzsche arguably seeks to inculcate the same desire in the reader.

### 4.4.4 Aphorisms for manipulation?

When Bamford continues her discussion on Nietzsche's use of mood, she comes close to the viewpoint that communicating joy is an important ingredient in this endeavour. Instead of speaking about Nietzsche's play with expectations she introduces the idea that the tone of Nietzsche's discussions about ideal moods and affective states is itself a powerful transformation tool (Bamford 2014, 70). Bamford's elaborations are worth interrogating closely. If, in general, one can agree with Nietzsche's assessment in *EH* that *D* is a book of affirmation (EC, KSA 6, 329 – 330), it is all the more true that the tone of those aphorisms in which Nietzsche touches upon future feelings is especially elated. Unfortunately, Bamford goes unnecessarily far in her interpretation when she theorizes *D* as an "environmental structure" that has been "constructed to manipulate and transform our mental processes" (Bamford 2014, 70). What at first sight might seem only a strong statement of the thesis advanced here, turns out to be nothing less than an explanation for Nietzsche's choice of the aphoristic form. In this view, "the aphorism, in writing, becomes a feature of the environment and as such, is able to facilitate the campaign to counter the prevailing mood of superstitious fear" (Bamford 2014, 70).

The thesis is either banal in the sense that any piece of writing, whether in aphoristic form or not, becomes a part of the environment and can in principle serve the function that Bamford attributes to *D*, or then the thesis is extremely ambitious if it is understood as a claim that Nietzsche chose the aphoristic form of *D* because it is particularly suited to serve as external support for his campaign against morality. The first interpretation of the thesis is of no interest and the second one is highly problematic. Bamford fails to provide any solid reason why the aphoristic form should be particularly suited to this task; nor does she provide any evidence

**62** "*dieses mächtige Gelüste, das uns mehr gilt als irgendeine Lust*" (D 575, KSA 3, 331).

concerning Nietzsche's intentions that would support her thesis. In advancing her reading, Bamford merely refers to contemporary thinking in philosophical psychology, specifically the externalist theory of cognition of Mark Rowlands, according to which some mental processes depend on external support (cf. Bamford 2014, 70). As an externalized testament of the campaign against morality, to which one can return again and again, the physical book can be used as therapy whenever one would stray from the goals one has set against morality (Bamford 2014, 70). Additionally, the idea would seem to be that the aphoristic form is able to serve the attack on morality better than any other because it is more open-ended and engages the reader to take in what he can and fill in what he deems missing; thus countering the a kind of moral instruction that has to be obeyed. Instead of giving definite answers, the aphoristic form would convey a mood that allows one to break free from the shackles of the morality of custom.

While this approach can help illuminate the effect that *D* has for some readers of the book, perhaps even the effect that Nietzsche thought it should have,[63] I think the introduction of a theoretical perspective from contemporary philosophical psychology only obscures the difficult and ultimately unanswerable question about what led Nietzsche to adopt the aphoristic form and in no way illuminates Nietzsche's use of mood in *D*. In this regard, it is nevertheless interesting to compare Nietzsche's 1877 plan for a travel book [*Reisebuch*] with his description of *Daybreak* in the *Digression* [*Zwischenrede*] (D 454, KSA 3, 274). In his 1877 plan, he envisions a book purposely composed for readers who lack the time and attention required to wade through a systematic treatise from beginning to end. Such a book would not be read through but opened and closed repeatedly and at each opening the reader would take in a thought or two for reflection. Nietzsche even suggests that such a book would encourage free reflection, in contrast to the forced reflection involved in following a longwinded systematic argument. Despite the unsystematic character of the book, the free reflection that it promotes would result in a general realignment of views [*Umstimmung der Ansichten*]. (Cf. NL 1876 – 77, 23[196], KSA 8, 473 – 474.) It is not at all implausible that *D* serves a similar function, though there is no unambiguous evidence to suggest that Nietzsche thought so. In any case, Nietzsche's words about enabling free reflection can hardly be reconciled with Bamford's talk of "manipulation". With this in mind, we can return one final time to the discussion on ideal moods in *D* and the expectations that Nietzsche raises.

**63** In *EH* he presents the book as producing a "*scheuen Vorsicht vor Allem, was bisher unter dem Namen der Moral zu Ehren und selbst zu Anbetung gekommen ist*" and emphasizes that this negative effect is in no way contradicted by the affirmative tone of the work (KSA 6, 329).

### 4.4.5 Ideal moods in *D*

In aphorism 551, *Of future virtues*, Nietzsche asks: where are the astronomers of ideals, where are the poets of that which could be? Where are those who would give a foretaste of that which is to come, not to speak of those possibilities that will never be reality on earth? (D 551, KSA 3, 321–322) If the poets do not speak of such ideals, Nietzsche surely does. Thus far, we have seen that Nietzsche's ideal mood is intimately associated with a scepticism that is indissociable from joy (in incessant striving and expectation). For Nietzsche personally, this meant above all creative striving. Aphorisms 473 of book five is especially instructive in this regard:

> 473. *Where one should build one's house.* – If you feel yourself great and fruitful in solitude, a life in society will diminish you and make you empty: and vice versa. Powerful gentleness, like that of a father: – where you are seized by this mood, there found your house, whether it be in the midst of the crowd or in a silent retreat. *Ubi pater sum, ibi patria.* (Hollingdale transl./Clark and Leiter 1997, 196; D 473, KSA 3, 283)

That Nietzsche bids the reader to build his house where this mild mood of power sets in is perhaps best understood against the background of his own experience of being on the move. This point was already made by Stefan Zweig (Zweig 1925, 291), who emphasized the South as that which allowed Nietzsche to de-Germanize himself. Indeed, the aphorism lends itself to be read as a cosmopolitan rejection of provincialism/nationalism based on birth and the affirmation of a different kind of fatherland, but there is even more to it than that. What is most striking here is that Nietzsche in effect asks one to find one's home in a mood, not only through a mood. "*Ubi pater sum, ibi patria*", can freely be translated as "where you are creative, there is your homeland", due to the emphasis placed on where one feels fruitful and on the metaphor of paternity. That feeling Nietzsche had found to be strongest in himself in the Engadine,[64] but it was by no means bound to any specific location. Indeed, much could be said in favour of the case that Nietzsche thought he was carried on by the air, with which he felt to be related, wherever he went. Be that as it may, what matters most to us here is that Nietzsche unambiguously advices the reader to follow his own way, but that this advice is based on thinking of a specific mood as greater than others. Promoting this kind of individualism does not contradict promoting a specific mood. In this regard, this aphorism can be used to argue against what I take to be a major misunderstanding about Nietzsche's philosophical project that re-

**64** Young writes beautifully about how Nietzsche upon his arrival in the Engadine in 1879 "immediately felt in tune with the valley which, from now until his final collapse, would be the nearest he would ever come to a homeland" (Young 2010, 277). It is of course the case that Nietzsche did not return to the Engadine for two years after his first visit, but this does not diminish the truth of Young's statement, as Nietzsche was himself very clear about the matter. Not only did he record his initial experience of this feeling in strong words (HH II, WS 338, KSA 2, 699), he also incorporated the landscape of the Engadine into his philosophy through metaphors drawn from this unique valley.

surfaces again and again in scholarship. It is not the case that Nietzsche would abandon all claims to instruct and instead promote a full-blown individualism, nor is it the case that Nietzsche would have the reader accept his own revaluation of specific moral customs as binding. These are not real options; the choice need not be thought of as one between an individualistic and a communitarian Nietzsche. Although Nietzsche wants his readers to go their own way, he would arguably have them do this in order to dwell in that mood which most heightens their feeling of power, which he understands to be at least related to the mood which he himself feels to be the highest. With this in mind, we can begin to approach Nietzsche's *Gay Science*.

### 4.4.6 Conclusion

Nietzsche can be said to "use" mood in *D* to activate a desire to live the experimental life of the free spirit beyond conventional morality. He considers this affective reorientation necessary, because a rational attack on the religious and metaphysical forces sustaining customary morality is not enough to open the way towards a new dawn. Both negative feelings such as fear and positive, sublime feelings of being in touch with a higher world stand in the way. In order to overcome these affective obstacles, Nietzsche invites the reader to join his project not only through rational persuasion but also by playing with expectations, by providing glimpses of a sublime dawn. This technique is supported by the joyful tone of the work. By invoking future possibilities, he still does more than just communicate a joyful feeling, he also communicates his feeling of distance from his own time. This is the vertical dimension of the mood. Far from representing a diminishment, he thus means to suggest that the purification of feeling leads to a heightening of feeling and to a feeling of greater power. Nietzsche simply would have the reader trade the feeling of being in contact with a higher world for the vision of a *Daybreak* and the "high" mood that this vision opens up.

When Nietzsche writes about higher states of being it is not simply the curiosity of the psychologist that we witness, since his words are meant to allow the reader to enter into a mood in which he understands the joy of the philosophical life and is encouraged to strive for a desirable future. The future, however, is open. Nietzsche does not seem to write from a special position of authority, from the perspective of one who has attained a higher state of being, but rather from the point of view of one who himself is striving higher, and who has perhaps caught a glimpse of a novel culture and had a foretaste of future moods. Further support for this conclusion is found in a letter to Köselitz from the end of August 1881, in which Nietzsche explicitly identifies *D,* his latest work, as containing numerous examples of indirect persuasion [*exhortatio indirecta*] towards the most worthy goals that can be

thought.[65] While Nietzsche's words about "finding" this strategy at work in *D* might suggest something less than intentional use of the strategy, one can at least surmise that he speaks as much about his own work as that of his friend's when he advises Köselitz to use all means available to the artist in order to spur his audience (i.e. those who he seeks to reach through his art) to reach for the highest goals. After all, Nietzsche writes of "our task" [*unsre Aufgabe*], not only of the task of his friend.

To conclude, Nietzsche is at this stage not only aware of the possibility to make creative use of mood, but he also can be said to "use mood" in his writings. Nevertheless, the readings of *HH* and *D* have shown that it is in general more proper to speak of Nietzsche's communication of mood than of his "use of mood". Firstly, there is an intimate relation between Nietzsche's attempts to express mood and his statements about mood. They support each other instead of conflicting. In other words, both are part of Nietzsche's communication of mood. Secondly, the word "use" is prone to be interpreted in terms of manipulation, and is therefore unsuited to describe what is going on in Nietzsche's writings. This is not to say that Nietzsche makes no such use of mood, but that in the end the idea of manipulating mood conflicts with his far stronger emphasis on independence. This potential conflict is nevertheless good to keep in mind when approaching GS, for in that work Nietzsche does not shy away from using artistic means to communicate mood.

**65** "*Bekennen Sie sich ungescheut zu den höchsten Absichten! Menschen wie Sie müssen ihre Worte voranwerfen und sie durch ihre Thaten einzuholen wissen (selbst ich habe mir bisher erlaubt nach dieser Praxis zu leben) Benutzen Sie alle Freiheiten, die man dem Künstler allein noch zugesteht und bedenken Sie wohl: unsre Aufgabe ist unter allen Umständen anzutreiben, 'dorthin' zu treiben – gleichgültig beinahe, ob wir selber dorthin gelangen! (Die exhortatio indirecta finde ich zum Erstaunen oft in meinem letzten Buche z.B. in dem Abschnitte § 542 'Der Philosoph und das Alter' – die direkte Ermahnung und Anreizung hat dagegen etwas so Altkluges.)*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 143)

# 5 On the communication of mood in Nietzsche's *Gay Science*

As I have shown, psychological observations on religion and mood were already present and quite important in *HH* and in *D*, and the available evidence also suggests that Nietzsche did attempt to "use mood", i.e. he put some effort into showing and leading the reader to a philosophically productive mood: a calm, detached but also joyful mood of doubt in the case of *HH* and a more expressively joyful mood of doubt and expectation in the case of *D*. The insights that Nietzsche gained from these experiments arguably developed into something far more radical in *GS*.

This chapter presents a novel reading of Nietzsche's *Gay Science* based on the thesis that insofar as one can speak of *GS* as a unified whole, the work is held together by its playful, joyful mood. In other words, the reading seeks to show that mood is central to the project of *GS*. Moreover, and this follows from recognizing the centrality of mood to the entire conception of a joyful science, I argue that scholarly interpretations of *GS* that are concerned with elucidating the text must take account of Nietzsche's attempt to communicate mood, and that philosophical interpretations that seek to build on the aphorisms of the work ignore this at their own peril. Placing mood at the centre of the investigation opens new and fruitful perspectives on key issues that have troubled interpreters since the first publication of the book in 1882, not least those aphorisms that concern religion ("God is dead").

If paying attention to mood is so crucial to the understanding of *GS* as I have suggested, one might question how novel this reading can be, as surely scholars and philosophers cannot altogether have overlooked anything so central? Indeed, I am more than willing to concede that I am not the first to point to the importance of mood, but there is a significant difference between pointing towards that importance and actually placing mood at the centre of investigation; not to say rereading the work and its key aphorisms in a light that recognizes mood. In her monograph-study on the aesthetics of mood [*Stimmung*], Friederike Reents suggests that Nietzsche's *GS* should be read as an attempt to reorient affect [*Umstimmungsversuch*] (Reents 2015, 236–238 and 240; cf. Reents 2014). In a similar vein, Bernard Williams has emphasized that *GS* is meant to "convey a certain spirit" that could "defy the 'spirit of gravity'" (Williams 2006, 314). Both, to mention but two interesting examples, assert that one misses the point of *GS* if one looks only for "philosophical content", for philosophical arguments in the work. However, neither Williams nor Reents do much more than to point at the laughter [*Heiterkeit*], that they see in the work. Although they certainly point in the right direction, mere suggestions based primarily on subjective experiences of reading (Williams 2006) and/or on simplifying interpretations of Nietzsche's project of affective reorientation (Reents 2015)[1] do not

**1** Reents problematically fails to situate her discussion on mood [*Stimmung*] in Nietzsche's works

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suffice. To establish that communicating a mood indeed is an essential element of the philosophical aims of *GS* requires more robust evidence.

A thorough reading of Nietzsche's "use of mood" in *GS* is still lacking. What is required is a contextual interpretation, a close reading that pays careful attention to evidence and problems related to what evidence is admissible. That which to some scholars seems to be all too obvious, the joy of the joyful science, might turn out to be more demanding, problematic and multidimensional than assumed. Next, I explain why *GS* is of utmost importance to understanding Nietzsche's philosophy and his philosophy of religion in particular. Then I lay the groundwork of my interpretation in dialogue with scholarship on *GS* in the following sections. After that I proceed with the reading itself.

## 5.1 The need for a contextual reading of *GS*

Nietzsche's *GS* is essential reading, if one wishes to come to terms with the philosopher's reflections on religion. Indeed, the book contains one of the most famous passages in his entire oeuvre,[2] the proclamation of the death of God through the mouth of a Madman. One should however not be fooled by the fact that this single passage seems to provoke endless commentary. Despite the success of the Madman, *GS* has suffered (philosophical) neglect in Anglophone academia according to its champions.[3] I concur; the proliferation of questionable interpretations of *GS* 125 seems to have gone hand in hand with a certain neglect of the book as a whole, especially when compared to Nietzsche's other major works. Still, the real problem is this: what is lacking is quality not quantity. This problem is sadly not limited to publications on Nietzsche written in English, but seems to be universal.[4]

*GS* most certainly deserves careful attention in its own right. Nietzsche's thinking on religion in *GS*, not least the Madman-passage, can only be understood contextu-

within Nietzsche's broader psychological thinking. Given that her work is a history of the literary aesthetics of mood [*Stimmung*],it is especially problematic that she overestimates the importance of the early unpublished essay "On Moods" from 1864 (cf. Reents 2015, 239 – 240) for Nietzsche's understanding of mood and fails to mention that the concept disappears from Nietzsche's published writings after *GS*. Otherwise, her discussion on Nietzsche's affective reorientation [*Umstimmung*] draws far too much on a one-sided reading of *GS* that only emphasizes the communication of laughter as a corrective to too much seriosity.

**2** GS 125 is: "perhaps the most famous passage in all of Nietzsche" (Pippin 2010, 47; cf. Franco 2011, 133).

**3** See Schacht 1988, Abbey 2000 and Franco 2011. These eloquent apologies seek to defend and elaborate the philosophical merits of *GS*, but with the exception of Franco do not provide substantial interpretations of the most difficult questions.

**4** Thus, it is the rule rather than the exception for serious scholars, irrespective of background, to lament out-of-context interpretations of key passages such as *GS* 125 (cf. Pippin 2010, 47 and 50; Hödl 2009, 363; Gentili 2010, 236).

ally. The philosophical monographs of Higgins (2003), Langer (2010) and Stegmaier (2012), to which I shall return in sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3, point in the right direction insofar as they (claim to) recognize the importance of context and therefore treat *GS* as a unified whole. I will argue that a properly contextual approach requires more than paying attention to the context of each interpreted passage within the whole of the book, and that one cannot be content with an understanding of the historical and personal context in which the book was created. Instead, one has to see how Nietzsche's thinking on mood permeates the whole (for what a contextual approach should look like, see section 5.3 and the ensuing reading). Such an approach is especially fruitful when it comes to understanding those passages concerned with religious questions.

What I aim to achieve is to clarify the place of *GS* 125, the parable of the Madman, in relation to the whole of *GS* and the whole of Nietzsche's criticism of religion. What makes this aphorism so important for the understanding of Nietzsche's entire critical project is that it suggests, as numerous scholars have noted, that Nietzsche is not just one in a line of 19$^{th}$-century thinkers who simply reduce religion to man and think that all else will stay the same (e. g. Pippin 2010, 50). Precisely how this rejection of a specific form of unbelief is to be understood is the crucial question. Does Nietzsche through the Madman, and in his later madness, recognize in himself an otherwise repressed desire for the Christian God (e. g. Düsing 2010)? Or does Nietzsche call for a new form of pantheistic religiosity (e. g. Young 2006)? Or does he rather call for a more radical atheism? Perhaps an atheism that is rooted in the instincts, i. e. an incorporated atheism, which bears a life-affirming mood? The answers to these questions depend to a great degree on how one interprets *GS* 125. Before I proceed with the reading, certain questions concerning the editions and unity of *GS* need to be sorted out. In the meantime, it will become clear how the reading that I propose differs from previous scholarship.

### 5.1.1 The two editions of *GS*

The fact that there are two differing editions of *GS*, both of which were published while Nietzsche was still alive, has created some unnecessary confusion in scholarship. This confusion stems from the rather unfortunate tendency of not specifying which edition is under discussion (e. g. Reents 2015). More alarmingly, even scholars who do specify which edition is being used seldom provide reasons for their choice (e. g. Langer 2010). In this regard, Stegmaier (2012) is the most notable exception in that he carefully argues for his choice.

This is no trivial matter, because there are differences between the editions which influence the interpreter's vision of *GS* as a whole. The first edition, published in 1882, begins with a motto, a quote extracted from Emerson, and a prelude of rhymes (63 poems), which is followed by four books of aphorisms. The back cover of the first edition states that *GS* is the last in a line of works beginning with *HH*,

which aim to create "a new image and ideal of the free spirit" (Franco 2011, ix; cf. KGB III/1, Bf. 251). The second edition, published in 1887, has a new subtitle ("*la gaya scienza*"), an added foreword, begins with an additional motto written by no other than the author himself, a fifth book, and ends with a collection of poems, the *Songs of Prince Vogelfrei*. In effect, the 1887 edition is a work of the late Nietzsche; published in the same year as *On the Genealogy of Morals* and only one year before the last authorized publications. As Wolfram Groddeck put it: there are after 1887 two different works with the same title.[5]

The second edition has hitherto received far more attention than the first. The simplest explanation is that this is the version that the reader is presented with in the KSA. It might also reflect the fact that philosophers have been more interested in Nietzsche's later philosophy than in that of the middle period (e. g. Stegmaier 2012). Of the most important scholars who have written on *GS* only Higgins consistently keeps to the first edition in her analysis, while Franco deserves praise for clearly separating the two in his study (Higgins 2000; Franco 2011, 106). There are very good reasons to follow their example and focus on the first edition on its own. To my mind, there is one reason above others that should give the sceptic pause, and this is it: the 1882 edition best captures Nietzsche's original vision!

I will discuss the nature of Nietzsche's vision in more detail in section 5.1.2. In the case of Nietzsche-scholarship, authorial intention is generally considered to be of utmost importance, wherefore I find it unnecessary to provide a lengthy defence of the foundation of my approach to *GS*.[6] It suffices to note that whenever a scholar writes that "Nietzsche writes/claims/argues" he or she at least implicitly accepts some understanding of authorial intention. Critical questions rather concern how to discern authorial intention and specifically what evidence should be relied on as the discussions on the work of Jacob Golomb and Rebecca Bamford have shown. In this case, emphasizing the original vision of *GS* is a necessity, simple because of the possibility that this vision is transformed by the time of the publication of the second edition. Despite privileging the first edition in my reading, I am more than willing to concede that the second edition can be considered a unified work in itself, i. e. that one might argue that Nietzsche aspires toward unity in both editions. At the end of the chapter, I will consider if and to what extent the second edition changes the interpretation that is here advanced with regard to the first edition.

Now that we have decided on using the first edition, on the ground that it captures Nietzsche's original vision, a short summary of the content of the aphoristic books contained in this edition is required before we can proceed. The first book engages questions concerning teleology and morality, in the context of historical and scientific knowledge and Darwinian ideas in particular. The second book focuses

**5** "*Es gibt nach 1887 zwei 'Fröhliche Wissenschaften'*." (Groddeck 1997, 185)

**6** For a defence of authorial intention in the context of Anglophone scholarship see Higgins 2003, 9 – 11.

on art, artists and women, the third on religion and science. The fourth is more personal in character, discussing primarily the contemplative life and science, and ends with the appearance of Zarathustra. Stated this way, *GS* truly seems to discuss themes that seem to have little or nothing to do with each other. Strictly speaking, there is also no unity of form, as the "aphorisms" that make of the bulk of the work differ greatly in length; from sentences to pages. So without even mentioning the poems that are also an integral part of the work, *GS* appears as a mixture of disconnected themes and forms. This appearance begs the question: Is *GS* a unified work and if so, in what sense?

### 5.1.2 Coherence and unity in *GS* in the light of previous scholarship

Is *GS* a coherent, unified work? This question is of great importance because the answer determines how one should approach the work. To put it simply, there are two alternatives. If the work can't be considered a unified whole, one can freely pick and choose aphorisms for interpretation as one wishes. If, on the other hand, *GS* is a unified whole, one must pay close attention to the composition of the book and how selected passages relate to the whole. From the latter perspective, the first approach must be condemned for engendering out-of-context interpretations, while from the former the second approach insists on a unity that is not to be found.

At one extreme are approaches to Nietzsche that see his texts as exemplary precisely because of their ability to resist attempts at systematic interpretation (e. g. Derrida 1979 and Kofman 1993, 115 – 116). In this view, *GS* shows "little overall sense of organization, thematic development, or extended philosophical argument" (Allison 2001, xi). It should come as no surprise that few Nietzsche-scholars who focus on *GS* support Allison's statement or other expressions of the sentiment it embodies. Indeed, the approach is often derisively branded "postmodern" or "deconstructionist" and dismissed without further reflection. As we will see, scholars convinced of the coherence of *GS* should be careful to avoid the opposite danger, i. e. overstating their case.

Scholars who have emphasized the coherence of *GS* have done so with strong words, so much so that it raises doubts. Some scholars swear on the "fundamental coherence" (Schacht 1988, 70; Langer 2010, xvii) of *GS*, and more recently the book has been called "a profoundly imagined artistic and philosophical whole" (Franco 2011, 106). Efforts to prove this supposed coherence do not strike me as entirely convincing. The most obvious reason is that each interpreter, irrespective of edition used, tends to see the coherence and unity of *GS* in a different way. Monika Langer's monograph is a good place to start the discussion, since Langer places such weight on the coherence of *GS* as to include the assumption in the title of her study *Nietzsche's Gay Science: Dancing Coherence* (Langer 2010). Langer contends that the coherence in question has been perceived as a coherence of themes, and she seeks to refine this heritage (Langer 2010, xiv). While it is certainly true that interpreters

of the work tend to concentrate on a few themes, it is not quite clear to me to what extent this reveals a deeper methodological commitment to thematic unity as Langer suggests. Even if one ignores the possibility that there could be other ways of reading the scholarly literature, one cannot deny that there are exceptions, i. e. scholars who do not think that the unity of the work is to be found on the level of themes. Still Langer is correct in a certain sense: the unity of *GS* most often appears in scholarship to be guaranteed by the coherence of its themes.[7] Therefore, I find Langer's claim useful and worth interrogating. What themes have scholars identified as being of central importance in the composition of *GS?*

Surveying the themes identified by scholars as central, one is immediately struck by the fact that there are subtle yet clearly noticeable differences. These differences cannot be overlooked. For Richard Schacht the unity of *GS* derives from its reflection on two connected themes; "what we are" and "what we might become" as individuals (Schacht 1988, 71). Julian Young's claim about the "systematic central argument" of *GS* is superficially similar to Schacht's, but he emphasizes what he takes to be the collective nature of Nietzsche's endeavour. According to Young, *GS* concerns the cultural health of a people; what cultural health is for a people, where "we" are now as a people and how to lead the people in the right future direction (Young 2010, 327). These views can be contrasted with Franco's, who identifies the notion of incorporation as being at the heart of the book's argument, an argument that advances as a chain of thoughts and which deals with the possibility of a science that enhances life (Franco 2011, xi and 102).

Langer's own approach differs only superficially from that of her predecessors and the approaches of Young and Franco outlined above, in that she does not extract a few chosen themes from the aphorisms for further elaboration, but instead works through the entire 1887 edition from beginning to end and tries to pay close attention to the interconnections between the aphorisms. This approach is especially problematic, since the 1887 edition begins with the foreword written years after the following four books. The interpretation of the foreword, which "introduces the *Gay Science's* main themes" (Langer 2010, 1) unduly influences the interpretation of the whole. As a result of this procedure Langer herself identifies three interconnected themes that account for the coherence of the book. These are de-deification, naturalization and beautification. (Langer 2010, xv)

Langer's frank admission that her themes do not appear explicitly throughout the text brings us to the core of the problem, which applies to all attempts to think of the unity of *GS* as being based on thematic coherence (cf. Langer 2010, xiv–xv). One simply cannot identify a theme or even a number of interconnected themes that would run through the entire text; there are simply far too many aphor-

7 E. g. in his article introducing *GS* in the *Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche* Christopher Janaway asserts that the book will "never cohere into a single statable philosophical position and cannot be 'summed up'", and then simply proceeds to discuss the "book's themes" (Janaway 2013, 252–253).

isms that do not fit in. Nonetheless, one can unreservedly agree with Langer that Nietzsche often eschews direct communication and that many aphorisms implicitly rely on and relate to others. This is however not always the case nor is it a convincing argument for the specific themes identified by Langer or other scholars for that matter. It would certainly be misleading to say that various themes laboriously identified by scholars play no part in the composition of *GS*. Indeed, it is hard not to identify one theme or some themes as central at the expense of others.[8] A charitable reading of the scholarly literature might conclude that even as scholars approach *GS* through different eyes and therefore emphasize different themes, they all contribute to the understanding of the underlying unity of the work. There is nevertheless good reason to question the emphasis on the thematic coherence of the work; not because it instead would contain a "discussion of everything under the sun" (Young 2006, 88 and 2010, 326), but rather because thematic coherence is not the only way to create unity within a book. This is especially important to keep in mind, when the book in question is as much a work of art as a work of science and philosophy.

In fact, not a few of the scholars mentioned above seem to suggest that *GS* is characterized by an underlying structure. They notice a movement from here to there, from reality to possibility. This might be considered the hard core behind the talk of an "argument of *GS*" by Young and Franco (Young 2010, 327 and Franco 2011, xi). While a certain motion of back and forth between realities and possibilities is certainly present in the book, there is no clear linear development connecting the beginning of the book to the end, i. e. no straightforward narrative structure. Reality and possibility, as in desirable and undesirable possibilities and realities, alternate and need not be seen as moving in any definite direction. Therefore, looking at the structure of *GS* also does not provide a satisfying solution to the problem of unity.

The related idea that the unity of *GS* is based on interconnected chains of thought is equally problematic, even though it has been thought to find some support in Nietzsche's own notes and letters.[9] The same criticism applies to the idea as to those views emphasizing thematic coherence. The chains of thought do not

**8** E. g. when Stegmaier asserts that the book has no basic theme he directly adds that the artistic and joyful reinterpretation of science and philosophy might itself be considered the basic theme: *GS* "*hat kein Grundthema … es sei denn die künstlerisch-fröhliche Selbstaufklärung der Wissenschaft und Philosophie*" (Stegmaier 2012, 52).

**9** E. g. "*Eine Sentenz ist ein Glied aus einer Gedankenkette; sie verlangt, dass der Leser diese Kette aus eigenen Mitteln wiederherstelle: diess heisst sehr viel verlangen. Eine Sentenz ist eine Anmaassung. – Oder sie ist eine Vorsicht: wie Heraclit wusste.*" (NL 1876 – 77, 20[3], KSA 8, 361) On the basis of this early note it is certainly possible to suggest that Nietzsche leaves it to the reader to make out the unity in the chains of thought that characterize his aphoristic works. However, one has to stretch the meaning of the note beyond recognition in order to come to the conclusion that the aphoristic works themselves would form wholes that the reader should recreate in a similar manner. Cf. the discussion on *Sentenz* and *Aphorismus* by Joel Westerdale (Westerdale 2013, 23 – 24), as well as his strong criticism of attempts to read coherence (in the sense of interconnected chains of thought) into the works of Nietzsche's middle period (Westerdale 2013, 85 – 96).

form a sensible whole on their own, nor are the interconnections between the chains particularly strong. On top of that, there are always aphorisms that are hard to fit into any chain of thought. I have mentioned these two possibilities of thinking about the unity of *GS*, i. e. underlying structure and organization as chains of thought, because they prepare us to look at the book as an artistic whole rather than as a straightforward philosophical argument.

A bit closer to the approach pursued here is Higgins who, contrary to what Langer claims (Langer 2010, xiv), does not take a thematic approach to the unity of *GS*. Despite initially suggesting that the unity of *GS* is to be found in thematic coherence (Higgins 2003, viii), Higgins is primarily interested in the "vision which unifies the original work" (Higgins 2003, 5). Higgins has taken to heart that one has to pay as much if not more attention to the *how* as to the *what*, i. e. Nietzsche's mode of presentation in relation to the thoughts presented.[10] According to her, *GS* cannot be considered systematic in any traditional sense but it is nevertheless "very carefully orchestrated" (Higgins 2003, 8). Taking her cue from Eugen Fink, Higgins notes that this orchestration functions in the manner of "leitmotifs" (Higgins 2003, 11–13). In the resulting view, *GS* is seen as purposively theatrical for dramatic effect: tragic and comic perspectives take turns to force the reader into experientially encountering the thoughts presented (cf. Higgins 2000, 5–13).

How does this flow from tragic to comic and back again create the unity which Higgins (e. g. Higgins 2003, 50) implies it does? The perspectives are supposedly complementary but reading Higgins' work one cannot escape the impression that one has to choose between the tragic and the comic. This is exactly what Higgins herself does, choosing to focus on the comical aspects of the book, since scholars have according to her already emphasized the tragic aspects too much (Higgins 2003, 6–7). It is certainly a correct observation that tragic readings of *GS* abound, but the underlying implication that there are clearly distinct comic and tragic aspects in the work is questionable. One might ask if it is not rather the case that the reader interprets the text as comic or tragic, and that readers might disagree on which aphorisms are comic and which tragic. In any case, the apparent need to choose between emphasizing comedy or tragedy leaves the prospect of unity in tatters, giving place to an alternation of tragic and comic perspectives without any greater purpose.

Against this view, I argue the thesis that Nietzsche in *GS* upholds the possibility of uniting his aphoristic experiments in a higher mood; one which is beyond comedy and tragedy.[11] Tragic and comic perspectives could then be viewed as expressions of the same underlying joyful mood. They could both be seen as nothing but surface

**10** In Anglophone scholarship, the importance of this hermeneutic principle was first and most forcefully argued by Alexander Nehamas (cf. Nehamas 1985, 39). While it might be argued that more recent "analytic" work on Nietzsche does not fully appreciate the significance of this principle, most scholars at least pay lip service to it (e. g. Clark and Dudrick 2012).

**11** Cf. "*Es giebt Höhen der Seele, von wo aus gesehen selbst die Tragödie aufhört, tragisch zu wirken*" (BGE 30, KSA 5, 48).

phenomena that the creative artist disposes of as he pleases, as he plays. Perhaps only understood with reference to the possibility of this peculiar mood do the aphorisms and chains of thought emerging from them make sense, take their proper place and form a sensible whole. For it might be argued that Nietzsche thinks that this ideal mood unites art and science into serving the task of philosophy, and the task to become who one is. Furthermore, it might be argued that Nietzsche's conception of this mood draws on and seeks to combine experiences that are characteristic of both science, art, and even the history of religion, which would explain why these three "themes" are all discussed in *GS*. Only from within this mood can (what Nietzsche means by) joyful science, perhaps, be fully understood. Fortunately, the text of *GS* does not presuppose a joyful scientist as reader, but seeks to communicate a sense of this joyful mood; it shows a sceptical, playful mood that among other things suggests the possibility of a yet higher mood.[12] These claims, which will be backed up with evidence in the ensuing reading, importantly require no claims about Nietzsche as person, only as artist.

Again, it is necessary to recall the distinction between Nietzsche as author and *Herr Nietzsche*, the person. The thesis advanced here should not be misconstrued as some naïve claim about the state in which Nietzsche wrote *GS*, e. g. that Nietzsche wrote each and every aphorism in the same mood. Quite to the contrary, the thesis is not in the least touched by the fact that the writing of *GS* coincided with a turbulent period in Nietzsche's life. His mood was anything but constant, despite the fact that most of the work that went into *GS* preceded his acquaintance and tempestuous affair with Lou von Salomé.[13] He was namely at the time engaged in a constant struggle for physical health as evinced by his search for beneficial climatic conditions and a fitting diet. Julian Young is most probably right to suspect that Nietzsche's self-doctoring was not always beneficial to his physical health and to emphasize that what mattered even more to him was spiritual health, and that in this but only this regard things were starting to look better for Nietzsche since his arrival in Sils-Maria in 1881 (Young 2010, 316 – 317). One is therefore tempted to provisionally accept Stegmaier's assertion that Nietzsche was able to keep the basic tone of the work joyful despite the extreme changes that his mood underwent during the creation process.[14] However, even this statement is problematic if read in the sense that there would generally

**12** Werner Stegmaier notes that Nietzsche never defines the joyfulness of *GS*, that it is rather a *Stimmung* that must show itself (Stegmaier 2012, 46). He does not connect this idea to that of the unity of *GS* nor does he follow up on it to the extent that one would wish in his commentary on the aphorisms of book five. Nevertheless, Stegmaier's work is currently the most significant contribution to the discussion of *Stimmung* in *GS*.

**13** In a letter to Köselitz, Nietzsche assures his friend that *GS* essentially took shape before his acquaintance with Lou [*vor meiner Bekanntschaft mit L(ou)*], though he does see a premonition [*Vorahnung*] of that relationship in the work (KGB III/1, Bf. 272).

**14** "*Trotz der extremen Stimmungswechsel während der Entstehungszeit hat er den Grundton heiter gehalten.*" (Stegmaier 2012, 52)

have to be a close connection between the mood of a work of art and the mood of its creator. Precisely as artist, Nietzsche is able to suggest and express moods that he himself need not have had more than a distant premonition of. I will therefore here assume a more modest and cautious proposal as starting point: The composition of *GS* suggests the possibility of a mood, which could unite art and science as well as philosophy into a new endeavour. Thus, the text presents a joyful science pondering its own possibility.

Next, I will review the evidence that relates to the question of authorial intention under the assumption that it might provide a good foundation for the reading of *GS* and some initial support for the thesis that mood is central to the conception of a joyful science. A general methodological problem with most if not all of the approaches to the unity of *GS* hitherto covered is that they try to find the answer to the question concerning unity by going straight to the text; to find that which creates unity without considering other evidence than the text itself. This is especially problematic if one also assumes that one can interpret authorial intention by looking only at the text, as the preceding discussions about *HH* and *D* have already shown. To put the discussion about authorial intention on a more solid footing, I begin by examining letters that pertain to the question.

## 5.2 Authorial intentions

There is strong evidence to support the view that Nietzsche himself wanted to present the 1882 edition of *GS* as a unified work. There are, however, serious problems with the ways in which evidence in favour of such an interpretation of authorial intention has hitherto been presented by scholars. I will here engage the issue in dialogue with previous scholarship. In doing so I seek to emphasize where prior scholarly efforts point in the right direction, in order to build a solid foundation for the reading of the text proper. As I have already suggested, a particularly fruitful starting point for the task at hand is to be found in the oft repeated assertion that one must pay as much attention to the *how* as to the *what* when approaching Nietzsche's writings and that consequently *GS* should be viewed as much as an artwork as a work of philosophy (cf. Franco 2012, 106). When one examines the assertion with the question of authorial intention in mind, the key question takes this form: what did Nietzsche himself think about the unity of *GS?*

First of all, Nietzsche considered unity essential for an artwork. Marco Brusotti thus sums up Nietzsche's view of a successful artwork in the period prior to and around the publication of *GS:* a work only becomes a lasting monument if it is a whole and expresses a mood, a passionate state, in its entirety.[15] Essentially, art is

**15** "*Zu einem Denkmal wird ein Werk erst, wenn es ein Ganzes ist und eine Stimmung, einen Leidenschaftlichen Seelenzustand in seiner Ganzheit mitteilt.*" (Brusotti 1997, 21) Brusotti curiously writes that

in this view expression of mood. Secondly, and more importantly, Nietzsche's concern with unity is seen in his letters from the period before and after publication. The letters show that Nietzsche applied the same aesthetic criterion to his own works. I will now turn to examine the evidence provided by these letters in detail, because they have all too often been misused. In this regard, one letter from the period prior to the publication of *GS* deserves particular attention. Indeed, this letter cannot be overlooked, since it has caused a great deal of confusion in scholarship.

### 5.2.1 A deceptive letter

In an intriguing letter to Paul Rée from late August 1881, Nietzsche mentions an unspecified unpublished work, the identification of which is the cause of the scholarly confusion referred to above. He writes in joy that in the same year that Köselitz's, i. e. Peter Gast's, opera *Scherz, List und Rache* was completed, another great work is yet to be completed. The year, he goes on, will still bring forth another work, which due to its unity, its perfection of form, will make him forget about his fragmentary philosophy (KGB III/1, Bf. 144).[16] In Anglophone scholarship one comes across the view that this "other work" would refer to Nietzsche's own work in progress, i. e. a work Nietzsche himself intended to publish (e. g. Bishop and Stevenson 2005, 75). Franco goes the furthest, identifying the work in question with *GS* and using the letter to bolster his claims concerning the unity of the work. According to Franco the letter expresses Nietzsche's hope to finally create a unified work with *GS*, a hope that was fulfilled as the book forms a "profoundly imagined artistic and philosophical whole" (Franco 2011, 106).[17] Not only do said interpretations fail to provide reasons for their identification of the "other work" with a work of Nietzsche's, they also fail to take account of a conflicting interpretation with a long tradition.

Both the context of the passage quoted above and a long line of scholarship speak against the interpretation according to which the "other work" should be attributed to Nietzsche. Let us first examine the letter more closely. After adressing Rée as his dear, dear friend [*lieber, lieber Freund*], Nietzsche expresses joyful surprise at the sudden intellectual flowering of both Rée and Köselitz [*bei Ihnen und bei unserem Freunde Köselitz*]. Then Nietzsche briefly praises the new opera of the latter, only to return to Rée, naming Rée his fulfiller [*Vollender*] directly after speaking of

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the clearest expression of this view is to be found in a note from 1876 – 7 (NL 1876 – 77, 23[104], KSA 8, 440). This is problematic because the time Nietzsche wrote down the note is not exactly close to the publication of *GS* nor does the note have anything to say about the role of mood [*Stimmung*]. In my view, Nietzsche's letters provide better evidence that mood is of utmost importance to Nietzsche's understanding of the artwork, so I will therefore in the following discussion focus more on them.

**16** "*soll nun auch das Andre Werk an's Licht bringen, an dem ich im Bilde des Zusammenhanges und der goldnen Kette meine arme stückweise Philosophie vergessen darf!*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 144)

**17** Needless to say, this scholarly blunder does not fatally compromise Franco's entire reading.

that other work, which is to appear. From the context, it is clear enough that Nietzsche speaks of Rée as if his friend were bringing to completion a work that reflects not only the nature of its author but also that of Nietzsche: reading Rée's work allows Nietzsche to forget his own disparate thoughts and to see his own nature reflected in an elevated form.[18] Furthermore, he attests to being incapable of a comparable feat and even calls himself an impossible and incomplete aphoristic philosopher. (KGB III/1, Bf. 144)

Nietzsche's exercise in self-deprecation cannot be overlooked. It would make no sense for him to first announce that a new work of his will provide an image of coherence and to liken this coherence with a golden chain and simultaneously in the very same letter complain about his inability to create coherent works. To this can be added that he had no plans to either publish or finish anything more in 1881, having already gone through the painful process of getting *Daybreak* published.[19] That Nietzsche himself does not identify the work in question, e. g. by mentioning a title or even something about its contents, can be explained by the circumstance that the letter can with reasonable certainty be presumed to be a reply to a letter by Rée, in which Rée must have hinted at a possible publication or at least written about his work-in-progress. Unfortunately, the letter of Rée, to which Nietzsche is responding, has not been preserved. There is nevertheless enough historical evidence to identify the "other work".

This interpretation, that the "other work" refers to a work by Rée, is supported by historical scholarship (cf. Stummann-Bowert 1998, 98; Brusotti 1997, 22 – 23). It is of no small importance that the first interpreter to explicitly mention and make a point out of this connection was herself intimately acquainted with both Rée and Nietzsche. For it was none other than Lou von Salomé who first identified the work in question with Rée's *Die Entstehung des Gewissens*, which he was working on at the time the letters were written (Andreas-Salomé 1894, 140). On Salomé's account, Rée had let Nietzsche know that he intended to complete his work before the end of the year. Eventually, as it happens, that book was not published before the year 1885, i. e. almost four years after the letter was sent. According to Salomé, Nietzsche expressed great interest in Rée's work and she directly connects this interest to what she interprets as Nietzsche's own desire to devote himself to studies of a more systematic character; studies that might eventually lead him beyond the limitations of the aphoristic form (cf. Andreas-Salomé 1894, 140 – 141). While Salomé can be considered unreliable precisely as an interpreter of Nietzsche's desires, her closeness to Rée even after the break with Nietzsche must be taken into account when it comes to the bare facts of the matter. Most importantly, Salomé had access to at least some of the letters Nietzsche wrote to Rée in the period that is of concern here. This is

**18** Cf. the similar words in a letter to Köselitz (KGB III/1, Bf. 143).

**19** That Nietzsche after the publication of *D* planned to add more books to the work (see KGB III/1, Bf. 180; also KGB III/1, Bf. 190) has no bearing on this matter. There is no evidence that he had any plans to publish anything more in 1881.

apparent from the fact that she not only quotes letter Nr. 144 (Andreas-Salomé 1894, 16 and 140), but a great many of Nietzsche's letters to Rée (e. g. Andreas-Salomé 1894, 99 – 100). It is not unreasonable to assume that she discussed these letters with Rée. In any case, there is no reason to challenge her identification of the "other work". In lack of contrary evidence, her version about the facts of the case must therefore be judged the most trustworthy.

It should be clear by now that this particular letter (Nr. 144) cannot be used to argue the thesis that Nietzsche aspires toward unity in his works or in *GS* in particular; not at least in the way as it has been used in Anglophone scholarship. The greatest confusion surrounding the letter having been dispelled, it is worth asking what if anything can be gained from it for our endeavour, for without a doubt it is an intriguing letter. Interestingly, Salomé herself opens this possibility by connecting the letter to Nietzsche's declared plans to re-enter the academic world as a student of the natural sciences and by interpreting these plans as expressions of a desire to form his own thoughts into a coherent philosophical system (Andreas-Salomé 1894, 141). Even though one might want to question Salomé's interpretation of Nietzsche's plans, it is certainly useful to follow her attempt to interpret the letter as having something to say about Nietzsche's desires. In this regard, it could indeed be argued that the letter reveals an important value-judgement; the judgement that unity is a desirable quality in a philosophical work. Rather than confirming Nietzsche's confidence in his ability to create a unified work, as Franco would have it, the letter, among other things, expresses Nietzsche's frustration of being incapable of creating such a whole. Compared to his own fragmentary efforts, Rée's writing appears to him as a golden chain.[20] That Nietzsche expresses himself in such strong words has justly raised the questions whether he is absolutely serious (cf. Brusotti 1997, 23), but his choice of words is wholly understandable against the background of the letter. Although the correspondence cannot be reconstructed, Nietzsche's own letter contains a striking clue for interpretation.

Nietzsche's letter to Rée indicates that his friend was having a hard time in 1881 (cf. KGB III/1, Bf. 144): an earlier letter that Nietzsche sent to Köselitz shows Nietzsche's concern for the health of his friend and reveals that Rée was suffering from the loss of his father and that his mother was sick (KGB III/1, Bf. 83). He had also lost a foster sister, which further weakened his and his mother's health (cf. Janz 1978 II, 51). This circumstance certainly puts Nietzsche's words of praise for Rée's work in a more clear light; perhaps they should best be interpreted as encouragement? (cf. Stummann-Bowert 1998, 98) Though Nietzsche's words of praise for Rée should at least partially be interpreted as a compliment to his friend, there are good enough reasons to assume that Nietzsche is being sincere, especially when it

**20** A letter to Köselitz from the same month is written in the same spirit. Here Nietzsche describes himself as a suffering, incomplete aphoristic human [*Aphorismusmensch*] and states that his own writings at best suggest unity and allow the reader to intuit the need for unity (KGB III/1, Bf. 143).

comes to his doubts about his own abilities. That there is more than a grain of truth behind his complaint is apparent, given the composition of his previous works.[21] Nietzsche in no way here or elsewhere denies the desirability of unity; that it is something worth striving for. To the contrary, one might go as far as to claim that Nietzsche expresses the wish to create a unified work. Namely, Nietzsche expresses the wish to create an own sun to shine over Rée.[22] While this might be nothing more than a friendly wish, it can also be interpreted as expressing his desire to be able to create a work for Rée which would serve the same function he thinks his friends work does for him. But does Nietzsche's wish imply creating a unified work? Could the metaphor of a golden chain be used to describe Nietzsche's own writing?

### 5.2.2 Nietzsche's writing: A golden chain?

I think this is a case where one must be especially careful of words. The temptation is near at hand to link Nietzsche's metaphor of a golden chain with the chains of thought that are characteristic of his aphoristic works. Such a move would be misleading if perhaps not completely mistaken. Only once more in his entire oeuvre does Nietzsche employ the metaphor. Brusotti has drawn attention to the remarkable circumstance that only a couple of months after writing the letter to Rée, Nietzsche uses the very same metaphor of a golden chain; this time referring to himself (Brusotti 1997, 23). The big problem with this note from the *Nachlass* is that the golden chain does not in this case refer to the form or composition of a specific book or any other work of art or science for that matter. Instead, the "artwork" is here the self and the question the unification of the self.[23] The note does suggest that for

**21** Brusotti states that he leaves the question open, to what if any extent Nietzsche's words in the letter to Rée and in other letters lamenting his inability to create unity are to be understood as ironic (Brusotti 1997, 23). I think Brusotti underestimates the importance of solving the question for interpreting Nietzsche's intentions. There is certainly some irony in his complaints, but does it serve any other purpose than to distance himself from his fear of failure? I think that what really is decisive is that Nietzsche most certainly was insecure as to whether he was able to communicate the unity that he sought to create in his works, and not only a sense of the need for unity.

**22** "*eine eigne Sonne schaffen können, die über Ihnen und dem Wachsthum Ihres Gartens allein zu scheinen hätte*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 144).

**23** "*Werde fort und fort, der, der du bist – der Lehrer und Bildner deiner selber! Du bist kein Schriftsteller, du schreibst nur für dich! So erhältst du das Gedächtniß an deine guten Augenblicke und findest ihren Zusammenhang, die goldne Kette deines Selbst! So bereitest du dich auf die Zeit vor, wo du sprechen mußt! Vielleicht daß du dich dann des Sprechens schämst, wie du dich mitunter des Schreibens geschämt hast, daß es noch nöthig ist, sich zu interpretiren, daß Handlungen und Nicht-Handlungen nicht genügen, dich mitzutheilen. Ja, du willst dich mittheilen! Es kommt einst die Gesittung, wo viel-Lesen zum schlechten Tone gehört: dann wirst du auch dich nicht mehr schämen müssen, gelesen zu werden; während jetzt jeder, der dich als Schriftsteller anspricht, dich beleidigt; und wer dich deiner Schriften halber lobt, giebt dir ein Zeichen, daß sein Takt nicht fein ist, er macht eine Kluft zwischen sich und dir – er ahnt gar nicht, wie sehr er sich erniedrigt, wenn er dich so zu erheben glaubt. Ich*

Nietzsche this unification of the self takes place through the work on texts, but Brusotti goes on to use the note to make a far more radical claim. Through a rather convoluted procedure, he arrives at the conclusion that Nietzsche aspired to unity in his writings of the free-spirit period. Before we look closer at the claim, and in order to be able to evaluate it properly, it is necessary to provide some further background as to why the note is worth any attention at all.

The note deserves special attention, and not only because it contains an early expression of that Pindarian motif (cf. Hödl 2009, 532), "become, who you are", which perhaps more than any other sentence could be said to summarize Nietzsche's entire philosophy. According to Brusotti, the note shows that Nietzsche ascribed to himself the ability to make himself complete though Brusotti admits it is still unclear whether the unification is accomplished through the entirety of his works or through a single work (Brusotti 1997, 23). On the grounds that Nietzsche in an unrelated letter to Erwin Rohde (KGB III/1, Bf. 345) writes that one must put oneself into a whole in order not to become divided,[24] Brusotti then concludes that for Nietzsche to form a unified self is only possible by creating a work that is itself a whole. Brusotti furthermore asserts that this conception would have informed the creation of *GS* (Brusotti 1997, 24).

While Brusotti's interpretation is suggestive, its underlying logic is oddly circular and not entirely sound. To simplify, the interpretation is based on a set of interrelated claims:

1) Nietzsche ascribed to himself the ability to unify his self.
2) Unification of self can in Nietzsche's case only happen through writing.
3) The writing that unifies the self must itself form a unity: an artwork has to be a unified whole.

Combining such statements, Brusotti makes the inference that Nietzsche aspires to unity in his writing. First of all, one might ask if Nietzsche really ascribes to himself the ability to unify his self: is it not rather the case that Nietzsche presents unification as a task for himself [*werde der, der du bist*]. Even more problematic is the sudden shift by Brusotti from 2) to 3), from creating works that allow one to become complete to the idea that only complete works can make one complete. There is no justification for the interpretation that Nietzsche would accept premise 3) within the *Nachlass*-note. Brusotti's interpretation is a bit more palatable when one takes account of the fact that Nietzsche in his letters seems to connect Rée's ability to create complete works with his being one of the "whole and complete natures" [*die ganzen und vollständigen Naturen*] (KGB III/1, Bf. 144) and his own inability to do so with being an aphoristic nature (KGB III/1, Bf. 143). Yet accepting this view only results in a

*kenne den Zustand der gegenwärtigen Menschen, wenn sie lesen: Pfui! Für diesen Zustand sorgen und schaffen zu wollen!*" (NL 1881, 11[297], KSA 9, 555–556)

**24** "*Wir müssen uns in etwas Ganzes hineinlegen, sonst macht das Viele aus uns ein Vieles.*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 345)

paradox: If only a complete nature can create complete works, then Nietzsche's aspiration to form a unified self through his writing is bound to end in disappointment. What matters in the end is of course Nietzsche's intention. While I agree in principle that Brusotti's interpretation points in the right direction, it certainly requires more evidence. Saying anything definitive about Nietzsche's authorial intention regarding *GS* requires a more robust defence than Brusotti provides. It requires a defence that takes into account the ambiguity in Nietzsche's thinking. Brusotti does not pay enough attention to the ambiguity of the note, and therefore too hastily proceeds with his argument.

There is something almost uncanny in this glaringly contradictory note, in which Nietzsche writes to himself in you-form [*du*] and exhorts himself to write for none other than himself. He seems to be concerned about what writing for himself means for the value of his writing but comforts himself that it does have value; namely, it has value for himself. Through writing, Nietzsche contends that he can connect the good moments of his life into a golden chain, into a unified self. There is no suggestion that what Nietzsche himself writes would have to be a unified whole in any traditional sense, as long as he himself can make out the whole and gather the good moments of his life in his memory. In this sense, however, Nietzsche's writings would be little more than self-help for himself. That is hardly a satisfactory conclusion, and one that Nietzsche apparently would reject. If we look closer at the note we find that the very reason for his "resolution" to write only for himself lies in his distaste with and rejection of what he takes to be the role of an author [*Schriftsteller*] in his time, a role he associates with writing for a specific kind of reader, with whom he associates a specific state. Nietzsche does not describe this state but there is no better expression of his disgust at it than the exclamation [*Pfui!*] at the end.[25] This idea of writing only for himself and his concomitant rejection of the role of author is half-hearted to say the least, because he most certainly has future readers in mind: "Yes, you want to communicate" [*Ja, du willst dich mittheilen*], he affirms. (Cf. NL 1881, 11[297], KSA 9, 555–556.)

### 5.2.3 Nietzsche's desire to communicate and the question of mood

It is best to leave talk of golden chains behind and instead follow another lead from the note, namely Nietzsche's desire to communicate. After the publication of *GS*,

**25** It is near at hand to connect the state that Nietzsche writes of with boredom and the will to be entertained. Nietzsche would later similarly complain about *Z* being presented to the world as entertainment. He writes to Köselitz that no one can save him anymore from becoming associated with popular writers [*Belletristen*]. The "*Pfui!*" has become a "*Pfui Teufel!*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 401). To Overbeck he likewise writes to assure "*wie unsäglich fern ich mit diesem Z(arathustra) von allem eigentlich Litterarischen bin*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 473). In other words, Nietzsche feared to be read in the wrong way as much as he feared not being read at all, as proven by his attempts to give instructions to his friends.

Nietzsche writes to his erstwhile mentor Jacob Burckhardt, having sent him a copy of his new book. This curious letter echoes the playful mood of the book. After first imploring Burckhardt to approach the work with an anticipated goodwill, Nietzsche lets his esteemed friend know that he has reached the point where he lives as he thinks. The decisive part comes next as he follows up his assertion with a more sceptical suggestion that he perhaps also has learned how to express what he thinks. Therefore, he asks about his ability to communicate his thoughts, and specifically asks Burckhardt to read book four of *GS*, *Sanctus Januarius*, with the question of unity in mind (KGB III/1, Bf. 277).[26] What is relevant here is not to what extent Nietzsche is honestly suspicious whether he really has learned to express his thoughts in a unified manner or whether the sentiment is feigned. No amount of scholarship can give any definite answer to such a question. It is in any case worth noting that Nietzsche was interested in hearing Burckhardt's answer to his question.[27] From the discussion on *HH*, we know that Burckhardt was one of those readers who Nietzsche presented as capable of hearing his words (cf. KGB II/5, Bf. 723). Still, the most interesting question is rather why Nietzsche would single out *Sanctus Januarius*. Notably, Nietzsche here speaks above all of *Sanctus Januarius* as an intended whole: there is no word of *GS* in its entirety forming a whole. So the question why he singles out that book is so interesting, because of what the answer can tell about in what sense if any he thought of *GS* as a whole. Another letter goes a long way towards answering the question.

The answer can be found in a letter to Köselitz. This letter is already important for the reason that it indicates that Nietzsche made revisions to the preceding books after finishing *Sanctus Januarius*. This further proof serves to cement the perception that Nietzsche actively sought to form a whole out of *GS*. Even more important than that is how the letter connects the unity of *GS* with mood. After recommending his friend to take a look at the 2nd and 3rd books, to which he has made some final changes, Nietzsche asks the crucial question about unity as a question of mood and once again he singles out *Sanctus Januarius*, asking if that particular book can be understood (KGB III/1, Bf. 282).[28] The first lines of the question provide as clear an indication as there is to find that Nietzsche wanted to present *GS* as forming a whole in its entirety. Moreover, Nietzsche's emphasis on mood [*Stimmung*] strongly suggests that a specific mood had something to do with it being a whole. In its turn, Nietzsche's question concerning *Sanctus Januarius* indicates that the fourth book takes a special place in this regard.

On the basis of the letters referred to above, one can cautiously surmise that in Nietzsche's own understanding there is a strong connection between the mood of the

**26** "*ich wünschte namentlich, daß Sie den Sanctus Januarius (Buch IV) im Zusammenhang lesen möchten, um zu wissen, ob er als Ganzes sich mittheilt. – Und meine Verse?*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 277)

**27** "*In Hinsicht hierauf höre ich Ihr Urtheil als einen Richterspruch*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 277).

**28** "*Und auch über das Ganze und die ganze Stimmung: theilt sie sich wirklich mit? Namentlich: ist Sanctus Januarius überhaupt verständlich?*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 282)

whole of *GS* and that of *Sanctus Januarius*. Perhaps what Nietzsche is trying to accomplish through *GS*, if indeed that has something to do with communicating a specific mood, relies on *Sanctus Januarius* to be understood? Perhaps it could be argued that of the four books that comprise the work *Sanctus Januarius* most embodies the mood of joyful science?[29] These questions, with the bolder interpretations they suggest, can only conclusively be settled through an engagement with the work proper. For now, it is enough to give a provisional answer to the problem at hand, i. e. why Nietzsche asks his friends (both Burckhardt and Köselitz) specifically about *Sanctus Januarius*. The most plausible answer is that the *Stimmung* of *GS* is most easily recognizable in *Sanctus Januarius*. Why then is this mood so important to what he wanted to communicate? Anything close to a final answer can only be provided through a reading of *GS*, but one can and should provisionally note that Nietzsche insisted that the book tells about himself; something about himself that he wanted to communicate.

In a letter to Rée following the publication of *GS*, Nietzsche for the first time calls *GS* the most personal of his books, a claim that he is to repeat (cf. KGB III/5, Bf. 1050), and specifically bids Rée to read *Sanctus Januarius* as a whole because of what it tells about himself (KGB III/1, Bf. 292). It is remarkable how Nietzsche here, after the break with Lou and Rée, uses *Sanctus Januarius* as a justification of his own actions. To be precise, Nietzsche writes that *Sanctus Januarius* reveals his private morality [*Privatmoral*], which stipulates that there is only one "thou shalt" for him, if he wills himself [*falls ich mich selber will*] (KGB III/1, Bf. 292). In other words, Nietzsche justifies his break with Rée with the maxim "*become, who you are*"; if he is to become who he is, he can do nothing else. It cannot be emphasized enough that what Nietzsche wants Rée to understand about himself is not his mundane self, but the ideal towards which he strives, the vision of a supremely joyful and productive mood. Not without a hint of sarcasm, Nietzsche in fact suggests that he already dwells above all petty human quarrels when he quotes the motto of *GS* and wishes Rée that he too might come to see all events as profitable, all days as holy, all humans as divine (KGB III/1, Bf. 292).

Likewise, Nietzsche writes that his books speak about himself in a letter to Carl von Gersdorff. He specifically asks Gersdorff to read *Sanctus Januarius* with that in mind.[30] Gersdorff's reaction to Nietzsche's letter is quite intriguing. Having read *GS*, Gersdorff writes that there is a mood in the work that reminds him of the air

**29** Werner Stegmaier has identified the fifth book of *GS* as expressing the mood of *Gay Science* at its most mature (Stegmaier 2012, 46). I see no reason to object to this claim, as long as one distinguishes the most mature expression of the mood from its most evident expression. Since the fifth book was published later, Stegmaier could hardly object to the thesis that of the four original books the fourth contains not only the clearest but the most mature expression thus far.

**30** "*Im Übrigen ist Brief-schreiben Unsinn für mich, das weißt Du ja! Dafür erzählen meine Bücher so viel von mir, als hundert Freundschafts-Briefe nicht könnten. Lies namentlich den Sanctus Januarius in diesem Sinne.*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 294)

of a clear and beautiful September day.[31] Is it a mere coincidence that Gersdorff emphasizes this mood of *GS* and describes it in terms that Nietzsche himself might have used? Arguably, Nietzsche's enthusiasm for clear air, and an autumnal mood suggesting the ripening of fruits (of the mind) cannot have escaped Gersdorff. Be that as it may, these letters again point to the intriguing yet hardly penetrable connection between self and mood in Nietzsche, between communicating himself and communicating a specific mood.

Following Brusotti, one could argue that Nietzsche is in letters such as these eager to hear whether he has been able to put himself into a whole and thus to become complete. This interpretation would certainly give even more gravity to Nietzsche's pleas to his friends to read specifically *Sanctus Januarius* as a whole. For if *Sanctus Januarius* is the most personal of the books of *GS*, it would more than any of the other books testify of Nietzsche's ability to form himself into a whole, his ability to express his most own mood. While the letters can be read to support Brusotti's conclusion, such a reading remains highly speculative. By noting what role mood had for Nietzsche's original vision of *GS*, I nevertheless maintain that Brusotti hits the nails head, even if he doesn't present conclusive evidence. Brusotti, however, does not go on to reflect on the implications for readings of *GS*, i. e. how one should approach the work, given that mood is central to its functioning as a whole. Nor does Brusotti provide a reading of *GS* showing exactly how this mood is expressed in the text. This is understandable since his primary interest is the conceptual history of Nietzsche's idea of passion for knowledge (cf. Brusotti 1997). As far as I know, no one has explicitly reflected on the hermeneutic implications of acknowledging the centrality of mood for readings of *GS*, nor has a reading attentive to mood been attempted. That is the direction we turn next. Inspired by Brusotti's insightful work, I take his conclusion about the central role of *Stimmung* for *GS* as the starting point for my reading: "Also *The Gay Science* and specifically its fourth book are despite the aphoristic style meant to communicate Nietzsche's mood as a whole."[32] For this is arguably a fruitful starting point as long as one keeps in mind that it is the mood of the Nietzsche of the text that matters, and not that of the all too human person.

## 5.3 Towards a contextual interpretation of *GS*

Whatever unity is to be found in *GS*, it does not primarily derive from the coherence of the book's themes or a sustained philosophical argument. The work is not coherent in any traditional philosophical sense, yet it can be argued that it forms a unified whole. Returning to the claim that *GS* forms a "profoundly imagined artistic and phil-

**31** "*Es ist eine Stimmung darin, die mich anmuthet wie die Luft eines schönen klaren Septembertages, wo man sich gerne sonnt und dem Lichte nicht mehr ausweicht.*" (Reich 2013, 575; KGB III/2, Bf. 142)
**32** Own translation of: "*Auch die fröhliche Wissenschaft und insbesondere deren viertes 'Buch' soll dem aphoristischen Stil zum Trotz Nietzsches Stimmung als ein Ganzes mitteilen.*" (Brusotti 1997, 21)

osophical whole" (Franco 2011, 106), one can at least wholeheartedly agree that this was attempted, and that the means to the goal were artistic. Nietzsche sought to unite his sceptical, aphoristic experiments and fragmented thoughts in a joyful mood, and thereby suggest a union of philosophy, art and science. One can of course ask, whether Nietzsche succeeds or fails in his endeavour to create a unified whole with *GS*. After all, Nietzsche's letters certainly express a nervousness about his ability to communicate or at the least a nervousness whether his contemporaries are able to hear him. I will return to the sceptical question about Nietzsche's communication of mood through a discussion of the 1887 edition of *GS* (see section 5.8). Now, however, the most pressing and most important question is rather how *GS* should be approached when one recognizes that whatever unity there is in the work, it depends on the possibility of a unifying mood.

What does it then mean to interpret *GS* contextually? It is not enough to note that the aphoristic text forms chains of thought or that many aphorisms relate to and rely on each other. The same can be said about noting intertextual references and researching sources, however valuable clues this might yield. These are important tasks, but only if one treats *GS* as a whole, as a specific attempt at communication, can one speak of a truly contextual interpretation. However, and this is critical, it still does not suffice to be attentive to how parts relate to the whole, if the whole is understood to be made up of themes, ideas or arguments. Instead, the crucial issue is to be attentive to how Nietzsche's understanding of a joyful mood of affirmation permeates the text of *GS* and how the most important aphorisms relate to the overriding mood.

To conclude, it remains to be shown that paying attention to mood gives a privileged background from which to approach *GS*. The crucial test in this regard is whether this approach can cast more light on the most difficult interpretative issues that the text of *GS* confronts the reader with; above all that aphorism that has caused most trouble for interpretation, *GS* 125, *the Madman*. I will however begin by discussing the title of *GS*, move onward to the motto, from there to the collection of poems and only then will I approach the aphoristic text, because these are arguably not trivial additions but play an important role in the composition of *GS*.

### 5.3.1 The title "*Gay Science*"

What job does a title perform? A title gives an impression of a book, all the more important as it is a first impression. A title can suggest what to expect from a book. These expectations in turn can influence how one approaches a book and therefore how one interprets it. Nietzsche himself suggested as much when discussing the title of *Daybreak* (KGB III/1, Bf. 83). There is no comparable discussion about the title of *GS*, but Nietzsche's plea to Burckhardt that he approach the work in a sympathetic frame of mind can be read as an indication that Nietzsche still was very concerned about the manner in which one approaches his text. It is worth noting that what came to be *GS* was originally not planned as an independent work but as a contin-

uation of *D*. It is not possible to say exactly when Nietzsche changed his plans and came up with the title for his next work (cf. Kaufmann 2015, 9–10). In January 1882, Nietzsche still speaks of having finished writing books 6, 7 and 8 and planning to work on the 9th and 10th books of *Daybreak* (KGB III/1, Bf. 190 and KGB III/1, Bf. 192), but already in May he writes to his publisher Schmeitzner that he has almost finished a new work entitled *The Gay Science* (KGB III/1, Bf. 224). This means that he chose the title after his experience of health in January 1882, which again indicates that the entire work is best seen in the light of the mood that is above all expressed in *Sanctus Januarius*.[33] In any case, there is no reason to assume that Nietzsche had completely changed his mind about the importance of choosing a fitting title. Since there still is no evidence about what effect Nietzsche intended the title to have, the only way forward in this line of inquiry is to ask what effect the title has had on scholars. Gersdorff attests that the title and motto put him in a joyful mood (Reich 2013, 575; cf. KGB III/2, Bf. 142), but what about contemporary scholars?

The effect of the title on scholars seems to be one of bewilderment. Commentaries invariably point out that it is not at all clear what the joyful science means.[34] Scholars have noted Emerson's use of the phrase "joyful science" and investigated the connection to the *gaya scienza*[35] of the troubadours. Besides far-fetched conjectures, many interesting and enlivening details have been uncovered this way (e. g. Pippin 2000 and Babich 2006), but in the end the search for precursors and models has not provided any definitive answers as to the nature of the title nor has it given clues that could guide the interpretation of the work.[36] It is certainly understandable

**33** This claim can be supported by drawing on scholarship, in which Nietzsche's plans for titles are discussed. Building on the work of Figl, who analysed Nietzsche's title-sketches for unpublished *Nachlass*-notes and found that the titles evolve as the work on the notes evolves (Figl 1982, 39), Hödl argues that since Nietzsche considered many different titles his final choice of title reflects his most mature intentions about the program of the work: that the title gathers the work as a whole as a kind of summarizing aphorism (Hödl 2009, 516–519). While this is a quite speculative interpretation, as Hödl is aware (cf. Hödl 2009, 519), it is very instructive in the case of *GS*, as it fits the evidence about the change of plans that led to there being a *Gay Science* instead of more books of *Daybreak*.

**34** For a summary of approaches to the title of *GS*, consult Stegmaier 2012, 47–49.

**35** Nietzsche added the subtitle ("*la gaya scienza*") to the second edition to make the connection to the troubadours more apparent. He also sought to emphasize this connection in *EH* (cf. KSA 6, 333). What is most interesting about this matter is how Nietzsche thinks of the troubadour as a unity of singer, knight and free spirit in one, i. e. one who can unite his multifaceted nature in one spirit or mood.

**36** The same conclusion can be drawn about Nietzsche's own discussions that link joy and science in his previous works. The most interesting aphorism that would seem to prefigure *GS* is certainly *The allurement of knowledge*, where Nietzsche speaks of the glad tidings [*frohe Botschaft*] of science and exemplifies what he means by quoting Marcus Aurelius to the effect that "'Let delusion vanish! Then "woe is me!" will vanish too; and with "woe is me!" woe itself will be gone.'" (Hollingdale transl. Clark and Leiter 1997, 189; D 450, KSA 3, 273) Though one might claim that this aphorism has not received the attention it deserves, it too provides no key to the title, since the characterization of the joy

that scholars would exhaust all possibilities of determining possible influences on the title; after all, here's something to grab and expound, an opportunity to practice some conceptual archaeology and detective work. There is however a real danger here that such historical investigations divert attention from the fundamental orientation toward the future which is so characteristic of Nietzsche's joyful science.

Another slightly more fruitful approach to the title is to compare it with the titles of Nietzsche's other publications. This approach is taken by Stegmaier who asserts that Nietzsche's titles are not only more poetic than descriptive, but also inherently irritating and that of all the titles *GS* is the most irritating (Stegmaier 2012, 41–43). Indeed, many of Nietzsche's titles both irritate and fascinate, and thus above all raise expectations. In the case of *GS*, Stegmaier perceptively draws attention to the grounds of the irritation that he claims the title raises. The irritation stems from a historical constellation worth looking into. What strikes Stegmaier as particularly irritating about *GS* is that the title combines two terms that appear to be almost mutually exclusive in the European tradition. Science deals with truth and is therefore grave and serious. Consequently, science has little or nothing to do with joy, which is associated with play, light-heartedness and carelessness. Not only in the context of 19th-century science would freedom from care suggest irresponsibility. Ever since its philosophical foundations in antiquity, the pursuit of truth has been indissociable from a specific seriousness that at least in part stems from knowledge of death and a peculiar relation to death, exemplified in Socrates' willingness to die for truth (cf. Stegmaier 2012, 43–47). To this could be added that the experiences of the 20th century, and the self-destructive possibilities opened up by physics and biochemistry, have only served to strengthen the association of science with an ethic and pathos of seriousness.

The apparent, and perhaps merely apparent, incompatibility of science and joy is an important issue, one that recurs in the text of *GS* and in Nietzsche's *Nachlass*-reflections. In a sketch for the foreword to the second edition of *GS* Nietzsche later noted about the reception of his work that some scholars took offence at the combination of the words joy and science.[37] It could then be argued that one of the main goals of the work was precisely to untangle the connection between science and scientific seriousness, and that the title refers to this intention. One could think of scientific seriousness as a moral ideal that gives gravity to the search of truth. In this vein, one could see Nietzsche as trying to reinvigorate the search for truth on the basis of a different, more joyful relation to truth. An intellectual shift in perspective is not enough; what is also required is an affective change. I find Nietzsche's contention in *HH I*, that "we" are unable to fully understand, that is feel, combinations of feeling that were known in the past, very instructive in this regard (cf. HH I 112,

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of science is purely negative, as absence of woe. If Nietzsche had meant only this by joyful science, he would not have had to write *GS* at all.

**37** "*sie gaben mir zu verstehen, Das sei 'fröhlich' vielleicht, sicherlich aber nicht 'Wissenschaft'*" (NL 1885/86, 2[166], KSA 12, 151).

KSA 2, 116). Reasonably, the same logic applies to the future and emerging affective constellations: we are unable to fully understand combinations that will be felt and thought of as natural by following generations. Against this background, Nietzsche's *GS* can be read as an intervention in the history of emotion *and* science. Such a reading would show how far beyond the tradition Nietzsche aimed with his conception of a joyful science. It suffices to take Nietzsche's ambition seriously, and to admit the possibility of such a reading, in order to reject Stegmaier's suggestion that the title must remain irritating out of necessity (cf. Stegmaier 2012, 45). When one takes account of Nietzsche's understanding of the historical nature of emotions and his orientation to the future, the title (though perhaps still irritating) no longer seems so startling, so surprising, so irritating.

That Nietzsche's writings are indeed marked by a fundamental orientation to the future can be established as a fact by an overview of the content of his philosophical works. From *BT* to the very last writings, Nietzsche's primary concern is to open up the present to future possibilities. This opening of possibilities of course also serves the present or emphatically the earthly present, as there is no escapism, no "other world" involved. After all, in what light the present moment and the past are seen and life is lived depends in great part on expectations, on the future horizon and specifically on what kind of futures are opened. Whether Nietzsche is really more concerned with the changes of perspective and affect that visions of both desirable and detestable futures have for this life or is genuinely concerned with future lives is an interesting problem of interpretation, but one that is not of concern to us here. What matters here is Nietzsche's praxis of opening possibilities through his writings. In *BT* Nietzsche bids farewell of philological-historical research and turns to future-oriented philosophy. What is at stake is not primarily the correct historical interpretation of the development of tragedy in Ancient Greece but the possibility of a birth of tragedy in his own time. The untimely meditations follow the pattern established by *BT*.[38] Nietzsche's turn to science in *HH* can be interpreted as a revaluation of scientific thinking as providing the most promising model on the path to a higher culture. *Daybreak* expects a new dawn. With the culmination of the free spirit -period in *GS* Nietzsche's play with expectations reaches a new height, only to be outmatched by the future-drunken rhetoric of the prophetic Zarathustra. This fundamental orientation is in no way weakened by the sobering up that followed the pathos of *Z*. The book that is entitled *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* is a case in point. Even the genealogy of morality is no mere historical work, but serves the future. The last writings explicitly affirm this orientation, as exemplified by his

**38** E. g. Nietzsche's fierce rejection of David Friedrich Strauss' later thinking derives in large part because Nietzsche finds there a rival ideal and idea of the future. In an unsent draft of a letter to an unknown recipient, dated August 1885, Nietzsche calls his untimely meditations promises ("*Versprechungen*", KGB III/3, Bf. 617), and adds that he has ever since been fulfilling his promises, which should perhaps be interpreted in the sense that he has been reaching for his "higher self" and that his books are testaments of his development.

bold statements that he writes for future readers, by which he means both temporally distant readers in a time yet to come as well as readers with future in them (A Foreword, KSA 6, 167; cf. KSA 6, 298).

To conclude, Nietzsche's *GS* is above all concerned with the future. Because of this fundamental orientation, Emerson and the troubadours serve Nietzsche at best only as precursors. Looking to the past does not help to fathom the joyful science. Instead, we should look to the radically new in Nietzsche's conception. Put differently: the text interprets the title (cf. Hödl 2009, 518). The combination of the words joyful/gay [*fröhlich*] and science [*Wissenschaft*] gains meaning only through the text. What should be pursued further, however, is not Nietzsche's use of these words in the text, but how the text as a whole embodies his understanding of joyful science. The next logical step is therefore to move forward to the motto.

### 5.3.2 The Emersonian motto

> "*Dem Dichter und Weisen sind alle Dinge befreundet und geweiht, alle Erlebnisse nützlich, alle Tage heilig, alle Menschen göttlich.*" – Emerson (as Nietzsche quotes him in the motto, GS Title page, KSA 3, 343)
>
> "To the poet, to the philosopher, to the saint, all things are friendly and sacred, all events profitable, all days holy, all men divine." – Emerson (the original, from Emerson's essay "History", cf. Emerson 1979, 8)

Why does Nietzsche open the joyful science with such a motto? What purpose does it serve? Perhaps it is enough to hear the question properly to find the answer. For is not the answer there? Does the motto not open the "joyful science"; its meaning and goal? A joyful mood of affirmation. Be that as it may, let us not jump to conclusions.

Following the tradition of Nietzsche-scholarship, the first thing to do is to turn to the source of the motto. As was the case with the pairing of the words joy and science, one can and must also in this case refer to Nietzsche's reading of Emerson. Although no certain clues can be gained thus, two issues about Nietzsche's relation to Emerson strike me as in need of further clarification. The first has received ample attention in scholarship, while the second has received none. Firstly, it is worth pointing out that the motto is not an exact rendering of the original. According to Brusotti, the differences are not insignificant; the most important difference being that instead of Emerson's three figures (poet, philosopher and saint), Nietzsche presents us with one figure, who is both poet [*Dichter*] and sage [*Weiser*]. Brusotti furthermore suggests that the merging of these two figures represents the union of joy (art) and science in the title, and that this explains why Nietzsche did not mention the saint (Brusotti 1997, 382). Given the resulting union of joy and science and considering the disparaging portrayal of saints in *HH* and *D*, it is tempting to think that Nietzsche intentionally chose not to replicate the exact wording and to leave the saint unmentioned instead. Though the difference is minimal, it is striking. If indeed *GS* is to a

great degree an attempt to establish the possibility of a post-Christian, post-religious mood of affirmation, then the exclusion makes even more sense. The motto could then be read as suggesting a possibility open only to those who, like Nietzsche, are willing to break new ground. Since the exact circumstances will forever remain unknown, there is not enough evidence to conclude with absolute certainty that Nietzsche's wording was intentional. After all, it might just as well have been a lapse of memory.[39] Whether or not one considers the omission of the saint in Nietzsche's motto significant, the inexactness is once again a reminder to be alert to the radically new in Nietzsche's appropriation of his sources.

Secondly, and this might add plausibility to the contention that the motto is "about" mood both in the sense that the motto speaks of an ideal mood and that this speaking of is meant to raise mood, Emerson had a highly original understanding of mood that guided his essayistic writing. Indeed, it is an understatement to say that mood played a major role in his thinking.[40] The decisive question is to what extent Nietzsche not only understood but was inspired by Emerson's thinking on mood through his intensive reading of the American thinker.[41] Again, it is impossible even to reconstruct to what extent Nietzsche understood the specifics of the Emersonian conception of mood, as expressed most clearly in the essay "Experience", namely what has been called his "epistemology of moods" (Cavell 2003b, 11). All that is certain is that Nietzsche found Emerson related to him in the same way as he found the Upper Engadine, as a note from autumn 1881 attests. In this note he writes that he has never felt so at home in a book as with Emerson's essays.[42] That this judgement was more than an exaggerated outburst of joy is proven by the fact that even when he has in 1883 become sceptical of Emerson's worth as thinker he still recognizes a brother-soul in the American (KGB III/1, Bf. 477). Suffice it to say that the Emersonian

**39** In a note dated February–March 1882, Nietzsche quotes Emerson and does not fail to mention the saint: "*Emerson sagt mir nach dem Herzen: Dem Poeten dem Philosophen wie dem Heiligen sind alle Dinge befreundet und geweiht, alle Ereignisse nützlich, alle Tage heilig, alle Menschen göttlich.*" No far-reaching conclusions can be made on the basis of this note. On the one hand Nietzsche writes that Emerson speaks "*mir nach dem Herzen*", which suggests that Nietzsche endorses the entire sentence, but on the other hand the note is to be found under the title "*500 Aufschriften / auf Tisch und Wand / für Narrn / von / Narrenhand*" (NL 1882, 18[5], KSA 9, 673).

**40** Cf. Stanley Cavell's characterization, which also is a masterpiece of understatement: "Emerson may be said to be a philosopher of moods" (Cavell 2003a, 26). In fact, Cavell places Emerson alongside Heidegger and himself as the only philosophers to have seriously considered the foundational role that moods play in understanding reality and consequently as the only philosophers to have understood the role that moods play in doing philosophy (Cavell 2003b, 11). What I suggest in this study is that one should at least consider adding Nietzsche to the list.

**41** Nietzsche read both the first and second series of Emerson's essays in the German compilation and translation *Versuche* (Essays) by G. Fabricius, published in 1858. Nietzsche lost his first copy of the work, but bought another one in 1874, and in this surviving copy, all essays except "*Liebe*" are heavily annotated (Brobjer 2008, 119).

**42** "*Emerson / Ich habe mich nie in einem Buch so zu Hause und in meinem Hause gefühlt als – ich darf es nicht loben, es steht mir zu nahe.*" (NL 1881, 12[68], KSA 9, 588)

view that all experience is filtered through moods[43] certainly has its parallels in Nietzsche's psychological thinking about felt experience and the perspectival nature of all knowledge. Besides that, both Emerson and Nietzsche understand their thinking as striving for a higher self, which is defined by a mood of supreme affirmation. In Emerson's essays, this idea of a higher self is the focus of the essay "Self-Reliance", but it also appears in the essay from which Nietzsche extracted the motto of *GS*. In that essay, entitled "History", that which all wisdom (all history, all nature) speaks of is the "unattained but attainable self" (Emerson 1979, 5). Finally, Emerson like Nietzsche, considered playfulness essential to his ideal: his genius "knows how to play" with the changing forms of life (Emerson 1979, 8). When one takes account of these parallels, one might be tempted to read the motto as expressing Nietzsche's agreement with the Emersonian ideal, yet that is precisely what one should not do. The motto is certainly an admission of kinship with Emerson, yet the ideal mood that Nietzsche has in mind cannot be equated with Emerson's, because his playfulness is something quite different from Emerson's. That which in my view most attests to the Emersonian background of the motto, yet also hints of this darker and more sinister playfulness, is how it begs the question: is that supreme state of affirmation really attainable, and if yes, at what cost?

At first glance, the motto might precisely for this reason seem unreasonable to one unaccustomed to Nietzsche's philosophy. But even a newcomer to Nietzsche should be able to note that there is more going on here than mere rhetorical embellishment: the motto is an invitation to entertain the possibility that there is a perspective, experience or mood, through which everything appears divine, and to read the work with this possibility in mind. The seasoned reader acquainted with the secondary literature, on the other hand, might think of Nietzsche's notorious use of hyperbole and then especially of self-aggrandizing hyperbole. Indeed, much of Nietzsche's writing relies on the skilled use of hyperbole, of exaggeration: his philosophy is "*essentially* hyperbolic" as Alexander Nehamas would have it (Nehamas 1985, 31) and this is nowhere more clear than in his self-depictions (cf. Hödl 2009). In this regard, one might question whether Nietzsche in the motto presents an ideal worth striving for or simply announces that this is the perspective, experience or mood that he has attained and from within which he writes. Precisely in this in-between movement, which continues in the text of *GS*, one can detect an element of play that comes close to mockery. The motto certainly has a playfulness to it that seems to shout: "be on your guard!"

Despite or rather because of this playfulness, the motto demands to be taken as seriously as anything in the book. In interpreting the motto, there are two credible options. Firstly, it can be read as a statement concerning a special, blessed moment in

**43** See e. g. the oft-quoted passage: "Life is a train of moods like a string of beads, and, as we pass through them, they prove to be many-colored lenses which paint the world their own hue, and each shows only what lies in its focus." (Emerson 1983, 30)

which the world appears perfect, without blemish. One could think of this as a momentary enlightenment, as an epiphany or even as a transportation into Dionysian ecstasy. Secondly, it can be read as referring to a (at least in principle) lasting perspective, felt as a life-affirming mood, inhabited by the one in whom joy and science are united. *GS* itself does not provide an unambiguous answer in the form of a decisive statement; one might even go as far as to claim that there is a conflict on this point in Nietzsche's thinking more generally.[44] I think the safest answer is that the two need not be thought of as mutually exclusive. Provisionally it is worth holding open the possibility that the motto speaks about more than a singular moment of affirmation, a blessed point in time. Such moments certainly play a role in Nietzsche's philosophy, but they too have value only insofar as they change one's being. In other words, it is plausible to assume provisionally that Nietzsche holds out a lasting change as possibility, though this need not be thought of as a constant habitation of a high mood. The motto certainly seems to suggest that striving towards such change is what the joyful science is about. As we shall soon see, one of the questions raised by the text itself is whether and under what conditions such a mood is attainable.

### 5.3.3 "*Joke, Cunning and Revenge*"

What role do the poems that follow the opening motto serve? As with the motto, one cannot avoid really thinking through the question why Nietzsche would include a collection of poems in a work that ostensibly has to do with science. As I have indicated earlier with respect to the title, traditions of scholarship strong in Nietzsche's day and arguably even stronger in ours predispose one to view the inclusion as problematic. One might think of the poems as added to the main body of the text as if they were not an important part of the text. Philosophers who write on *GS* tend to ignore the poems, and this is certainly reasonable if one is interested only in extracting and discussing particular ideas expressed in *GS*. If on the other hand one is interested in a contextual interpretation of the work or aspects of the work, the poems cannot be overlooked. In what way should the poems be recognized? There is reason to caution against taking the poems all too seriously in the sense of thinking that their value lies in their philosophical content.[45] Having sent some rimes (including

**44** See the entry "Augenblick/Moment" in the *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch* (Nietzsche Research Group 2004, 181–216; cf. Brusotti 1997, 522–523)

**45** E. g. Langer only focuses on the supposed philosophical content and symbolism of the poems (cf. Langer 2010, 14–25) Higgins is quite exceptional among Anglophone interpreters in her willingness to engage the poems as a special form of communication. Although she also comes close to treating the poems as arguments, she finally compares them to nursery rhymes and concludes that their aim is to lead the reader to a childlike state, a state of openness. The idea would seem to be that the reader first has to be lead back to a childlike state before being ready to embrace Nietzsche's philosophy (Higgins 2003, 14–41). While Higgins' reading is suggestive, and does pay attention to Nietzsche's

poem 13) to Köselitz, Nietzsche writes that he amuses himself with such things on his walks.[46] If the value of the poems is perhaps not to be found primarily in the philosophical content that they can be seen to express, might their value be found in the way they set the tone in which the aphorisms that compose the rest of the work are to be approached?

In the perspective opened up by the above question: the jocular poems serve as attunement, and in doing so they prepare the reader for the aphorisms that make up the rest of *GS*. They are an introduction,[47] in the musical sense. Just as a prelude [*Vorspiel*] of Wagner prefigures the dramatic action of the operatic acts, Nietzsche's introductory poems are filled with intratextual references to the aphorisms that follow. There is however even more to the prelude than that. One need but remind oneself that the German word for play is *Spiel*. In this sense, the poems are arguably not only to be seen as lighthearted play before start of the serious philosophizing, but as foretaste of the play proper. They give the reader a taste of things to come, of the style one is to expect. From this perspective, the aphoristic style of the following text appears as a continuation of the poetic. Although one might argue that the playfulness is more pronounced in the poems than in most of the aphorisms, it is hard to deny that the poems and the aphorisms partake of the same spirit, express the same sense of freedom that is indissociable from a certain fascination with irresponsibility and display the same self-conscious arrogance that borders on the insane. The first poem, entitled *Invitation* [*Einladung*], exemplifies this mood.

> Take a chance and try my fare;
> It will grow on you, I swear;
> Soon it will taste good to you.
> If by then you should want more,
> All the things I've done before
> Will inspire things quite new.
> (Kaufmann 1974, 41; cf. GS Prelude, KSA 3, 353)

The mocking tone of the poem is evident from the start as it challenges the reader to dare to consume that which has been prepared. It is implied that the reader might not be quite up to the task (cf. Higgins 2003, 26; Langer overlooks this hint: Langer 2010, 15). Yet the reader might get used to the food being served, the diet prepared by Nietzsche, in which case there shall be more of it! What then, one is tempted to ask,

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metaphors one might object to the direction that she leads these metaphors in her own argument by asking: does a child have a good bite in the sense that Nietzsche demands of his reader? (Cf. Poem 54, GS Prelude, KSA 3, 365.) Is a child independent?

**46** "*Mit dergleichen unterhalte ich mich auf meinen Spaziergaengen.*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 202)

**47** In a letter to Salomé Nietzsche writes: "*Ich bringe die Einleitung mit nach Berlin, welche als Überschrift hat 'Scherz, List und Rache' Vorspiel in deutschen Reimen.*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 241) Nietzsche wanted to present the poems as an introduction [*Einleitung*] literally leading into the aphorisms. They arguably do this as much if not more by leading into a mood than by introducing themes.

if one dares to taste Nietzsche's delicacies? Could it be that if one eats and manages to digest the food one can come to that all-embracing perspective that the motto speaks of, or at least approach it? Perhaps so, but is it not also the case that the reaction to food as to knowledge varies from individual to individual, i. e. that not everyone can digest everything? That some might be allergic to Nietzsche's goods? This recognition is the dark undercurrent of the joyful science; that which makes understanding the mood (joy) of the joyful science so crucial to understanding his critical project. Only when approached through a joyful mood does Nietzsche's project make sense. The element of play appears in a clearer light, when one takes into account Nietzsche's belief that the ingredients of his food can also lead to utter horror, repulsion and finally suicide (e. g. GS 107, KSA 3, 464; cf. HH I 34, KSA 2, 53 – 55). Therefore, the poem is mocking in an even more significant way. Nietzsche tempts the reader to dangerous experiments with himself, and in this sense Nietzsche here appears more as tempter than in any of his previous writings.

*Invitation* is not the only poem that builds on metaphors of consumption, food and digestion. Poems 1, 8, 24, 35, 39 and 54 all deal with such issues in one way or another. On the surface of it, these poems do not have much in common. However, they can all be read as referring intratextually to the idea of incorporation. Incorporation has rightly been identified as one of the most important philosophical issues in *GS*, specifically as the question to what extent one can incorporate knowledge in a way that allows life to flourish (cf. Franco 2011, 101 – 102). I will discuss incorporation in more detail in the next section. For now it suffices to note that Nietzsche requires of his readers the capacity to incorporate his message, namely to take time to read him carefully, to reread, to digest his words. Poem 54, *To my reader*, is directly addressed to the reader. Once again, the tone is mocking: Good teeth and a good stomach is what Nietzsche wishes his reader. This does not mean following Nietzsche blindly, as poems 7 and 23 make clear, but to turn Nietzsche's food into a source of energy for one's own development. If one thinks about the issue from the perspective of incorporation one comes to the conclusion that merely to ape Nietzsche, to do no more than repeat his words without thinking, does not speak of successful incorporation. It is not a sign of good digestion. In short, it is akin to throwing up.

Although Nietzsche thus suggests that successful incorporation does not lead to the creation of a cult of Nietzsche-followers, this does not mean that there would be no common effects to the incorporation of Nietzsche's thinking. One such effect is arguably the purification of feeling, which was an important goal in *D*. Since each individual has a different history and emotional constitution, this goal will result in widely differing trajectories. Therefore, the only fitting morality for those who accept Nietzsche's invitation to an experimental life is the star morals [*Sternen-Moral*] of poem 63, which concludes the poems: "But one command is yours: be pure!" (Kaufmann 1974, 69; GS Prelude, KSA 3, 367) The journey to one's own self, though it differs from the journey of all others who pursue their own selves, will perhaps eventually lead to a high mood of joyful affirmation, and though the exact nature of the mood will differ from person to person, all of Nietzsche's descriptions of

such a state suggest that it is in every case associated with a heightened feeling of power.

Now, we can conclude the preliminary examination and begin approaching the aphoristic text itself. As the main focus of the reading is on religion, the third book of *GS* is granted most attention. However, I will begin the examination with a broader overview starting from aphorism 1 and the notion of incorporation, which the preliminary investigation has suggested is important to the work as a whole.

## 5.4 On incorporation and joyful science

The very first aphorism of *GS*, entitled *The teachers of the purpose of existence*, not only contains the first mention of "incorporation" but also of "joyful science". Undoubtedly, this coincidence can be used to defend the centrality of the notion of incorporation to the work. Yet it must not be overlooked that the first mention of "incorporation" appears suddenly and without further clarification in the context of a sarcastic discussion of those "teachers" who would have one believe that all of existence has a definite preordained *telos*. The perspective entertained by Nietzsche subsumes all efforts to direct human action toward a single goal under a drive to preserve the species [*Trieb der Arterhaltung*]. Nietzsche jokingly suggests that whatever in us that could really harm the species has perhaps already died out, and that therefore even the most life-denying teachings cannot but help serving this drive. Now the main concern of the aphorism is clearly not with providing unshakeable evidence for this "truth", but rather to show what would follow if we were to accept this truth and let it guide our being; if this truth were to become conscious in us. If all of humanity would take this thought to heart, and would have incorporated[48] the idea that "the species is everything, *one* is always none", then Nietzsche surmises that there might perhaps only be "gay science" left. (Kaufmann 1974, 73–76; GS 1, KSA 3, 369–372)

The suggestion is that if laughter and wisdom were to be united into a new mood, which might follow from the incorporation of a single shocking idea, then indeed all events would appear profitable, and a joyful irresponsible experimentation would be made possible. So the aphorism establishes a connection between the incorporation of specific ideas and joyful science. There is nevertheless not much to be learned about incorporation on the basis of the first aphorism: indeed, if the notion were not present in other aphorisms, it would remain entirely mysterious. The only certain conclusion that can be drawn is that Nietzsche ascribes incorporated ideas the power to change affect. So even if all purposive human behaviour would in fact serve the preservation of the species, the incorporation of at least some ideas can shape mental life in a dramatic way. The aphorism begs the question: Is the sen-

**48** "*sich der Menschheit einverleibt hat*" (GS 1, KSA 3, 370).

tence "the species is everything, *one* is always none" what Nietzsche really wants humanity to incorporate? Is this what *GS* is about?

There is something curious and playful, if not outright inconsistent, about the way in which Nietzsche presents the idea of incorporation in the first aphorism. Even as Nietzsche mocks those who teach that life has a *telos*, he presents his critique within a teleological framework; namely within an objective teleology of species-preservation [*Arterhaltung*].[49] Of course, Nietzsche insists that such preservation happens by itself and without final goal (GS 1, KSA 3, 371), simply because preserving the species is the oldest of our drives. So it would seem that what Nietzsche is doing here is to replace misinterpretations of the drive to preserve the species with a more scientific interpretation, in the spirit of *HH* and *D*. This impression is complicated by Nietzsche's assertion that misinterpretations of said drive by ethical teachers has made humans "fantastic animals" that have developed a "need" for such teachers (GS 1, KSA 3, 372), a need for answers about ultimate questions regarding the purpose of existence. Importantly, Nietzsche does not even raise the question whether this presumably incorporated need is something that humanity can be rid of. Instead, he emphasizes that the need is not felt constantly, but takes hold of humanity from time to time. Furthermore, he identifies interpretations that give individual existence purpose as tragic, and interpretations of the human condition that do not as comic. On the one hand there is comic irresponsibility, on the other tragic seriousness. The result, with which the aphorism ends, is a vision of an ebb and flood of tragic and comic interpretations of existence (GS 1, KSA 3, 372).

Because Nietzsche presents his vision of a historical ebb and flood of tragic and comic interpretations in the opening aphorism, the idea has taken root in scholarship that *GS* itself would oscillate between tragic and comic perspectives. Not only do such interpretations ignore the fact that Nietzsche is speaking of entire historical epochs, they also fail to note how Nietzsche defines tragedy and comedy in the aphorism. Unlike interpreters who see an ebb and flood of tragic and comic perspectives within *GS* (Franco 2011, 109 and 127; Higgins 2003, 50), I do not think that one can contest the claim that the entirety of *GS* is comic following Nietzsche's understanding of comedy in aphorism 1.[50] Nietzsche is simply not in the business of providing ultimate goals for existence. As I will show, the first aphorism rather serves as a prime example of what could be called Nietzsche's "what if-style" in *GS*, which is closely related to the mood of the work. What characterizes this style is that there are no final answers to be found, and that one might be well advised to place a question mark even after those statements, where he himself does not. Instead of giving the reader clear directions or a sense of solid foundations, he bids the reader to provisionally inhabit perspectives that might provide fruitful, but which must be thrown

**49** Cf. Nietzsche's critique of *unnecessary* teleological principles (BGE 13, KSA 5, 27–28).

**50** One can of course even interpret *GS* as tragic through and through but then one has to employ an understanding of tragedy that differs greatly from Nietzsche's.

away once they have served their purpose. Werner Stegmaier has diligently and convincingly argued for the importance of this style for the entirety of *GS* and described how Nietzsche brings this method of questioning and tempting to perfection in the fifth book of *GS* (Stegmaier 2012). I here follow Stegmaier's lead when examining what Nietzsche seeks to achieve through his discussion of incorporation.

Nietzsche's "what if-style" is apparent in aphorism one, where one encounters the perspective of a narrative I, who again and again qualifies his words with a cautionary, yet tempting perhaps [*vielleicht*]. So instead of concluding that Nietzsche seriously suggests that the sentence "the species is everything, *one* is always none" should be incorporated, it is more plausible that he merely provisionally bids the reader, as a starting point, to entertain a perspective that allows one to view human life in a non-moral way.[51] There could perhaps be many other ways to "gay science", other ways to the feeling of freedom that is required.[52] Be that as it may, it is important to examine Nietzsche's use of the notion of incorporation carefully, in order to ascertain what function it serves in the critical project of *GS*. First, it is of course necessary to establish that the notion of incorporation indeed plays an important role in *GS*.

I emphasized that the idea of incorporation appears "out of the blue", suddenly and without clarification. In no way do I by that mean to suggest that the idea would be unimportant. Quite to the contrary, I find it plausible that the manner in which the idea is introduced reflects the importance Nietzsche attached to it. Instead of forcing the idea upon the reader through a sustained discussion at the start, Nietzsche is careful to introduce the idea gradually; to let the reader chew on it. Perhaps the rationale behind this manner of presenting has to do with an intuition on Nietzsche's part that one first has to accept the premise that ideas have such power before one is ready for all the implications that follow. In any case, the notion of incorporation reappears in aphorism 11; now as a grand task to incorporate knowledge (GS 11, KSA 3, 382–383). After this Nietzsche returns to the question now and then in book one. Besides aphorisms explicitly mentioning the notion (GS 21, KSA 3, 392 and GS 43, KSA 3, 410) other aphorisms express the same idea in other words (GS 9, KSA 3, 381 and GS 54, KSA 3, 417) or implicitly rely on the idea to make sense (e. g. GS 18, KSA 3, 389–390 and GS 44, KSA 3, 410–11). What has been said about book one also applies to book two. Aphorism 57, the opening aphorism of book two, provides the foundation for the remainder of the book with its discussion of the proper way to engage incorporated errors (GS 57, KSA 3, 421–422). The reader has to wait until book

**51** Higgins also suggests that Nietzsche merely provisionally presents that perspective but gives no convincing explanation why the aphorism should be read that way, other than that it is an example of Nietzsche's perspectivism (cf. Higgins 2003, 45–46).

**52** Arguably, art is precisely for this reason an important ally and component of joyful science. In aphorism 107, Nietzsche writes of his indebtedness to all joyful arts, because he sees in art the same freedom of rising above morality: "*Freiheit über den Dingen … welche unser Ideal von uns fordert*", specifically "*über der Moral stehen können*" (GS 107, KSA 3, 465).

three for a more revealing elaboration of the notion: this is accomplished in aphorisms 110, 111 and 113 (GS 110, KSA 3, 469 – 471; GS 111, KSA 3, 471 – 472; GS 112, KSA 3, 472 – 473). It is also in book three that the idea is at its most important; many an aphorism can only be misunderstood if one doesn't take the notion of incorporation into account. This is most importantly the case with the parable of the Madman (GS 125, KSA 3, 480 – 482), which I discuss in detail in section 5.5. While the notion is not as present in book four as in the previous books, it returns with force in aphorism 341 with the challenge to incorporate the idea of Eternal Recurrence (GS 341, KSA 3, 570).

In light of this evidence, it has to be concluded that incorporation plays an important role in *GS*, but one should be careful not to exaggerate the originality of the notion.[53] The ideas that go into the concept of incorporation are nothing new for Nietzsche: the idea of incorporation is not what is special about *GS*. Essentially, Nietzsche's discussion of incorporation is a continuation of his thinking in *HH* and *D* about the power of historical forces to shape our lives. As such, the concept is nevertheless of great interest to the question of affective reorientation. I therefore provisionally treat incorporation as a key to the text. There is also another reason to consider incorporation a key to *GS:* Nietzsche's discussions of incorporation can be interpreted as a commentary on the text within the text, i. e. as meta-commentary. Through his discussions of incorporation, Nietzsche reminds the reader of the possibility to incorporate the knowledge that he presents in his text. A case in point would be the thought of "Eternal Recurrence", which I discuss in section 5.6. Besides being invaluable as a key to understanding *GS*, the possibility of incorporation is intriguing in itself as a new metaphor to grasp the relation between conscious thought and the body. Neither *HH* nor *D* provided any clear answers on that issue, so it is worth paying attention to how Nietzsche's thinking has advanced in *GS*.

Aphorism 11, *Consciousness*, at first sight presents us with a puzzle. Consciousness, Nietzsche claims, is weak. As the most recent development of organic nature, its power is very limited indeed compared to the instincts (= drives), many of which it is implied have structured our lives for countless years. However, the task to incorporate knowledge is presented as a task that is dependent on developing and utilizing consciousness. There is a tension between these statements, but there is no fundamental contradiction here. In fact, the aphorism itself provides the necessary clues to solve the puzzle. For the task which is described as requiring requires conscious effort and involves "making knowledge instinctive" is also presented as a task that is as of yet only grasped by an avantgarde, who perceive that only errors have been incorporated thus far. Thus far, Nietzsche muses, the organism has protected itself from the dangers inherent in the development of consciousness.[54] In a move not lacking

**53** Arguably, this is what Paul Franco does (cf. Franco 2011, 101 – 102).

**54** Nietzsche here relies on the idea that any specific function is a danger to the organism until it is fully developed, "*ausgebildet und reif*" (GS 11, KSA 3, 382).

irony, Nietzsche particularly singles out pride as having served this protective function. Pride in being conscious, in possessing consciousness, has led to overestimating the power of consciousness and thus prevented humanity from feeling a need to actively develop consciousness (GS 11, KSA 3, 382–383).

That too much consciousness too soon could have catastrophic consequences in the sense that it would not serve life is an assertion that forms the background of the more informative aphorisms in book three. In aphorism 110, *Origin of knowledge*, Nietzsche explicitly states that the key question of thinking life is now to what extent truth can be incorporated (GS 110, KSA 3, 471). Are there truths that cannot be incorporated? Are some errors necessary? To answer what Nietzsche specifically had in mind when raising such questions one has to look beyond his hyperbolic statement that only errors have been incorporated thus far. What are the errors like that have been incorporated? Nietzsche identifies a handful of basic errors [*Grundirrthümer*] that the intellect has produced, among them: "that there are enduring things, that there are equal things, that there are things, substances, and bodies, that a thing is what it appears, that our will is free, that what is good for me is also good absolutely" (Kaufmann 1974, 169; GS 110, KSA 3, 469). He then advances what could be called an evolutionary explanation: errors are incorporated insofar as they serve the survival of the species and those errors, which prove their value over generations, become a part of us. Nietzsche provides an example of such incorporation in the following aphorism, which deals with the origin of logic. There he speculates that those individuals who did not perceive change acutely had an advantage over those who saw everything as flux (GS 111, KSA 3, 472).

The point is that even errors can serve life, but Nietzsche's talk of errors should not be taken without a grain of salt. Far more than making factual claims, Nietzsche is in these aphorisms trying to cultivate a certain sensibility; a sceptical awareness. This is clear from the emphasis of aphorism 121, in which Nietzsche lists phenomena such as cause and effect or movement and rest as articles of faith [*Glaubensartikel*] that serve life. The emphasis is here not on the supposed errors but on the conclusion that it could be the case that such errors are a necessary condition of life as we know it (GS 121, KSA 3, 477–478).[55] The word "could" [*könnte*], must not be overlooked. Nietzsche's extreme examples about perception are apt to raise the question: if our perception of nature is so distorted, what about our cherished values? In this sense, Nietzsche's historical narrative tempts the reader to embark on a philosophical journey to himself. According to Nietzsche, the pursuit of knowledge and truth arises only later against the background of error; and only becomes a powerful force once it proves that it too can serve life. It is now in the thinker that the life-preserving errors and the equally life-advancing drive for truth clash; hence the task to incorporate knowledge and the question to what extent truth stands [*verträgt*] to be incorporated (GS 110, KSA 3, 470–471).

**55** "*unter den Bedingungen des Lebens könnte der Irrthum sein*" (GS 121, KSA 3, 477–478).

If Nietzsche indeed would seek to replace the kind of incorporated errors he has described with truths, on what grounds could he possibly base his task? If our everyday perceptions are always already shaped by past incorporated errors, how could truth be distinguished from error? An important clue can be found in aphorism 112, which immediately follows the discussion on incorporation in the preceding aphorisms. There, amidst a discussion of cause and effect, Nietzsche writes that it is enough to consider science an attempt to provide as good a picture of the world as it appears to humans (GS 112, KSA 3, 473),[56] which at least allows us to describe ourselves better. Nietzsche seems to suggest that there is no way to correct the basic errors that influence perception, but there could be a path leading to a more true perspectival understanding of ourselves and the world. To pursue this idea further, it is best return to book two, which contains the clearest statements in this direction.

The critique of realists, in aphorism 57, the opening of book two, is instructive in this regard (GS 57, KSA 3, 421–422). Nietzsche's target is a kind of common-sense realism in the sense of a sober view on the world. Some scholars have sought to specify the target of Nietzsche's criticism, and indeed it is near at hand to mention the realist trend in literature and the arts, but such efforts essentially lead nowhere. There were certainly a great many men and almost as many women in the 19th century who considered themselves realists and this is what Nietzsche aims at.[57] So Nietzsche in his playfully mocking way puts the self-understanding of those who deem themselves realists to the test. This he does by suggesting that for all their love of truth and all their desire to see reality as it is, these realists remain trapped in the passions, errors and valuations of past centuries. It is above all else in the love of reality, a love which Nietzsche assumes animates even the most sober realist, that the real trouble lies; the trouble with the real. This love is an archaic drunkenness, which colours every sensation, every perception of the realist (GS 57, KSA 3, 421). This point is phenomenological: our reality is a felt reality, our very sense of reality is always shaped by our affects. There is no escape from this condition, unless it were possible to shed the entire history of one's animality and humanity, which Nietzsche of course does not think is the case, as his mocking challenge to the realists reveals: if only they could arrive at pure knowledge! [*Ja, wenn ihr das könntet!*] Where does this lead Nietzsche? The comparison with common-sense realism is not meant to be a mere feast of mockery, but is crucially meant to point out the direction of his own project of incorporation. The final sentences of the aphorism are revealing in this regard, as they contend that perhaps the will to move beyond a drunken love of reality should be considered as venerable as the realist's belief of being incapable of any drunkenness (GS 57, KSA 3, 422). How should this will be understood?

**56** "*möglichst getreue Anmenschlichung der Dinge*" (GS 112, KSA 3, 473).

**57** "*ihr nennt euch Realisten und deutet an, so wie euch die Welt erscheine, so sei sie wirklich beschaffen*" (GS 57, KSA 3, 57).

It should be clear by now that Nietzsche's task of incorporating knowledge should not be envisaged as an attempt to view reality "as it is" by stripping away illusions and replacing them with a "realistic" picture of the world. Admittedly, an important first step in the process is to become aware of the extent to which basic errors might shape our sense of "truth". Perhaps one could go as far as to venture the claim that it is a call to cultivate a conscious way of being in which the world as it appears to us is not taken for granted as a solid foundation for knowledge. This is already a heroic task. The incorporation of knowledge would however not be the key task of the *gaya scienza* if it were also not a joyful task. The destruction of one's basic trust in the world as it appears in one's consciousness is only the beginning. Only as creators, Nietzsche insists, can we destroy (GS 58, KSA 3, 422). To simplify: instead of only taking illusions away from a thing, one has to put something new into it. He presents this general argument in a manner that allows him to draw on his philological expertise. He specifically pays attention to the way we speak of things and compares the words we use to designate things to clothes that do not necessarily fit. The name itself might already reveal a valuation; in the way we speak about things different words carry a different weight. As language is transmitted from generation to generation, Nietzsche claims that it is as if valuations become a part of the thing itself. He then concludes that giving new names, attaching new valuations to names, associating words with new probabilities will in due time produce new "things" (GS 58, KSA 3, 422).

In other words, one cannot do away with reality by pointing to the distant and dubious origins of our current understanding of reality. What is required is creative reinterpretation, more fitting descriptions, out of which new "things" are born. Creative reinterpretations, whether they are of a scientific, moral or artistic character, must be incorporated in order to survive. While neither Nietzsche's own elaborations nor the scholarly literature (e. g. Pippin 2010, Brusotti 1997, Franco 2011) are of much help in determining how exactly the task of incorporating knowledge is to be understood, Nietzsche's own examples that I have been discussing imply a long-term process of cultural transmission over generations. At times he does however use the term incorporation in a far less demanding sense, e. g. he speaks of translations of literature as attempts at incorporation (GS 83, KSA 3, 438 – 439). All in all, it is questionable whether Nietzsche wants us to think that incorporating knowledge can have any significant impact on the basic errors that supposedly distort perception, because those errors could be argued to be part of our "nature" in a different sense than specific names for things. Instead of once more raising the question about Nietzsche's possible Lamarckianism, I find it more useful to return to the first aphorism and the question, what use Nietzsche makes of the notion of incorporation.

In aphorism 1, Nietzsche is concerned with the incorporation of a specific idea for its putative effect; it might enable a union of laughter and wisdom. Nietzsche uses the notion of incorporation insofar as it supports a specific joyful mood, through which the idea of life as an experiment appears eminently desirable. Nietzsche is not concerned with incorporation in itself and therefore it is no wonder

that no theory can be drawn from his discussion. It is not a theoretical interest that guides his discussion, but a practical one. Nietzsche is above all concerned with incorporation, when it facilitates affective reorientation. Therefore, it is only to be expected that he concentrates more on errors that are easier to be rid off than the basic errors, but still make a big difference. One need only be alert to how the discussion of incorporated errors in book three seamlessly turns from the domain of nature to questions of morality and from there to religion, a transition which I will reflect on in more detail in the following section, to see that Nietzsche in fact follows such a strategy. Incorporation is just another word that Nietzsche uses to describe the power of historical forces. As such, the notion is certainly of utmost importance for a proper understanding of Nietzsche's criticism of religion and specifically his attack on Christianity. Since Nietzsche thinks that Christianity has been incorporated, his criticism of religion takes the peculiar form that it does in book three of *GS*.

## 5.5 Book three and the Madman

The third book of *GS* is well-known for its criticism of religion; which focuses specifically on European Christianity and its legacy in atheism. As such, book three might mistakenly be taken to be "dead serious". There is no small risk that "tragic" interpretations of the parable of the Madman and the death of God are allowed to inform the reading of the entire book. In this sense, Paul Franco characterizes the book as a "return from art and gaiety to science and tragedy" (Franco 2011, 127). While book three might at first sight seem graver in comparison with the preceding book, it does remain playful throughout (cf. Higgins 2000, 95). In other words, the playful element is not only present in the latter part of the book, which begins with aphorism 153 and consists of shorter aphorisms, but is rather constitutive of Nietzsche's style of presentation. More importantly, book three is comic in the sense of aphorism 1, as Nietzsche evidently does not seek to provide human life with any general meaning. That this is indeed the case is clear from the nature of the task presented in the opening aphorism,[58] which for the first time mentions that God is dead:

> 108. *New struggles.* – After Buddha was dead, his shadow was still shown for centuries in a cave – a tremendous, gruesome shadow. God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. – And we – we still have to vanquish his shadow, too. (Kaufmann 1974, 167; GS 108, KSA 3, 467)

Whether one considers Nietzsche's imagery comic in the more common sense of the word is a matter of taste. What is of greater significance is that the task to defeat the

**58** One can say that the first aphorism presents the program of book three, in the sense that the entire book is best read as being about the fight against the shadows of God (Schellong 1989, 343; cf. Hödl 2009, 407).

shadows of God is above all the task to fight against attempts to replace God with a new instance that would give objective meaning to existence. In aphorism 109, *Let us beware*, Nietzsche explicitly warns against treating the world as if there were more meaning in it than that which humans put into it, i.e. as if there were objective meaning in it. Imbuing the world with objective meaning, Nietzsche insists, is akin to divinizing nature. There is undoubtedly something comic in the manic tempo in which Nietzsche lists a great variety of misleading metaphors through which we view the chaos that is the world, though it is hard to say if the comic effect is intentional. One example must suffice to illustrate how far Nietzsche goes in his criticism: He writes that we should beware of speaking of laws of nature as there is no lawgiver in nature, only necessity. Nietzsche's problem with such metaphors would seem to be that they contain evaluations, either praise or blame. Such metaphors are in his words shadows of God, and it is clear from his litany that he sees them everywhere. The discussion in the following aphorisms on incorporation does suggest that there might be errors that are necessary for life, but Nietzsche nowhere suggests that seeing purpose in nature is one of them. Instead, he ends the aphorism by looking forward to a time when this new view of nature bereft of meaning will be used to naturalize "us humans" (GS 109, KSA 3, 467–469).

Much has been made of Nietzsche's choice of words; of the fact that he speaks of naturalizing humanity.[59] It follows from the context of his use of the word that he is here primarily referring to the task of removing excess meaning from "the human". Nietzsche's task could thus be understood as a logical extension of the scientific picture of nature that he has painted to the picture that is humanity. As there is no absolute meaning in the universe, there is no absolute meaning in human life (cf. Schellong 1989, 343). Consequently, there is also no absolute certainty. Least of all is there certainty in moral or religious matters. Though Nietzsche rhetorically asks when that time will come when one is allowed to start naturalizing humanity, he himself doesn't wait (for permission), but quickly moves on to anthropological questions. It is as if the mere suggestion of nature as chaos without a higher purpose is enough to begin the task.

Indeed, it is worth noting the structure of the discussion that leads up to the Madman's announcement that God is dead, which in dramatic form confronts the reader with the new meaningless world by juxtaposing it to the orientation that used to be provided by God. Initially Nietzsche gives a foretaste of that which is to come in the opening aphorism of book three, in which he suggests that there are new battles to be fought. After the discussion on incorporation that follows the thematization of the shadows of God, Nietzsche stealthily turns the discussion to morality through aphorism 114 and those aphorisms that follow it. Here we finally seem

**59** E.g. Nietzsche's words about naturalizing humanity here and in his other writings are used by Brian Leiter as justification for his view that Nietzsche was a naturalist who thought that all human action should ideally be explained in terms of type-facts (Leiter 2002, 6–8 and 26).

to approach the main target of Nietzsche's discussion of the incorporation of errors, namely Christian morality and belief in God. In other words, there is a steady progression from nature to a naturalized morality and finally to the announcement by the Madman that God is dead.

Nietzsche effectively pauses the preceding discussions on nature and morality in aphorism 124, in order to show where the search of knowledge has led, where the free spirit stands, which is *In the horizon of the infinite*. The free spirit is faced with an open horizon, with an endless sea. Here begins the test of the character of the free spirit, as Nietzsche suggests that there will come a time when the free spirit who had felt so free realizes that there is nothing as terrible as infinity, and feels his freedom diminished. Nietzsche does not specify what is so terrible about infinity, but it is plausible to think that he wants to draw attention to how his or the free spirit's thirst for knowledge will never be stilled, his quest never comes to an end, there is no harbour in which to dock – and this might be felt as being compelled to move onward – as lack of freedom, not as a freely chosen movement. That this is indeed the case, and that it is a test of character is proven by Nietzsche's final words of mockery: "Woe when you feel homesick for the land as if it had offered more freedom – and there is no longer any 'land.'"[60] (Kaufmann 1974, 180 – 181; GS 124, KSA 3, 480)

Against this background, *GS* 125 might fruitfully be approached as another test.[61] For there the reader is confronted with the thought of what used to be infinity, what used to be the horizon and consequently with the question, whether his journey truly is taking him towards heightened feelings of freedom and power or whether he will not fall into despair when he fully understands what he has lost. In this regard, it is tempting to think of the aphorism not as a free-standing oddity but as a direct continuation of the preceding discussions and the test that *GS* 124 presents. Such a perspective would also reveal a new connection between *GS* 125 and the greatest of the tests in the whole work; namely the test that is the thought of Eternal Recurrence (*GS* 341).[62] Be that as it may, there is still something about these tests that has to be clarified before moving on to the Madman. Why does Nietzsche test himself and the reader thus? That Nietzsche devises such tests is only fully understandable when one takes account of the role that mood plays in Nietzsche's thinking and in the composition of *GS*. One could think of them as experiments, which allow himself

**60** This is one of those cases where Kaufmann's translation (nearly) fails to capture Nietzsche's sense, as the original final sentence ends with an exclamation mark (!), i. e. a more clear challenge to the reader.

**61** Dieter Schellong has emphasized that the passage is meant to provoke and that the words of the Madman should be read as a challenge to the reader (cf. Schellong 1989, 341). I will here refine this idea.

**62** Hödl has in some detail explored what he interprets as a thematic connection between *GS* 125 and Eternal Recurrence from the perspective of their history of creation [*Entstehungsgeschichte*], which means that Hödl shows, by drawing mostly on unpublished notes and plans, that the announcement that God is dead is intimately related to Nietzsche's reflections on the possibility of a new kind of teaching that enhances life without relying on absolute authority (Hödl 2009, 400 – 408).

and the reader to test to what extent they are capable of affirming their free spirited existence, to what extent they are carried onward by a mood of joyful affirmation towards yet higher moods.

### 5.5.1 Introduction to *GS* 125, *The Madman*

"Have you not heard of that Madman", are the opening words of *GS* 125, *The Madman* [*Der tolle Mensch*] (GS 125, KSA 3, 480). One should mark these first words carefully, for they do not simply invite the reader to listen to a story. They also draw the reader into a fictional situation, in which the reader listens to a narrative as if he or she were a contemporary of the narrator. The narrative voice is part of the world of the Madman, but is it the Madman himself who recounts his story? The opening words certainly suggest a subtle difference between the voice of the narrator and that of the Madman, but more important than establishing a clear difference is to note the fictionality of the narrative voice. It is of course ultimately Nietzsche who speaks, but through a mask. Any interpretation that does not take the fictionality of the situation into account necessarily becomes a retelling or continuation of the story. To a certain extent all interpretation are continuations of the story, but there is a fundamental difference between the meta-perspective of a properly critical approach that recognizes the narrative as narrative fiction (cf. Hödl 2009, 363)[63] and more direct or naïve approaches. With this in mind, we are ready to move on through a summary of the original story in *GS:*

The Madman goes to the market place and cries, "I seek god! I seek god!", and as it happens there are quite a few of those present who do not believe in God. These respond mockingly to the Madman's cry, they make fun of his search for God, until he jumps right into their midst and interrupts their fun by launching into a pathetic speech in which he most importantly 1) accuses his hearers and himself of having murdered God, 2) seeks to affect his hearers with a sense of loss and finally 3) hints at what is to be done to move onward and falls silent. At this point his hearers also fall silent. Thereupon the Madman announces that his time has not yet come, and the narrator recounts that it is told [*Man erzählt noch*] that the Madman broke into churches on that day to sing his *Requiem aeternam Deo*. When thrown out, the Madman reportedly answers by asking what all churches are now other than graves of God. (GS 125, KSA 3, 480 – 482)

**63** Much has been made of the sources Nietzsche potentially used in crafting the narrative. Once again, no single source provides a key to the interpretation of the passage, nor does dwelling on passages in Nietzsche's earlier works that purportedly express the thought that God is dead through narrative fiction (cf. Hödl 2009, 394) lead to any significant clues (cf. Hödl 2009, 400 and Brusotti 1997, 389). In this regard, it is arguably far more instructive to carefully follow the general trajectory of Nietzsche's criticism of religion and read the passage in that context.

The secondary literature has rightly paid much attention to the dramatic tension between the Madman and the atheists of the marketplace. Unfortunately, there has also been an obsession to identify both the atheists and the Madman to make them more graspable. The atheists are most often read as representing enlightenment atheism (Pippin 2010, 51). Perhaps a bit more true to Nietzsche, Higgins writes that the atheists represent "contemporary atheistic society" or simply "modern" men (Higgins 2003, 101–102). All of these attempts to specify who the atheists are, to give them an identity, involve overinterpretation.[64] I think it is far more fruitful to respect the fictional character of the atheists and to analyse what role they play in the story. So let us simply call them the marketplace atheists and see how Nietzsche himself portrays them. As has been pointed out by scholars, the Madman directs his words at an audience with which one does not need to argue whether God is dead or not (Schellong 1989, 341; cf. Hödl 2009, 462). What is important to the narrative is that there is still something that is lacking in these atheists, but precisely what that is can only be answered through an analysis of that enigmatic figure who through his deeds make their lack apparent. The decisive moment in this regard is when the atheists fall silent and look at the Madman with bewildered eyes. What is the lack that the Madman has made apparent? Is it perhaps the lack of God and a hidden desire for God that the Madman has made them feel with his invocation of the search for God? Or is it perhaps a deficient understanding of the consequences of the death of the Christian God? The only certain thing is that it is suggested that a mere denial of the existence of God is not satisfactory.

It is even more problematic when one does not recognize the fictionality of the figure of the Madman. "The Madman is Nietzsche and expresses Nietzsche's inmost thoughts." Thus, scores of readers have without a doubt reasoned when faced with the words of the Madman.[65] I here intend to show that equating the Madman to Nietzsche in any straightforward manner is to make things easier than they are and that accepting that presupposition does away with much of the challenge involved in interpreting the passage. Specifically it goes against the grain of contextual interpretation. Consequently, I will argue that interpretations that are premised on the interchangeability of Nietzsche and the Madman ignore the context of *GS* 125 within the work and therefore suffer from distortion. To be absolutely clear, I do not mean to deny that scholars who have made such claims have made important contributions to the discussion about the passage. To the contrary, much can be gained by taking interpretations that do not distinguish the Madman and Nietzsche seriously. I will therefore emphasize what I take to be the relative merits of two theses of the kind alluded to above.

**64** To be strict, even using the word atheist is questionable, since it is only spoken of people who do not believe in God. I take it to be fairly uncontroversial to use that term, as long as one leaves the precise identity unspecified.

**65** Karl Jaspers espoused this view (Jaspers 1981, 431) and it echoes forth in scholarship to this day (e.g. Janz 1978 II, 108 and Düsing 2010, 44–45).

I will begin by examining a thesis that most blatantly contradicts my own interpretation; namely that the Madman's words are an expression of Nietzsche's desire for God. Then I will examine a more subtle thesis that also rests on the premise that the Madman speaks directly for Nietzsche; namely the thesis that *GS* 125 expresses his desire to be God. Though these theses have much in common and are often presented in tandem,[66] they can be presented as rivals, so I will treat them separately in their pure forms. Only after having weighed the merits and drawbacks of these related theses, will I finally present an alternative interpretation, premised on the fictional nature of the narrative and centred on the claim that Nietzsche strategically uses the "death of God" as a test.

### 5.5.2 Nietzsche, the Madman and desire for God

The Madman, as Nietzsche presents him, does indeed appear to be an agitated being. On a not uncommon reading, the Madman expresses Nietzsche's sincere devastation at having lost God (e. g. Düsing 2010, 44 – 45). Karl Jaspers explicitly speaks of the cry "God is dead!" as an expression of Nietzsche's shock [*Ausdruck seiner Erschütterung*] (Jaspers 1981, 431). This devastation is then linked with desire for God, for in the view that is of concern here there can be no other explanation for the sense of loss that the Madman embodies than a strong yet frustrated desire for God. Again, Jaspers provides a good albeit extreme example of this point of view when he writes that even when Nietzsche resists the impulse toward transcendence, he in fact cannot help but seek transcendence (Jaspers 1981, 432). Based on this assertion, Jaspers finally concludes that Nietzsche's atheism is the expression of a search for God that no longer recognizes itself for what it really is (Jaspers 1981, 433).[67] Such interpretations, according to which Nietzsche was and remained a God-seeker [*Gottsuchender*], can for textual support point to the Madman's cry "I seek God! I seek God!" on the one hand, and his evocation of a sense of loss that culminates in his *Requiem aeternam Deo* on the other. One can of course question whether the emphasis on these aspects of the passage at the expense of others is justified, but the most important critical question is whether the presuppositions about Nietzsche and the Madman's condition that the interpretation relies on are defensible.

There are two major problems with the "Desire for God-interpretation". The first and most serious problem is that the interpretation is inextricably tied to a strong claim about Nietzsche as person. Though scholars who support the interpretation invariably refer to Nietzsche's biography, there are reasons to question whether the claim can be based on biographical facts. Note that it would not be enough to estab-

**66** E. g. a presumed desire to be God can be read as misinterpreted desire for God (e. g. Düsing 2010, 64 – 65).

**67** "*Daher ist Nietzsches Gottlosigkeit die sich steigernde Unruhe eines sich vielleicht nicht mehr verstehenden Gottsuchens.*" (Jaspers 1981, 433)

lish that Nietzsche now and then felt a longing to return to the faith of his youth or anything of that sort. The claim presupposes a much stronger affective orientation,[68] if it is to do the work required of it, i.e. if it is to guide the interpretation of *GS* 125 in particular and Nietzsche's philosophy of religion in general. Just how problematic interpretations of the passage that rely on the idea that the Madman expresses Nietzsche's desire for God are, can be seen when one instead of basing one's interpretation on that idea asks the question: Did mister Nietzsche have an acute desire for God that defines his philosophical pursuits? The only scholarly answer that can be given to the question is that this cannot be known for sure, since it is ultimately a question of interpreting Nietzsche's inmost desires. In this case it is not even of much use to point out that neither Nietzsche's philosophical writings nor his own self-interpretations suggest that his philosophizing could be subsumed under a religious impulse, if Jaspers really is onto something when he claims Nietzsche no longer recognized his driving impulse for what it was. In that case, nothing that Nietzsche himself writes about issues relevant to the question really matters in the end. Therefore, what one has to ask is this: is Jaspers a better interpreter of Nietzsche's desires than Nietzsche himself? Though Jaspers might be right, after all that possibility cannot be excluded, his assumption is unwarranted. The primary issue would here not seem to be whether the available evidence supports his interpretation or not, but whether any amount of evidence could either verify or falsify it. His hermeneutical procedure is rather reminiscent of certain philosophical and theological perspectives that see desire for God in each and every human action. Or as Nietzsche himself bluntly put it: through a false psychology one can turn everything into metaphysical need (NL 1877, 22[107], KSA 8, 399).

If the decision that grounds Jaspers' interpretation and other interpretations that rest on the same premise is such a fundamental philosophical commitment that it seems to be, how should we who are concerned with the interpretation of *GS* 125 move onward? If the question cannot be settled by referring to Nietzsche's writings, it would seem that an engagement with Jasper's claim falls outside the domain of Nietzsche-scholarship proper. There is, however, no need to start a fundamental discussion concerning philosophical anthropology. Instead of rejecting such interpretations of *GS* 125 on philosophical grounds, however untenable their foundations seem to us, one can ask about their consequences for understanding the rest of *GS*. More than any other approach, this strategy is apt to show that interpretations that identify Nietzsche with the Madman and diagnose both with a misunderstood desire for God are implausible. Before I advance an alternative contextual interpretation of *GS* 125, I will engage a second significant problem with the desire for God -interpretation.

**68** Although Düsing also refers to Nietzsche's biography, she seems to be aware that this is not enough to ground the claim. To supplement biographical trivia, she asserts that Nietzsche's desire for God must have been mostly unconscious and actively repressed by him until it finally broke through simultaneously with his madness (cf. Düsing 2010, 65).

The second major problem with the "Desire for God-interpretation" concerns the exact nature of the devastation that the cry "God is dead!" is associated with, and the link between this presumed devastation and desire for God. Could there not be a better explanation for the pathos of the Madman than that it is an expression of Nietzsche's own devastation and desire for God? On what grounds can the Madman's response be associated with desire for God in the first place, irrespective of whether one identifies the figure with Nietzsche or not? Can there be no reason to be alarmed at some of the consequences of the death of God even if one is not moved by desire for God? Perhaps there are other alternatives, but let us entertain the thought that there are not, for a while, and begin by looking more closely at the Madman's condition. For whether we do or do not take the Madman to express Nietzsche's own devastation, the task to describe its nature is an important one for any interpretation. It is after all possible that scholars who see desire for God in the Madman's behaviour have diagnosed the Madman correctly, even if they then too quickly identify the Madman with Nietzsche. Therefore, the task commands our attention.

#### 5.5.2.1 A story of loss and grief?

Though much of the pathos of the Madman's speech derives from his claim that he and those he directs his words at have murdered God, the accent is still squarely placed on the loss and not on the murder. This is clear when the Madman asks how on earth the murder was committed, as he then goes on to impart a sense of loss on his hearers through rich metaphors that all express the centrality that the notion of God once had; especially for orientation (cf. Hödl 2009, 428). The key metaphors here are the sea, which has been drunk dry, the sun, from the gravity of which the earth has liberated itself, and the horizon, which has been wiped away. The Madman concludes this litany by one last time emphasizing that the holiest and mightiest that belonged to the world has bled to death (GS 125, KSA 3, 481). Whereas the Madman fails to describe how God was murdered, he does not fail to communicate a sense of loss (cf. Hödl 2009, 447). To this can be added that the ending of the passage (*Requiem aeternam Deo*) at least suggests the possibility of rituals of mourning for the dead God (GS 125, KSA 3, 482). It is therefore understandable that the passage has been read as a story of grief. To mention one prominent and telling example, even Higgins who otherwise emphasizes the comic aspects of book three reads Nietzsche/the Madman as calling for a "period of grieving" following the death of God (Higgins 2000, 95). If the passage is read as a story of loss and grief, how should the grief of the Madman be understood? Does Nietzsche actively call for a period of grieving or will those confronted by the knowledge of the Madman inevitably fall into grief? Is the response represented by the Madman paradigmatic for all of humanity or only one alternative among others?

In order to cast light on the scholarly discussion about the Madman's grief, I will draw on contemporary research on loss, grief and resilience. The point is not to advance some anachronistic claim about Nietzsche's intentions, but to problematize

what has been written about the Madman's response to the death of God. The most important finding of the scientific study of grief is that there are many ways that humans respond to loss (Bonanno 2004, 20; cf. Bonanno, Westphal and Mancini 2011). Crucially there is no such thing as an ideal pattern of coping with loss, which would set off with shock and move through a set of stages until grief is slowly but surely overcome. The story used to be that the death of a loved one is always a devastating loss: not only grieving too much but showing too little grief was deemed rare and pathological. However, most people simply do not respond to the death of a significant other in the way that a vast pop-psychological industry would have us believe (Bonanno 2004, 21). Quite to the contrary, many or perhaps even a majority of those who are faced with a potentially debilitating loss such as the death of a loved one manage to continue their lives without any serious disruptions (Bonanno 2004, 23). These individual have a capacity to thrive in the face of loss and other adverse events. This is called resilience, and it is a healthy response that has nothing to do with a failure to recognize loss. Those who exhibit resilience are not unaffected by loss, but the loss nevertheless has no long-term negative psychological consequences on them, such as depressed mood (Bonanno 2004, 23 – 24). Researchers in the field emphasize that taking account of resilience is not to deny that some people grieve over a period of years before recovering and that some never fully recover and instead develop chronic grief, which is indistinguishable from depression. What makes resilience so interesting is rather, besides it being surprisingly common, that it forms a distinct trajectory from grief, i. e. that it is different from recovery (Bonanno 2004, 20 – 21). Most interestingly, the available evidence strongly suggests that one of the ways resilient individuals cope is through positive emotion and laughter, and that instead of necessarily representing an unhealthy denial of reality, such a response can be a sign of health (Bonanno 2004, 26; cf. Bonanno, Westphal and Mancini 2011, 1.12). This is good to keep in mind when one approaches what has been written about *GS* 125 and responses to the death of God, for quite a few interpreters have read the aphorism as a story about a loss comparable to the loss of a loved one. Specifically it has been read as a loss that, for reasons seldom articulated, requires a response akin to grief.

Nietzsche never explicitly thematizes the death of God in terms of grief [*Trauer*] nor does that term appear in *GS* 125. There are indeed good reasons to differentiate the Madman's condition from grief, at least of the kind of grief that passes by of its own accord, i. e. the grief-pattern known as recovery. This is in fact what the more perceptive commentators who emphasize the loss evoked by the Madman have done. Reinhard Gasser has proposed that what the Madman is meant to express is not temporary grief [*Trauer*], but more akin to melancholia as defined and theorized by Freud (Gasser 1997, 498). As opposed to the presumed passivity and reactivity of grief, Freudian melancholia is characterized by the active despair of destruction. So interpreting the Madman as expressing melancholia fits in neatly with his ravings about murder. Gasser is careful to point out that his interpretation involves imposing a Freudian framework on Nietzsche's text, but one can agree with Gasser that this

framework casts light on the passage at least insofar as it helps rule out that the Madman would express any common form of grief and instead points in the direction that the Madman's condition is perhaps something more pathological. Still one might ask whether diagnosing the Madman with melancholia does not create more problems than it solves.

On philosophical grounds one might object that the Freudian framework can hardly be reconciled with a 21st-century scientific understanding of grief (e. g. Bonanno 2004), which in this case means that adopting it threatens what one might want to see as the enduring relevance of *GS* 125. This is not to say that a contemporary understanding of responses to loss should instead be applied, and that one should speak of the chronic grief of the Madman. To the contrary, outside perspectives can only aid interpretation, not guide it. I merely want to draw attention to this drawback to viewing the Madman's actions in terms of Freudian melancholia. Needless to say, the wish to find the passage relevant even in our day is no admissible reason to reject Gasser's interpretation. One might rather, on philological grounds, question Gasser's claim that Nietzsche thinks that the melancholic reaction of the Madman is paradigmatic for the reaction of all men [*Reaktion des Menschen*] (Gasser 1997, 498), until a new type of human eventually arises after a process of revaluation spanning several centuries (Gasser 1997, 498 – 551). The problem is not primarily that Gasser places Nietzsche's thinking within a fairly rigid historical schema, because such ideas are certainly to be found in the corpus. That aspect of Gasser's interpretation actually fits Nietzsche's psychological thinking about incorporated ideals and historically inculcated emotions perfectly. The problem is rather that he fails to note that revaluation can itself be a joyful project, especially for those who would prepare the way toward that future in which the old ideals have been overcome. For is that not what the joyful science is all about? If and when the open horizon seems so enticing, abandoning the old ideals need not appear as a melancholic necessity but as a joyful destruction.

As the entire issue is of secondary importance to his scholarly goals, Gasser himself does not argue for his interpretation in great detail, but fortunately Edith Düsing has expanded on Gasser's insights. Unlike Gasser, Düsing emphasizes that Nietzsche counts with at least three different responses to the "melancholic darkening of horizons" that is the death of God:

> 1) a passive grief, in which no hope nor love nor desire is possible any more, 2) a despairing liberation of destructive energies (represented by the Madman) and 3) finally and ideally a slow but steady overcoming of grief through revaluation (Düsing 2010, 57).

Although she places all reactions within a melancholic framework, Düsing is careful to distinguish the Madman's condition from melancholia of any known kind, i. e. melancholia as response to any other loss. Instead, she writes of a "new kind of mel-

ancholy".[69] There are indeed good reasons to assume that what the Madman is meant to express is a new feeling. Though Düsing does not draw on Nietzsche's sketches for *GS* 125 to support her interpretation, it is noteworthy that Nietzsche in the notebooks of 1881 specifically writes of the feeling that humanity has murdered God as a new feeling.[70] In the final version that we know from the published work, the identification of the state of the Madman with a new feeling is lacking.

Did Nietzsche radically change his mind about the state of the Madman? It is more plausible to assume that Nietzsche sought to give expression to this imagined feeling, instead of naming it. The result is less analytic and more visceral. Of course, Nietzsche's strategical choice makes it harder to identify the exact components of the feeling than if he had named them too. I concur with Düsing's reading that the new feeling is composed both of pain and exultation [*Schmerz und Jubel*] (Düsing 2010, 47; cf. Brusotti 1997, 409). The pain of loss which is heightened by a sense of guilt at having caused the loss is inextricable from a heightened sense of power, i.e. it also betrays a pride. While the pain of the Madman might reasonably be thought to spring from desire for God, how does such exultation fit into the picture? Düsing solves the problem by asserting that the Madman's joy derives from getting rid of God as judge, whereas his melancholy derives from losing the God of love that he still seeks (Düsing 2010, 47). Though this explanation is hardly plausible,[71] one might just as well concede that the Madman, as Nietzsche presents him, appears still to be bound to the religious tradition and to the God that he would mourn in the churches into which he forces his way. The main reason for this is that the guilt of the Madman, expressed in his questions implying the need for rituals of purification (GS 125, KSA 3, 481), certainly seems to be religious (cf. Franco 2011, 135). Be that as it may, there is no reason to deny that Nietzsche thought that the Madman's response, or the response the Madman performs, to the death of God is one possible alternative. The question is rather what emphasis is to be put on this alternative and how it fits into the general picture of *GS*.

#### 5.5.2.2 A non-melancholic response?

Though it is not quite clear to what extent Düsing follows Gasser in thinking that people will generally react to the death of God in a way that does not differ greatly from that of the Madman, she certainly emphasizes that the loss is dramatic and that all alternative reactions will be in one way or another melancholic (cf. Düsing 2010, 57). The initial response would always be what in contemporary research is called

**69** "*neue Art der Melancholie*" (Düsing 2010, 39).

**70** "*Dies Gefühl, das Mächtigste und Heiligste, was die Welt bisher besaß, getödtet zu haben, wird noch über die Menschen kommen, es ist ein ungeheures neues Gefühl!*" (NL 1881, 14[26], KSA 9, 632)

**71** Nietzsche's comments on God and love (GS 140 and GS 141, KSA 3, 489) do point to the contradiction between loving and judging but in no way suggest that Nietzsche would only have a problem with God as judge.

chronic grief, which encompasses a variety of pathological forms of grief. In other words, the reaction to the death of God cannot be done away with through a "period of grieving" (Higgins 2000, 95). According to Düsing, what is instead required is therapy (Düsing 2010, 31 and 59). There is a strong hint in Düsing's elaborations, which above all concentrate on the ideas of Eternal Recurrence and the *Übermensch*, that this therapy necessarily amounts to a godless divinization of the human (Düsing 2010, 47); a divinization which involves a misdirection of religious desire for God (Düsing 2010, 64–65).[72] Although one might instantly object that such divinization seems to blatantly contradict Nietzsche's project of naturalizing man (cf. GS 109, KSA3, 469), I will for now ignore this latter claim about desire to be God and concentrate on the idea that the death of God requires therapy.

A crucial unexamined presupposition behind Düsing's reading is that all possible responses to the death of God are best interpreted within the framework of a novel form of melancholia, the paradigmatic example of which is given by the Madman. What if there is an affective response to the death of God that doesn't start with devastation? What I am suggesting is that there could be an entirely different trajectory, analogous to the way in which resilience has been found to differ from recovery in scientific research on grief. In the following, I will argue that Nietzsche in fact held such a response both possible and desirable.

Among the most interesting issues that has emerged from scholarly commentary on *GS* 125 is that Nietzsche most probably meant the Madman to express a new feeling (e. g. Düsing 2010, 47 and Brusotti 1997, 409). While the Madman's response is perhaps best described as melancholic and pathological, one might ask if the death of God doesn't also make other new feelings possible. After all, Nietzsche's first reflections on mountain air in the latter half of the 1870s suggested precisely that possibility (see sections 4.2.7 and 4.2.8). Shouldn't the feelings associated with "joyful science", feelings of free air and open horizons, be read this way? In this sense, Franco contrasts the "terrified, guilt-obsessed response of the madman" with the "cheerful response of the free-spirited seeker after knowledge", which he perhaps also too quickly[73] identifies with Nietzsche's own response (as a biographical matter, see Franco 2011, 140). As a whole, *GS* is a testament to this joyful response, though book four can be claimed to most embody it, as I will seek to show soon enough (cf. section 5.6). The Madman's ravings, if read in the tragic key that they so often are read, seem to be wholly out of tune with this general mood of *GS*.

I have already suggested that directly identifying the Madman with Nietzsche and diagnosing both with desire for God can hardly be reconciled with the rest of

**72** "*Gottlose Vergöttlichung des Menschen*" (Düsing 2010, 47). Düsing's own standpoint is clearly articulated in her monograph study, in which she presents a return to Jesus, to the love of Christ, as the only viable therapy for nihilism (Düsing 2006, 553).

**73** Because that which matters is not Mister Nietzsche's own response, but the response he presented as desirable or in other words as an ideal throughout his writings. So what matters again is the "Nietzsche" constructed within the text.

*GS*. Likewise, the most important reason to reject the idea that Nietzsche wants to infect the reader with the Madman's melancholy has to do with the consequences of that idea for interpreting *GS* as a whole. If one places much stress on *GS* 125 and the Madman's devastation and supposed desire for God, it would seem to me that the inevitable consequence is that the entire project of *GS* is obscured. In order to give a definite interpretation of *GS* 125 in that direction, one has to sacrifice the rest of *GS*. What is gained in clarity when approaching this single passage, is lost when one moves either backward or forward in the pages, because the whole of *GS* simply cannot be made to conform with interpretations of that kind. From the point of view of contextual interpretation, the interpretation that both equates Nietzsche with the Madman and interprets the Madman's condition as expressing desire for God has to be deemed implausible.

I am willing to concede that emphasizing the devastation of the Madman need not lead to a rigid view on *GS* as tragic at its core. A case in point would be the interpretation of Curt Paul Janz. Janz, who equates Nietzsche and the Madman ([*Der tolle Mensch – Nietzsche*], Janz 1978 II, 108), and assumes that the aphorism expresses sincere devastation is careful to point out that this regret represents only one side of the philosopher's experience, the stronger side being one of affirmation (Janz 1978 II, 108 – 109). The problem with this view is that it renders *GS* oddly inconsistent; one simply has to accept that *GS* 125 is out of tune with the rest of the work. The critical question can be formulated thus: Is there perhaps a way of reading the passage which does not contradict the mood of joyful science? To begin with, I will show through a discussion of the most relevant passages from book three that there is no basis in the rest of the text of GS for the interpretation that the Madman expresses Nietzsche's own devastation, and that neither does the assertion that the driving force of the project of *GS* would be desire for God find any support. In the following, I am not concerned with Nietzsche's inmost desire, but with the Nietzsche that emerges from the text, i. e. the Nietzsche that is of consequence.

#### 5.5.2.3 Metaphysical need, aesthetic taste and desire for God

If Nietzsche/humanity is left with desire for God, but there is no God or intellectual integrity forbids worshipping a God, then the result might indeed be despair. That there is no textual support for the view that Nietzsche held such a dismal prospect to be inevitable, and that interpretations that claim otherwise are unfounded, can be shown by carefully heeding what he has to say about the "metaphysical need" in *GS:*

> 151. "*Of the origin of religion*". – The metaphysical need is not the origin of religions, as Schopenhauer supposed, but merely a late offshoot. Under the rule of religious ideas, one has become accustomed to the notion of "another world (behind, below, above)" – and when religious ideas are destroyed one is troubled by an uncomfortable emptiness and deprivation. From this feeling grows once again "another world," but now merely a metaphysical one that is no longer religious. But what first led to a positing of "another world" in primeval times was not some im-

> pulse or need but an error in the interpretation of certain natural events, a failure of the intellect. (Kaufmann 1974, 196; GS 151, KSA 3, 494–495)

The consequence of Nietzsche's claim that the metaphysical need is not the immutable source of religion is that it too will pass away. There is nothing in the aphorism to suggest that Nietzsche would have revised his understanding in this respect, which means we are dealing with "an acquired and consequently also a transitory need" (Handwerk 1997, 99; HH I 131, KSA 2, 124). In fact, Nietzsche goes even further than in *HH* and *D* when he now more confidently claims that religion does not have its origins in any one drive or need but in misinterpretation (GS 151, KSA 3, 495). It is important to note that this claim does not amount to denying that the misinterpretation in positing another world was and is guided by affect, but that there is not one single, innate and immutable metaphysical need that would explain all religion and metaphysical philosophy. Metaphysical philosophy must in this view instead be understood as a late flower that grows when religious ideas have been refuted or can no longer be believed. Since religious belief in another world has been incorporated, i.e. one has become accustomed to the idea of another world, parting from it is not necessarily easy. It can be felt as loss. Metaphysical philosophy offers an easy replacement, a metaphysical idea of another world. Consequently, there is reason to assume that Nietzsche's willingness to move beyond metaphysical philosophy necessarily requires overcoming those feelings of lack and loss that sustain metaphysics.[74] Nietzsche's thematizations of loss, above all through the Madman, could thus be read as pointing to a condition that is undesirable to say the least, against which the alternative opportunities presented by Nietzsche appear more desirable. It could of course be objected that the aphorism referred to above advances a general theoretical claim and nothing more. It tells us nothing about Nietzsche's personal struggles. Be that as it may, an earlier aphorism that is both as "personal" and as philosophically illuminating as it gets speaks a harsh language about Nietzsche's rejection of the religious tradition he was brought up in:

> 132. *Against Christianity.* What is now decisive against Christianity is our taste, no longer our reasons. (Kaufmann 1974, 186; GS 132, KSA 3, 485)

There are very good reasons to think that this kind of rejection is not merely an intellectual pose and instead goes to the heart of the issue. These reasons, which I will shortly present, are strong enough to utterly reject Janz's view that Nietzsche's aestheticization entails a devaluation of the existential question of belief in God. Janz writes that it is a terrible devaluation, when Nietzsche "reduces" the question of faith to an

**74** Carlo Gentili has similarly argued that precisely in the rejection of an absolute need for God one finds the meaning of gay science (Gentili, 2010, 242–243).

aesthetic judgement.[75] Instead of representing a devaluation, I argue that Nietzsche's statement is best interpreted as reflecting the maturity of his philosophical rejection of Christianity.[76] Read against the background of what Nietzsche writes about metaphysical need it should be clear that what is at stake is not an aesthetic judgement in any trivial sense, but rather a more general affective orientation; or "wishes of the heart". As I have already shown (see chapter 2, section 2.2), Nietzsche inherited and radicalized an already existing tradition of thinking about religion in aesthetic terms. If Nietzsche's judgement of taste against Christianity is to be seen as a devaluation of a serious existential question, the real culprit is Schleiermacher, who defined religion as feeling and taste for the infinite.[77] In this context, Nietzsche's aesthetic rejection of Christianity is above all feeling and taste for the earth. As such, Nietzsche's philosophy represents a tremendous revaluation of matters of taste and of aesthetics broadly conceived.[78] That Nietzsche thinks of religion in aesthetic terms follows naturally from his privileging the perspectives of this life, which are the only perspectives left once one abandons the idea of a universal perspective (a God's eye view).

A good example of Nietzsche's revaluation of taste can be gained from what he says about changes in taste in *GS*; namely, that changes in (general) taste are far more important than the change of opinions (GS 39, KSA 3, 406 – 407). To justify his claim, Nietzsche suggests that aesthetic and moral opinions are merely symptoms and that instead the real causes are most often a matter of physiology. In short, differences in ways of living result in differences in taste (GS 39, KSA 3, 407). While the physiological language in which Nietzsche tries to make his point is characteristically hyperbolic, the aphorism need not be read in a manner that undermines Nietzsche's efforts to consciously change tastes. Perhaps the most important claim undergirding Nietzsche's talk about incorporation is after all that incorporating ideas can cause physiological changes. In fact, Nietzsche's elaborations in *GS* 39 support that view: when a new taste is successfully introduced, people first have to become accus-

**75** "*Die furchtbarste Abwertung vollzieht er damit, dass er das ganze Problem auf ein ästhetisches Urteil reduziert*" (Janz 1978 II, 108).

**76** Dieter Schellong has also argued that Nietzsche's judgement of taste reflects an advance in understanding. His interpretation that Nietzsche thinks Christianity is no longer a living faith, i. e. only a shadow, and that Nietzsche therefore finds no reason to argue against Christianity, is nevertheless questionable. The main problem is that it ascribes to Nietzsche the view that one cannot argue about matters of taste (Schellong 1989, 343 – 344).

**77** The aestheticist tradition as a whole can and has of course been criticized for its anthropocentrism, e. g. for trivializing Christianity, but even critics should and often do acknowledge that Schleiermacher's influence on Protestant theology was immense and that he left a legacy that all later attempts to ground theology in the modern world have to contend with. In other words, what matters most to us here is that Schleiermacher was at the forefront of serious philosophical and theological thinking that dared to confront the challenge of modernity.

**78** As Nietzsche has his Zarathustra say to those who deem matters of taste not worth fighting about: "But all of life is a dispute over taste and tasting!" (Parkes 2005, 101; KSA 4, 150)

tomed to it, but finally they feel it as a necessity. Thus, the new taste becomes a need [*Bedürfnis*] (GS 39, KSA 3, 407). Nietzsche gives no examples in that aphorism of how a taste becomes a need, but in a discussion about learning to love new things Nietzsche gives a phenomenological description of how one first learns to tolerate a piece of music, then becomes accustomed to it and finally feels that one has to hear it again and again (GS 334, KSA 3, 559 – 560). One could also think of the process by which a style of clothing is adopted. First a few individuals dare to challenge the reigning style, then people slowly adopt the new style and finally feel that you have to wear it as a matter of respectability. In any case, a presupposition for there being changes in taste is that there are always individuals who feel differently about the reigning taste, but that is in no way enough. Those who feel differently about matters of taste have to be alert to their feelings, listen closely to them and have the courage to stick to their judgement in order to be able to resist the force of the general taste and potentially change it (GS 39, KSA 3, 407).

Listening to one's feelings is a matter of interpretation, which means that Nietzsche's elaborations are in no way bound to a view that only recognizes basic physiological impulses. Read thus, the aphorism can be fruitfully employed to understand what Nietzsche is trying to say when he presents himself as rejecting Christianity on grounds of taste. Nietzsche listens to his own impulses, interprets his desires, and concludes that Christian faith is out of the question for him. In other words, his taste rejects Christianity. What remains is to live up to this feeling and to make it known. In this light, Nietzsche would aspire to be one of those mighty individuals, who without feeling shame proclaim their judgement of taste, their "*hoc est ridiculum, hoc est absurdum*", and thus influence the general taste in a population (cf. GS 39, KSA 3, 406 – 407).

Contrary to what Janz's interpretation suggests, the question is about what is decisive, not about devaluing other than aesthetic grounds to reject Christianity. Walter Kaufmann's translation expresses this perhaps with even greater clarity than the original German: "What is now decisive against Christianity is our taste, no longer our reasons." (Kaufmann 1974, 186) To be absolutely clear, this does not mean that Nietzsche would have no reasons against Christianity, but that taste has become more important. He presents himself as having reached a new stage: only now does he fully dare to confront the tradition where it is most strong. He no longer needs to rely solely on rational grounds to reject Christianity, but can count on the judgement of his taste. What an overcoming he presents this to be becomes apparent, when one compares this judgement of taste with what he has to say about the free spirit in *HH*. There, the free spirit is still under the thrall of those religious/metaphysical feelings [*Stimmungen*] that he encounters in the arts, and such experiences almost prompt him to wish that someone might lead him back to religion (HH I 153, KSA 2, 145). That is clearly no longer the case. Henceforth, the attack on faith becomes more direct: as if he had gained in confidence, Nietzsche utters judgements of taste against Christianity in increasingly harsh words.

This is the Nietzsche that emerges from the text of GS and from his later writings. In the end, it doesn't matter that much, what Nietzsche's personal reaction to the "death of God" was. Enough doubt has been cast on the interpretation that Nietzsche's writings could fruitfully be approached through the thesis that they speak of his personal desire for God. Therefore, we can return to the question: What did Nietzsche intend when writing the fictional narrative about the Madman? The most plausible answer to be found in the scholarly literature is that Nietzsche aims to draw attention to his view that the death of God presents a unique historical opening of possibilities. Following Hödl, the narrative about the Madman is best read as part of Nietzsche's strategic communication concerning the possibilities opened up by the death of God, possibilities that first and foremost concern what humans can be.[79] In this sense, the Madman is a warning example, though also one who warns about what might come. That the Madman does not represent Nietzsche's ideal is all too apparent, but the decisive question here is whether or not the Madman hints at this ideal, when he asks if "we" do not have to become Gods now that God is dead. Is the possibility that interests Nietzsche most perhaps after all an expression of his desire to be God?

### 5.5.3 Nietzsche, the Madman and desire to be God

Though there are good grounds to emphasize the Madman's evocations of loss, and no small number of scholars have done so, it is also possible to read *GS* 125 with murder in mind. In other words, the accent can be placed on the murder of God instead of on loss. Though the Madman does not give reasons for the deed, reasons can arguably be interpreted into his words. This is especially the case with the question "must we not ourselves become Gods to appear worthy of it?" (Kaufmann 1974, 181). Could it be that this is the true message of the Madman, what Nietzsche meant to communicate?

The thesis that this is indeed the message of the Madman and more significantly also that of Nietzsche was first put forward by Lou von Salomé (Andreas-Salomé 1894, 38 – 40). In her classical formulation, however, Nietzsche does not want to murder God but becomes convinced that God is dead, is consequently devastated and finds no other way out of this feeling other than to direct all his power to the task to become (a) God. In his influential polemic *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, Henri de Lubac takes the darker view alluded to above; that Nietzsche was out to

**79** Referring to the anthropological focus of Nietzsche's criticism of religion, Gerald Hödl writes: "*In diesem Kontext wird die Thematisierung des Todes Gottes als eines epochalen Verlustes strategisch dazu eingesetzt auf die neuen Möglichkeiten, die damit eröffnet sind, hinzuweisen, aber die Gefahren zu betonen, die in einer Abspannung der durch das alte Ideal angespannten Kräfte, ohne sich nach den neuen Möglichkeiten hin zu orientieren, liegen.*" (Hödl 2009, 463) Schellong also cursorily notes that the passage points to such possibilities (Schellong 1989, 341).

kill God (de Lubac 1983, 49 – 50) in order to put Man on the quest to become God. Though these interpretations have different starting points, they converge in the conclusion that Nietzsche's mature philosophizing was driven by a desire to be God. Though no scholars have to my knowledge more recently argued in favour of a strong version of the thesis that the Madman expresses Nietzsche's desire to be God one does find echoes of it here and there. As we have seen, Edith Düsing comes close to suggesting that the death of God in Nietzsche's view necessarily leads to a divinization of man (Düsing 2010, 47). Likewise, Stephen Mulhall asserts that both Nietzsche and his Madman cannot help repeating Christian structures of thought and that a desire to be God might be the ultimate truth of Nietzsche's philosophizing (Mulhall 2005, 44 – 45 and 120 – 122). It is therefore important to examine the evidence that bears on the matter, if only to rule out the possibility that the interpretation has found the key to *GS* 125.

The most obvious place to look for evidence is book four, where Nietzsche presents enticing future possibilities. In aphorism 300, Nietzsche envisions enjoying the self-sufficiency of a God as such a possibility. In the perspective that Nietzsche bids the reader to entertain, the entire history of religion could be cherished as means to a sublime end, specifically "the strange means to make it possible for a few single individuals to enjoy the whole self-sufficiency of a god and his whole power of self-redemption" (Kaufmann 1974, 240; GS 300, KSA 3, 539). It is indeed near at hand to read the aphorism in the context of the death of God, as Nietzsche speaks from a point of view where the history of religion is effectively understood to have come to its conclusion if not to an end. Could such a vision be enough to inspire the murder of God or enough to let a devastated Nietzsche forget what he has lost and mourns? Perhaps so, yet it is the case that Nietzsche nowhere suggests that the longed-for self-sufficiency would be anything else than a feeling. What is presented as an alluring possibility is a god-like mood, not actually being a god in the sense of wielding the powers of a god; other than that of self-redemption.

One has to look for evidence outside *GS* in order to find a stronger statement that might be interpreted as expressing desire to be god. Zarathustra's "confession" that he "could not stand not being a god, if there were gods" is as good as it gets in Nietzsche's published writings.[80] The sceptical reader might ask, why this quote extracted from *Z* should be considered in any way relevant to the interpretation of *GS* 125. It could then be argued that drawing on it is justified, because Nietzsche originally planned to have Zarathustra go to the marketplace and announce the death of God (cf. KSA 14, 256). Two preliminary issues about using the sketch [*Vorstufe*] as evidence have to be dealt with before drawing any far-reaching conclusions. Firstly, one cannot overlook the fact that Nietzsche eventually decided not to let Zarathustra appear until the very last aphorism of *GS*. Therefore, it is problematic to conclude that

**80** "*Aber dass ich euch ganz mein Herz offenbare, ihr Freunde: wenn es Götter gäbe, wie hielte ich's aus, kein Gott zu sein! Also giebt es keine Götter.*" (KSA 4, 110)

the Madman is Zarathustra, not to speak of continuing that the Madman is Zarathustra is Nietzsche. Secondly, Zarathustra is not exactly a character whose words and deeds are to be taken at face value (cf. Zittel 2011). To think that Nietzsche must be dead serious when he speaks as Zarathustra leads only to a labyrinth of contradictions and is therefore an unforgivable error. In this sense, introducing Zarathustra only complicates the picture further, and arguably lessens the plausibility of the "desire to be God" interpretation.

What better proof of this contention, that introducing Zarathustra is no solution, could there be than the fact that Zarathustra in the very same speech in which he makes his admission also cautions against striving for the impossible. He asks his hearers, whether they can think or create a God and teaches them that they should not desire something to be that they do not have the power to create; in short they should focus on what really is possible (KSA 4, 109 – 110) Additionally, he says that since he had a vision of the *Übermensch* gods are no longer of any concern to him (KSA 4, 112). I would therefore suggest that what Zarathustra is jealous of is precisely the feeling that he associates with being a god, not actually being a god, and definitely not being God. Nietzsche's writings do not suggest that he is interested in possessing the attributes of the Christian God, but only that he strives for a mood that is perhaps best described as god-like. This is an important distinction, to which I will return in chapter 7, about Nietzsche's late affective ideal. So if Nietzsche is above all interested in a state [*Zustand*], the possibility to dwell in a god-like state, this is yet another reason to question whether the Madman directly speaks for Nietzsche. After all, the Madman does pose his question in the form "must we not become gods…?".

### 5.5.4 GS 125 as a test

> 126. *Mystical explanations.* – Mystical explanations are considered deep. The truth is that they are not even superficial. (Kaufmann 1974, 182; GS 126, KSA 3, 482)

That so many differing interpretations of *GS* 125 have been presented over the years seems to suggest that there is something mysterious about the passage (cf. Pippin 2010, 47). However, the simplest explanation for the proliferation of interpretations is not that there is something mysterious about the passage but that it is carefully crafted to provoke an affective response in the reader and therefore to be open to a great variety of readings. In other words, *GS* 125 might best be read as a test.

The surface of the aphorism, its character as fictional narrative, cannot be emphasized enough. Announcing that God is dead through the mouth of a Madman, within a fictional narrative, allows Nietzsche to step back from view, but still forces the reader to react to the Madman's words. In this regard, it is worth remembering that Nietzsche is not concerned with proving that God is dead (cf. Schellong 1989, 341), whatever that might mean. Instead, he simply has the Madman announce that this is a tremendous event that is yet to be heard, which forces the reader to

try to hear it. In other words: the aphorism does not aim to impart propositional knowledge, but to compel an affective reaction. The reaction that the aphorism provokes is necessarily affective, because there is no objective point of view from which to judge to what extent the dramatic picture that the Madman paints is more than the painting of his fear. Some might see the "same" event as a magnificent opportunity. All depends on in what mood one is able to see the possibilities that the death of God opens. What speaks in favour of this interpretation is first and foremost that that it not only fits neatly into the context of the preceding discussion in book three, but also goes well together with the joyful, playful mood of *GS*, and of course with the general trajectory of Nietzsche's criticism of religion. It therefore only remains to be shown that this interpretation also makes better sense of the characters of the narrative and the central interaction between the Madman and the atheists of the marketplace.

In emphasizing the fictionality of the narrative about the Madman and consequently its broader context in Nietzsche's strategy of communication, my interpretation aligns with and provides further support for recent interpretations that argue on both philosophical and philological grounds that the Madman's response cannot be Nietzsche's position (Pippin 2010, 47–54 and Sommer 2010, 18). In the view I defend, the spectacle acted out by the Madman of the story represents one possible interpretation of that event [*Ereignis*] that God is dead. Though the Madman is called mad for a reason, one need not deny that there is some reason in his madness. Irrespective of whether the Madman is deemed nostalgic of the religious past or not,[81] he does draw attention to something that Nietzsche thought was crucial about the European situation: Fully recognizing the death of the Christian God closes off certain possibilities of feeling, while it opens up others. In his own mad manner, the Madman has recognized that God is dead, but he is far better at invoking a sense of loss than at speaking of new possibilities, as everything he says about the future is coloured by a sense of loss. What is lost is that which guaranteed a sense of absolute certainty, the basic trust that Being triumphs over Nothingness, and consequently the sense that human life is meaningful becomes questionable. The Madman certainly feels in his own way, what a note of Nietzsche from autumn 1881 speaks of: that unless "we" use the opportunity to make overcoming ourselves a constant struggle, we will have suffered a loss.[82] But coming from Nietzsche this note, which never found its way into the published work, reads better as an exhortation to fight against the incorporated tendency to interpret one's experiences religiously, to fight against the temptation to see more meaning in life than what one out of one's own power puts into life, to fight against

**81** Brusotti is perhaps too quick to claim that there is no religious nostalgia in the Madman's passion since there is no evidence that could decide the question either way. Similarly, Brusotti's talk of the Madman's intention [*Absicht*] is misguiding to say the least if the Madman cannot be identified with Nietzsche (Brusotti 1997, 418).

**82** "*Wenn wir nicht aus dem Tode Gottes eine großartige Entsagung und einen fortwährenden Sieg über uns machen, so haben wir den Verlust zu tragen.*" (NL 1881, 12[9]; KSA 9, 577)

all shadows of God (cf. Brusotti 1997, 418), than as a statement of fact. The loss that the note speaks of is a possibility. The death of God is in itself neither purely loss nor gain, but an event that opens up future possibilities: all depends on what possibilities one is able to see and this, my interpretation suggests, depends to a great deal on mood. What about the atheists at the marketplace, then? What is it that they lack?

In the light of this interpretation, the error of the atheists is not that they laugh at and mock the Madman, that they are incapable of feeling his pain. Rather, they lack the mood through which they could see the event that the Madman speaks of as profitable; in other words, they lack an understanding of the death of God as opportunity for themselves, to become what they are. That this might indeed be what they most lack is indicated in their reaction when the Madman is done with his tirade invoking the loss that he and they have suffered, done with accusing them and himself of killing God, and done with his insane suggestions of what must be done. They fall silent and seem bewildered, as if they had witnessed something mysterious. It is as if all their confidence, with which they had mocked the Madman, had been swept away. Had they been joyful scientists, they would perhaps have laughed heartily at this spectacle. Support for this interpretation need not be sought from outside the original edition of *GS*, but can be found aplenty in book four.

## 5.6 Book four and heightened mood

Book four is above all a demonstration of that (kind of) life-affirming mood that Nietzsche considers an ideal response to the message that "God is dead". I claim no originality for the general picture that I present, since it has already been suggested that the goal of the book is to put philosophizing in a new mood.[83] This view has however not yet been sufficiently recognized in scholarship; therefore, it would be misleading to claim that it is well established. What originality there is to be found in my defence and development of this thesis lies in the detail of the presentation, which on the one hand follows from the analytic distinction between the mood that is generated through the text and Nietzsche's statements about an emi-

**83** E. g. Wotling: "*In der Hauptsache zielt das Buch also auf die Darstellung einer neuen affektiven Tonart und will zeigen, wie diese das philosophische Unterfangen verändert*." (Wotling 2015, 107) Wotling also does not fail to connect this endeavour to the possibilities opened by the experience that God is dead (cf. Wotling 2015, 109 and 112). However, Wotling does not thematize Nietzsche's doubts about his abilities to communicate this new mood nor does he focus enough on the evidence about these moods, which means that the thesis requires a more robust defence.

nently desirable mood,[84] and on the other from a strict focus on the evidence concerning these moods.

Book four draws much of its inspiration from the experience of health that Nietzsche had in January 1882 in Genoa, where the ships sail to sea. All the available evidence also suggests that he at least began work on the fourth book that same month, though he made corrections to the text until the final publication of GS (cf. Kaufmann 2015, 9). For Nietzsche, Genoa is the city from whence Columbus hailed; the Columbus who eventually set sail toward the New World.[85] The symbolism is all too apparent, even though that name is never explicitly mentioned in the book, as Nietzsche draws heavily on metaphors of open seas, of new lands or islands to explore and to claim (e. g. GS 289, KSA 3, 529 – 530). This is not to say that these metaphors would have supplanted those of the heights, of his beloved mountain air (cf. GS 293, KSA 3, 533 – 534), which here is felt in the wind that would move the ships towards the unknown.

The opening poem praising "*Januarius*" already places the following discussions under the banner of that which is eminently desirable, the "highest hope", towards which the soul of the philosopher hurries (KSA 3, 521). What is this highest hope? It is near at hand to connect it to a higher way of being made possible by the death of God as the poem associates moving closer towards the goal with an ever higher, lighter and healthier feeling [*heller stets und stets gesunder*].[86] It is here necessary to distinguish the desired state from the mood in which it is approached. Whatever the goal is, the key issue to note is that the movement towards this goal is expressed as a joy in itself. The poem would then reflect what I take to be the defining characteristic of book four; namely, that Nietzsche seeks to communicate the possibility of the highest affirmation through a mood that he considers conducive to such affirmation. In other words, there are two levels of mood. On the one hand there is the vision of a high and supremely healthy mood that is presented as a goal, on the other a mood of expectation through which the philosopher bids the reader approach the yet higher mood. Traces of this same strategy can certainly be found scattered throughout the entire work,[87] but it is most apparent in book four. Indeed, one

**84** The two are of course intertwined in the sense that Nietzsche's discussion about an eminently desirable mood contributes to creating the joyful mood of the text and can thus also be read as part of his strategy to create mood.

**85** In his letters Nietzsche makes this identification of Genoa with Columbus known; he even goes as far as to claim that for him Genoa is above all the city of Columbus (e. g. KGB III/1, Bf. 474 and KGB III/5, Bf. 475 A). Besides that, he connects his own endeavours to Columbus' fate to be a discoverer of a new world (KGB III/1, Bf. 294 and KGB III/1, Bf. 490).

**86** In a letter to Köselitz from 6 April 1883 Nietzsche identifies the "highest hope" with becoming the father of Zarathustra, i. e. with creating Zarathustra (KGB III/1, Bf. 401). This fits well into the picture that Nietzsche's ideal mood is one that makes productive, enables creativity in following one's own path. Like his father, Zarathustra is presented as a being of the heights, as mountain air incarnate (cf. KSA 4, 375).

**87** Arguably, the motto begins this story.

need not look far for additional support that such a strategy of communication is at work in book four.

One can begin by noting that it is in a mood of expectation that Nietzsche in the first aphorism, *For the new year*, presents his wish to be nothing but a yea-sayer. To be able to see beauty in necessity, to make things that are the way they are beautiful; that is the formula of *amor fati* (GS 276, KSA 3, 521). Instead of interpreting *amor fati* as an abstract philosophical doctrine, it is more fruitful to read it precisely as a wish and as an expression of a mood of affirmation. When read contextually the objection that it is impossible to affirm the most painful and disagreeable states of mind in the moment that they occur loses much of its sting. Of course, one can and should read *amor fati* as a wish to dwell in a state that can at best overpower any pain. In this sense, *amor fati* is directly related to the motto of *GS* and that super-human mood in which every experience appears as sacred. Nevertheless, Nietzsche's main concern in book four is not to give a phenomenology of such a state but to present joyful striving towards it in a mood of expectation. In what sense this joyful striving itself is an approximation of the mood that gives the power to interpret everything for the best is shown in the next aphorism.

Nietzsche describes how it seems to the free spirit, who has reached a certain high point in life, as if all experiences that he goes through are for the good, whether he interprets them as good or ill in the moment they happen. Here, Nietzsche is only concerned with the interpretation of events after the fact. Nevertheless, the free spirit has reached a new height and the danger is great that he will fall. In order not to lose the freedom that has led him to these new heights, the free spirit has to resist the temptation to interpret his feeling that all events eventually are good for himself as proof of personal providence, i.e. that some God or spirit is watching over his fate. Instead, the assumption must suffice that his own power of interpretation has reached a new peak. (GS 277, KSA 3, 521–522)

Nietzsche still seems to fear, as he did in *HH* and *D*, that the experience of high moods and of overflowing joy might lead to a return to metaphysics or a turn to some kind of false religiosity. How and why does Nietzsche seek to guard himself and the reader from such a fate? The textual evidence supports the answer that Nietzsche explicitly ties his vision of a higher way of being to a strict rejection of religious customs and metaphysical ideals. In other words, a feeling of freedom is indissociable from Nietzsche's affective ideal. Any return to religion or metaphysics would hinder the attempt to move ever higher. To persuade the reader, Nietzsche can do nothing but instill a mood of expectation in the reader, since the reader has to feel in himself an increase of freedom in order to be convinced. The most perfect example of this strategy is to be found in aphorism 285, *Excelsior!*, which more directly than any other aphorism valorizes striving ever higher.

A voice, distinguished by quotation marks, tells what the free spirit who seeks to live without God must renounce. He must never pray, never worship and never feel absolute certainty. He cannot expect any absolute justice nor does he have the right to assume a higher reason in what goes on in the world. Above all, there is no place

for his heart to rest, no final goal, where all striving comes to an end. Instead, he must will the Eternal Recurrence of war and peace. The voice then calls the free spirit an ascetic [*Mensch der Entsagung*], questions the viability of the renunciation in question and states that as of yet no one yet had the power to live like that. After this statement that ends the quote, Nietzsche presents a vision of a lake that does not allow its water to flow away, but raises a dam and from that moment rises ever higher. Finally, Nietzsche suggests that a similar fate perhaps awaits the human [*der Mensch*], when s/he no longer flows into a God. (GS 285, KSA 3, 527–528) Importantly, Nietzsche does not directly challenge the voice about what the free spirit has to leave behind. In other words, he strategically agrees that the situation of the free spirit can be viewed as a renunciation. The point would rather be that if one must view the free spirit as one who renounces the consolations of religion, the renunciation itself generates a new feeling of power. Through this feeling of power, man can rise ever higher, when his hopes and wishes are not spent on illusory ideals. It is in this daring final suggestion that the meaning of the passage breaks through in full force: the suggestion effects a radical shift from the language of renunciation to that of affirmation. For what is the renunciation demanded of the free spirit compared to the enticing vision of a higher way of being? As the following *Interruption* [*Zwischenrede*], which refers as much to all of book four and perhaps even to the entirety of *GS* as to the directly preceding aphorism, states: "Here are hopes". Here indeed are hopes, but can these hopes be communicated?

> 286. *Interruption.* – Here are hopes; but what will you hear and see of them if you have not experienced splendor, ardor, and dawns in your own souls? I can only remind you; more I cannot do. To move stones, to turn animals into men – is that what you want from me? Oh, if you are still stones and animals, then better look for your Orpheus. (Kaufmann 1974, 230; GS 286, KSA 3, 528)

The strictest possible reading of this aphorism would lead to the conclusion that only those who have had similar experiences as Nietzsche, only those who are already acquainted with high moods (cf. GS 288, KSA 3, 528), can understand his newfound joy. Nevertheless, even this strictest interpretation does not speak against the interpretation of *GS* as involving an attempt to communicate mood. Rather, it supports the argument that this indeed is the case once one discards the idea that this communication is meant to reach everybody. Nietzsche has put the stakes high, and perhaps he fears he has put them too high; all depends on communicating mood. Perhaps the choice to let the reader approach the "highest hope" through a more easily accessible mood of expectation is best understood against this background of doubt? He is fully aware that even thus not everyone will be able to open up to his message, yet the message that God is dead can only be misunderstood if one disregards this context. Therefore, Nietzsche suggests that those who do not hear his words and see what he means must first find their own Orpheus. That Orpheus here stands as a metaphor for perfect affective communication needs no further proof than what is evident from within the aphorism. Nietzsche ascribes Orpheus the power to effect radical transfor-

mations though his art; the power to have himself heard by animals and even inanimate matter. In short, it is Orpheus's power to communicate that Nietzsche denies himself. To conclude, Nietzsche's apparent scepticism about his ability to communicate his experience solidifies the contention that the composition of GS is based on a poetics of mood and that the philosophical content relies on affective communication.

Not only does Nietzsche voice scepticism about his power to have his words heard but he also comes close to admitting that it is dangerous to raise expectations about the future. He has the Wanderer state to his Shadow that he loves ignorance about the future and doesn't want to perish from impatience and from tasting promised things (GS 287, KSA 3, 528).[88] Such cryptic references to promised things of course only raise more expectations. Indeed, there are no reasons to take a literal reading of the aphorism as a guide to interpreting what follows. After all, neither this professed preference of living in ignorance of the future nor the complaint that it appears to him as if most people would not even believe in high moods prevent Nietzsche in the following aphorism from presenting an enticing vision of a future in which a constant high mood is the rule rather than the exception (cf. GS 288, KSA 3, 528).

In the aphorism entitled *Elevated moods* [*Hohe Stimmungen*] Nietzsche goes as far as to envision a human being, who would be the embodiment of a single great mood. The experience of such a soul would be "a continual ascent as on stairs and at the same time a sense of resting on clouds" (Kaufmann 1974, 231; GS 288, KSA 3, 528). More remarkable than Nietzsche's familiar metaphors of heights is how his understanding of this possible mood combines the joyful movement of constant striving with an image of inner peace. Peace is not sought in rest or in some final goal, but is realized within the movement of striving. Although Nietzsche concedes that all of human history provides no certain examples of such a being, he contends that it is very well possible that such a being were born under the right circumstances. Most likely because of this reference to history and what might be history one day, the aphorism has been read in conjunction with what Nietzsche has to say about "historical sense" in aphorism 337 of *GS* (cf. Brusotti 1997, 476 – 478). Such a procedure is justified insofar as both aphorisms present enticing visions of future possibilities, visions that are hard not to read as promises of heightened feeling.

Aphorism 337, *The humaneness of the future* [*Die zukünftige "Menschlichkeit"*], attempts to convince the reader that though it would seem that the historical sense that has been growing in Europe is a sign of old age, of the weakening of all old feelings, it is in fact itself a sign and symptom of a new feeling that is growing from generation to generation (GS 337, KSA 3, 564). This feeling grows from an ever-increasing capacity to feel all of human history as one's own. Some day, Nietzsche suggests, the his-

**88** "*Ich liebe die Unwissenheit um die Zukunft und will nicht an der Ungeduld und dem Vorwegkosten verheissener Dinge zu Grunde gehen.*" (GS 287, KSA 3, 528)

torical sense will open up the possibility of subsuming the experiences of the most remote past together with all present hopes into one feeling. This would according to Nietzsche result in a god-like joy:

> the happiness of a god full of power and love, full of tears and laughter, a happiness that, like the sun in the evening, continually bestows its inexhaustible riches, pouring them into the sea, feeling richest, as the sun does, only when even the poorest fisherman is still rowing with golden oars! This godlike feeling would then be called-humaneness. (Kaufmann 1974, 268 – 269; GS 337, KSA 3, 565)

To fully understand what Nietzsche is up to here, it is useful to return to that other aphorism in book four, in which Nietzsche speaks of a divine, godlike feeling; namely aphorism 300, *Preludes of science*. There Nietzsche suggests that had not magicians, alchemists, astrologists and others of their ilk promised knowledge about hidden and forbidden powers, the human lust for knowledge would never have grown so strong as to enable the birth and development of science (GS 300, KSA 3, 539). Irrespective of whether Nietzsche is onto something on that point or not, his narrative can be used to explain his own manner of presenting his own conception of the experimental life as desirable. Nietzsche is engaged in the same game of promising knowledge as well as feelings of freedom and power for those who take to the seas, who leave all certainties behind, to become who they are.

In aphorism 300, Nietzsche suggests that some day in the distant future the entire history of religion might be viewed as an exercise and means so that there might be human beings who enjoy all the self-sufficiency of a God. Here too the emphasis is not on that high mood but on the striving for such a state and the subtle suggestion that had not religion implanted a desire that there be gods or super-human powers, humans would never have learned to feel hunger for oneself, to become who one is. Nietzsche's final question, as to whether Prometheus first had to believe that he stole the light and pay the price for that only to finally see he had created the light and God as well as humans through his own desire, provides the final clue for interpreting the passage (GS 300, KSA 3, 539). In effect, Nietzsche radically suggests that all desire that there be gods, all desire for God, can now be interpreted as misunderstood desire for one's self. Just as feelings have a history, so too does the desire to become who one is. In this perspective, Nietzsche is able to view the history of religion in a less hostile light,[89] as a necessary error, a comic misunderstanding that must be abandoned to move forward. Nietzsche quite openly guides the reader in

**89** Arguably, Nietzsche's elaborations do not concern monotheistic religion, and thus not the whole history of religion. In aphorism 143, Nietzsche longs for a time when each individual can give free rein to his self-desire [*Selbstsucht*], his desire to express his very own ideal. In this context he praises polytheism that at least allowed a multitude of ideals in the realm of the Gods, and harshly attacks monotheistic religions as premised on the idea that there is a common human [*Normalmensch*] for whom a common God [*Normalgott*] suffices, which in Nietzsche's view means that monotheism is directly opposed to the desire to become who one is (cf. GS 143, KSA 3, 490 – 491).

this direction, through his promises. His promises concern the future possibilities opened up to those who embrace the knowledge that God is dead. Again and again, he seeks to convince the reader (and perhaps also himself) to dare to live experimentally for the sake of new or "promised" lands, to set sail for a realm that is one's own (GS 289, KSA 3, 529 – 530).

As Nietzsche himself draws attention to what he sees as the religious prehistory of his striving, it is important to further clarify the relation between his striving and that striving for truth which characterizes the more recent religious past. Let us therefore ask one last time: Is Nietzsche a seeker, perhaps really a God-seeker [*Gottsuchender*], who only misunderstands himself?[90] Nietzsche's text answers: "What I want is more; I am no seeker. I want to create for myself a sun of my own." (Kaufmann 1974, 254; GS 320, KSA 3, 551)[91] Nietzsche does not want to bask in the light of another sun, irrespective of whether that sun is a God or a general philosophical justification of existence, but to create an own ideal. One takes to the seas to create an ideal for oneself, not to find a universal ideal (cf. GS 289, KSA 3, 529 – 530). Nietzsche's description of Kant in aphorism 335 illustrates Nietzsche's rejection of such a striving for universal truth. Nietzsche treats Kant as a failed free spirit, as a fox who after having broken out of the cage that is metaphysical philosophy into a new freedom, loses his way and crawls back to the cage (cf. GS 335, KSA 3, 562).[92] In Kant's Categorical imperative, Nietzsche finds a trace of that desire for a self [*Selbstsucht*] that he would give free rein, namely in the feeling that one's own judgement is a universal judgement. Yet, Nietzsche claims, this is a lowly form of that desire, which shows that one has not come up with an own ideal.[93] For if one would have an own ideal, and feel that it is one's own, one would not think that everyone must follow it. In other, words Nietzsche suggests that Kant did not go far enough in self-knowledge.

This individualism, this immoralism of each pursuing an own ideal, is not the only thing about Nietzsche's striving that puts it into opposition to most if perhaps not all (e. g. Satanist) religious paths of salvation known in the history of religion. What else differentiates Nietzsche's call to become who one is from the teachings of founders of religions is above all its experimental character. The paradigm is the scientific experiment, and the thirst for knowledge, the thirst for self-knowledge, is emphatically not a thirst for wonders, reincarnations or other things that go against reason (GS 319, KSA 3, 550 – 551; cf. GS 335, KSA 3, 563 – 564). As interpreters of experience, the free spirits must be strict as scientists (GS 319, KSA 3, 551). When

**90** Though I have repeatedly suggested that the question is misdirected, I have also sought to show that it can be useful insofar as it forces to better characterize Nietzsche's position.

**91** "*Ich will mehr, ich bin kein Suchender. Ich will für mich eine eigene Sonne schaffen.*" (GS 320, KSA 3, 551)

**92** "*sich wieder zu 'Gott', 'Seele', 'Freiheit' und 'Unsterblichkeit' zurückverirrte*" (GS 335, KSA 3, 562).

**93** "*sie verräth, dass du dich selber noch nicht entdeckt, dir selber noch kein eigenes, eigenstes Ideal geschaffen hast*" (GS 335, KSA 3, 562).

one reads these aphorisms in the light of what Nietzsche writes about high moods, the message is clear: he insists that all his enticing visions are within the bounds of the possible, and that precisely the experimental life can be a privileged path to moods of joyful affirmation. When one takes this into account it is unsurprising that he suggests a life in pursuit of knowledge need not be a life of melancholy toil, but can, when conducted in a certain way, be a life of joy and laughter (cf. GS 324, KSA 3, 552–553).

At the end of book four, in the second-last aphorism, the joy of the free spirit is put to a final test. Given that *GS* is a book of joyful science, it is fitting that joy itself becomes the object of experiments in the pages of the book. This last experiment is the most radical that Nietzsche devised. What if, the narrator asks, a demon would creep into your solitude and tell you that you have to live this very same life over and over again, how would you then react? Nietzsche is in fact careful to distinguish the voice of the demon from that of the narrator by quotation marks: once the demon has whispered the thought of Eternal Recurrence, which is not named here, it is the narrator who again takes over and asks the reader how he would respond. The narrator offers three alternative responses.[94] Initially the narrator asks 1) if one would not despair, rage and curse the demon who speaks thus, but then directly asks the reader 2) if he or she has not experienced such a moment in which one would greet the demon's words with joy and proclaim: "you are a god and never have I heard anything more divine!" After claiming that the thought of Eternal Recurrence, irrespective of how one initially responds to the demon, would change or perhaps crush the person over whom it gains power, i.e. the person who incorporates it, the narrator 3) presents the final alternative of responding to the demon's challenge: "Or", he begins, "how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life to crave nothing more fervently than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?" (Kaufmann 1974, 273–274, GS 341, KSA 3, 570)

Nietzsche himself arguably emphasized this question by letting it finish the aphorism and specifically marked out the words "to crave nothing more" in cursive. Thus, he suggests that even if one were not fully able to accept Eternal Recurrence at the moment that one is confronted with the thought, one need not despair, but one can instead strive to live so that one would long for nothing as much as for the repetition of one's life. Here again, one hears his call to become who one is and again one notes that striving for the highest possible affirmation in some sense already partakes of that affirmation.

*GS* ends with the appearance of *Zarathustra*. Through *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche dramatizes his own striving to come to terms with his "experience" of Eternal Recur-

**94** So it is not the case as all too often presented that "the Daemon offers two alternatives" (Parkes 2005, xxiv) of responding, since it is the narrator and not the Demon who asks the question of how one would respond, and there are arguably three responses.

rence, his attempt to incorporate the idea. That one has to ask about the mood of *Z* is therefore a foregone conclusion.

## 5.7 Conclusion and concluding excursus on the 1887 edition

The evidence surveyed supports the thesis that *GS* and specifically its fourth book aim to put philosophizing in a new mood. Throughout the text Nietzsche presents many reasons why a mood of joyful affirmation is philosophically productive, though never explicitly as answer to such a question. He rather shows that the mood of his book is conducive to philosophical tasks: It gives the courage to face difficult problems, to dare to question inherited assumptions, to ask questions that should or should not remain unasked. This it does in a manner that recognizes that there will be no final answers, no end-goal and final resting place for the philosopher. It is a scepticism that does not despair of never reaching solid ground – rather it is precisely in groundlessness, in the high air, that both the joy and the danger resides. It gives the freedom to pursue truth; one's own truth. In this regard, one can go so far as to speak of a liberation of philosophy (cf. Stegmaier 2012). Of course, Stegmaier, who has forcefully argued in favour of a joyful philosophizing, insists that the most mature expression of this mood is to be found in book five (Stegmaier 2012, 46). This of course raises the question, in what sense the character of the mood changes. In what sense is the mood of book five more mature?

### 5.7.1 The character of Nietzsche's communication of mood in the second edition of *GS*

How does the 1887 edition of *GS* alter the interpretation that has been advanced about the original 1882 edition? How do the foreword and the fifth book fit into the picture that I have drawn of Nietzsche's communication of mood and its relation to his criticism of religion? Do they challenge or provide further support for the reading? Perhaps the most pressing question is, whether Nietzsche has become more doubtful about communicating mood and if the answer is yes how that shapes the work. Nietzsche's attempt to clarify and explain himself in the foreword to the second edition is the best place to start the examination of the evidence.

Nietzsche's doubts about whether *GS* is understandable at all go a long way towards explaining the specifically philosophical need for a foreword in 1887. Nietzsche already voiced scepticism as to his ability to communicate his vision in the period around the original publication, for example when he asked Köselitz whether *Sanctus Januarius* can be understood at all. More significant than the question itself is his admission that his doubt about the issue of understandability is huge (Nietzsche in fact goes as far as to use the word monstrous [*ungeheuer*], cf. KGB III/1, Bf. 282). This scepticism he takes to a new height in the foreword, in which he spe-

cifically questions the communicability of the experience that grounds the joyful science. For this is what Nietzsche basically says: if one hasn't had such an experience as he has one cannot begin to understand what the book is about, nor does writing a foreword help (cf. GS Preface 1, KSA 3, 345). What is remarkable is not this scepticism *per se*, but that he despite everything still tries to make his work understandable.

What Nietzsche provides is what he himself might have called a physiological description of the experience which found expression in *GS*. It is, however, crucial to examine carefully what Nietzsche is in fact talking about, precisely when he seems to be at his most "physiological", as here. In this case his emphasis is as much on spiritual as bodily health, as he blames an unfitting spiritual diet [*geistige Diät*] (esp. romanticism) for much of his suffering, and again justifies his withdrawal from the intellectual circles of his earlier days, a self-imposed exile into loneliness, as an attempt to cure his condition (GS Preface 1KSA 3, 346). In this sense, he writes of *GS* as resulting from the experience of suddenly being overwhelmed by hope; specifically the hope of health. In itself it is a joyful state, which he compares to a drunkenness [*Trunkenheit der Genesung*], but it is also much more as Nietzsche emphasizes its orientation to the future: it is a feeling of future, of new mornings and open seas, and last but not least a feeling that there are goals worth striving for (GS Preface 1, KSA 3, 345 – 346). This description fits well the thesis that I have advanced about the two levels of mood: on the one hand there is the joyful mood of the text and on the other the vision of a supremely joyful and healthy mood. Because Nietzsche employs the metaphor of drunkenness, one might nevertheless ask: how lasting can this joy be?

What remains of the mood of *GS* now that Nietzsche has become healthy (GS Preface 2, KSA 3, 347)?

Despite insisting that the philosopher can only ever translate his state of being [*Zustand*] into philosophy (GS, KSA 3, 349), Nietzsche emphasizes the lasting value of what he has learned from his varied experiences of sickness and health. In this regard, it is not unimportant that he speaks of having acquired a distaste of the "spiritual pleasures" [*geistigen Genüssen*] that he thinks the educated of his time seek to induce through literature, music and alcohol [*geistiger Getränke*] (GS Preface 4, KSA 3, 351), since the distinction between high moods and artificially induced ecstatic states is arguably of great importance in both his mature and late thinking on mood (see chapters 6 and 7). Even more importantly, however, he describes how he has through his experiences found a new joy, a joy at even the most disturbing problems that always is stronger than any anxious uncertainty (GS Preface 4, KSA 3, 350 – 351).[95] That the text of the fifth book of *GS* does not superficially display as much joyful playfulness as the fourth book therefore need not mean that

**95** "*Der Reiz alles Problematischen, die Freude am X ist aber bei solchen geistigeren, vergeistigteren Menschen zu gross, als dass diese Freude nicht immer wieder wie eine helle Gluth über alle Noth des Problematischen, über alle Gefahr der Unsicherheit, selbst über die Eifersucht des Liebenden zusammenschlüge. Wir kennen ein neues Glück…*" (GS Preface 3, KSA 3, 350 – 351)

Nietzsche has abandoned his attempt to communicate a mood that he thinks is particularly conducive to the advancement of free spirits. It is instead best explained by referring to Stegmaier's suggestion that the mood of *GS* is expressed in its most mature form in the fifth book. Put differently, there are good reasons to assume that Nietzsche did attempt to communicate mood in the fifth book of *GS*, but that this communication is perhaps not as apparent on the surface as in the preceding books, and instead has to be drawn out.

Before moving on, it is worth noting that similar doubts that explain the need for the foreword can be found within the text of the fifth book. In this regard, aphorism 371, *We incomprehensible ones* (GS 371, KSA 3, 622–623), as well as aphorism 381, *On the question of being understandable* (GS 381, KSA 3, 633–635), are especially instructive. While Nietzsche in these passages expresses the view that his books are not for everyone, they also express his confidence that his communication will reach those for whom it is meant. These are of course the free spirits (of the future) and once again they are characterized in polemical contrast with religious believers. Thus, the opening aphorism that according to its title sets out to "explain" the spiritedness [*Heiterkeit*] of the joyful science, explicitly addresses the free spirits and confronts them once again with the idea that God is dead.

### 5.7.2 The death of God and the joy of the free spirit

In order to explain/show what the joy of the free spirit is like, Nietzsche first tries to explain what "God is dead" means. In Nietzsche's own words, this means nothing else than that faith in the Christian God has become unbelievable or unworthy of belief [*unglaubwürdig*]. Now, however, Nietzsche insists that the real significance of this event has not yet been grasped, except perhaps by a few who have foreseen the collapse of faith and with it the collapse of what hitherto was European morality. Even while he paints his dark picture of a monstrous logic of horror [*ungeheuren Logik von Schrecken*] and asks who could already know enough about what is to come in order to act as its teacher and prophet, he turns his attention to the joy of the free spirit. Instead of a dark future, the free spirit experiences the words that God is dead as heralding a new dawn and as the promise of open seas to explore. (GS 343, KSA 3, 573–574)

The question with which Nietzsche challenges his reader is whether the free spirit merely deceives himself; whether he is blinded by the immediate consequence that the message that God is dead has for him, namely his joy, and fails to see the horrific long-term consequences of the decline of Christian religion. In other words, Nietzsche returns to the question how one is to react to the message that God is dead. Within this one aphorism, he basically re-enacts the contrast between the dark visions of the Madman and the joy of *Sanctus Januarius*. Thus, Nietzsche once again tests the joy of the free spirit. In this regard, it is especially interesting to note, how Nietzsche in the first part of aphorism 343 employs a vocabulary sug-

gesting inevitability when describing the perspective of the few who already have seen the vision of a future governed by a logic of horrors, whereas he in the final part describing the perspective of the free spirits employs metaphors suggesting an open and desirable future (e. g. open seas). Crucially, Nietzsche's own perspective seems to go beyond either of the two perspectives, and this again supports Stegmaier's thesis that the mood of *GS* has become more mature in the fifth book. If the joy of the free spirit at its best truly is a joy even in the face of the most disturbing problems, the aphorism can be viewed in a different light; not so much as a choice between two incommensurable perspectives, but as a demonstration of a joy, which dares to confront an uncertain future. Following this thought, the aphorism is arguably itself a prime example of joy at that which is problematic and uncertain.[96]

This interpretation is supported by the central content of Nietzsche's criticism of religion in the fifth book, which follows and builds on that of the first four books and fits perfectly in to the general trajectory of his criticism. Once again, Nietzsche's argument is built on the irreconcilable opposition between the free spirit and the religious, specifically Christian, type, and again he targets the supposed need for religion (cf. Stegmaier 2012, 216). On this point, Nietzsche clarifies his position. Nietzsche concedes that in general, the Europeans of his time are not ready for the uncertainty that leaving Christianity behind necessarily entails: "Christianity, it seems to me, is still needed by most people in old Europe even today; therefore it still finds believers" (Kaufmann 1974, 287; GS 347, KSA 3, 581). These men and women he then contrasts with the idea of free spirits *par excellence*, who are characterized precisely by their ability to dwell in a state of uncertainty and to find joy in this uncertainty (GS 347, KSA 3, 583).

Just as in *Sanctus Januarius*, the joy that the text of book five is meant to exemplify is related to a yet higher joy. Similarly, the philosopher's health is related to his ideal of great health. Following this strategy, Nietzsche tempts the reader at the end of book five with the ideal of a spirit that is supremely healthy, and therefore in Nietzsche's view necessarily beyond good and evil (cf. GS 382, KSA 3, 635 – 637).[97] Here, perhaps more clearly than anywhere in the preceding books of *GS*, Nietzsche expresses the view that giving up Christian moral feelings and reorienting one's affects is a precondition for experiencing the supreme mood of affirmation that (alone)

**96** Stegmaier has similarly noted that Nietzsche does not really explain his joy in the aphorism, as the title might lead one to think, but instead shows what it is like through the composition of the aphorism (cf. Stegmaier 2012, 118 – 120). How one interprets aphorism 343 depends to a great extent on whether the focus is put on the putative "explanation" that the aphorism provides of the joy of the free spirit or on the "exemplification" of this joyful mood in the aphorism. In this regard, I follow Stegmaier in emphasizing Nietzsche's exemplification. Hödl also argues that the structure of the aphorism suggests that Nietzsche writes strategically to celebrate the perspectives open to the free spirit (Hödl 2009, 439).

**97** "*das Ideal eines menschlich-übermenschlichen Wohlseins und Wohlwollens, das oft genug unmenschlich erscheinen wird*". In Nietzsche's words, this spirit plays with all that has been considered good, holy and untouchable (cf. GS 382, KSA 3, 637).

is worth striving for after religious ideals have become unbelievable. In the following chapters, I will follow the development of Nietzsche's thinking until a clear picture about the nature of this new ideal emerges.

# 6 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Communication of mood or nihilistic self-parody?

While it would be a too extreme hypothesis to claim that it is with his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that Nietzsche rises or falls, the work is central to Nietzsche's endeavour as he himself repeatedly insists. In the foreword to *EH*, Nietzsche singles out *Z* as "the real book of the mountain air" (Large 2007, 4),[1] repeatedly refers to Zarathustra throughout the text, and finally associates what he already said through Zarathustra, i.e. the discovery of the life-denying nature of Christian morality ("God", "true world" etc.), with a radical cut of history into two halves (KSA 6, 373–374). Whatever one thinks of the hyperbolic excesses of *EH*, it is imperative to see the truth behind it. For if *Z* is due to its poetic character ignored and Nietzsche read only for his more accessible philosophical writings, as is the dominant practice in Anglophone philosophy, then I do not see how one can avoid the view that Nietzsche should not primarily be considered a philosopher at all given the weight he himself attached to the work. Any attempt to turn Nietzsche into a "philosopher" despite this runs utterly counter to Nietzsche's intentions, his highest hopes as well as his laughter which is to no small extent directed at academic philosophy (cf. Reents 2015, 236). For my project, which is to throw light on Nietzsche's criticism of religion through his communication of mood, *Z* is an indispensable source. I have already shown that communicating mood plays an important role in Nietzsche's critical project in the writings of his free spirit -period. How does *Z* fit into this picture?

The following engagement is not to be understood as a comprehensive commentary: *Z* speaks for itself. The reader will find no overview of the vast scholarly literature on *Z*, but instead a focused discussion on the communication of mood. The main question, through which I approach the work, is to what extent *Z* challenges and/or moves further than his preceding writings when it comes to affective communication. In other words, I explicitly question to what extent *Z* can be used to problematize the interpretation advanced thus far in this study.

I begin by examining the two most important presuppositions for approaching *Z*. The first one is to recognize the place of *Z* within Nietzsche's writings and to approach the work with his critical projects in mind. The second presupposition concerns the appreciation of the affective dimension of the text. After having furthermore discussed the tone of *Z*, I will seek to cast more light on the character of Nietzsche's communication of mood through a discussion of Zarathustra's speech *Upon the Isles of the Blest*, which is among his most important speeches that touch on the theme of religion. Thereafter I will in the final sections consider if there is self-parody in the text of *Z*, and if there indeed is self-parody in the text

**1** "*das eigentliche Höhenluft-Buch*" (KSA 6, 259).

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whether it is best read as an internal critique of the "use of mood" within the text or rather as an important part of the communication of mood.

## 6.1 The place of *Z* within Nietzsche's works

In a letter to Franz Overbeck from 7 April 1884, Nietzsche speaks of *D* and *GS* as prefiguring *Z* and that those two works can even be read as commentaries on *Z* (KGB III/1, Bf. 504).[2] That Nietzsche singles out precisely these two works is significant; as I have shown a strategic use of a mood of expectation plays an important role in both. What makes Nietzsche's use of mood special, which is specifically evident in *GS*, is how playful it is, i.e. how Nietzsche exemplifies the mood. In this regard, it is also worth noting what Nietzsche writes in a sketch for the foreword of the second edition of *GS*. There, writing about the original edition of *GS*, he specifies one sense in which *GS* can be said to prefigure *Z* and that is the playful approach to all that is sacred.[3] However, it should be added that the first formulations of the experience of being able to gain a philosophical freedom of being above all human things, an experience of mountain air [*Höhenluft*], which eventually lead to *Z*, stem from the period directly preceding the publication of *HH* and that aspects of the new experience are already present in that work in embryonic form. Undoubtedly, some elements of *Z* can be traced even further back. In a letter from 29 August 1886 to his then publisher Fritzsch, Nietzsche himself states that a presupposition for understanding his *Zarathustra* is to be acquainted with all of his previous writings (KGB III/3, Bf. 740).[4] Such statements about the works preceding *Z* cement the perception that *Z* occupies a central and unique position among Nietzsche's writings. They also point to the need to approach *Z* with an understanding of the concerns of the preceding texts, and then most of all the immediately preceding ones.

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**2** "*Beim durchlesen von 'Morgenröthe' und 'fröhlicher Wissenschaft' fand ich übrigens, daß darin fast keine Zeile steht, die nicht als Einleitung, Vorbereitung und Commentar zu genanntem Zarathustra dienen kann. Es ist eine Thatsache, daß ich den Commentar vor dem Text gemacht habe*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 504). Nietzsche repeats the same claim in a letter to Resa von Schirmhofer (cf. KGB III/1, Bf. 510).

**3** "*Vorbereitung zu Zarathustras naiv-ironischer Stellung zu allen heiligen Dingen (naive Form der Überlegenheit: das Spiel mit dem Heiligen)*" (NL1885–86, 2[166], KSA 12, 150).

**4** "*Das Wesentliche ist, daß, um die Voraussetzungen für das Verständniß des Zarathustra zu haben (– ein Ereigniß ohne Gleichen in der Litteratur und Philosophie und Poesie und Moral usw. usw. Sie dürfen mir's glauben, Sie glücklicher Besitzer dieses Wunderthiers! –) alle meine früheren Schriften ernstlich und tief verstanden sein müssen; insgleichen die Nothwendigkeit der Aufeinanderfolge dieser Schriften und der in ihnen sich ausdrückenden Entwicklung.*" (KGB III/3, Bf. 740) Of course, Nietzsche's words to his publisher are best understood against the background that he wanted to see all his writings published again with new forewords. Of course, not all of Nietzsche's writings prefigure *Z* to as great an extent as *D* and *GS*. Still, it is certainly helpful, as Nietzsche suggests, to understand his philosophical development or what should perhaps more properly be termed his development into a new kind of philosopher.

Against this background, and especially when one is all too aware that the dominant trend in Anglophone scholarship still is to ignore context, one should applaud Julian Young when he insists on the importance of understanding and keeping Nietzsche's previous texts in mind when approaching Z. Young is certainly correct when he claims that the sayings of Zarathustra all too easily become "oracular ink-blots on which to project one's favourite philosophy" (Young 2006, 105). Now, however, it is necessary to ask what is meant by approaching *Z* through the preceding works. Is it enough to recognize continuities in the philosophical contents of *Z* and the preceding writings? Or is it perhaps essential to recognize the role of affective communication in those writings in order to understand what *Z* is about? With this last question in mind, the limits of Young's approach can be made apparent. Young focuses only on the content of *Z*, and specifically on Zarathustra's teaching. Young's central claim is that his procedure of interpreting *Z* not only helps to understand Zarathustra's sayings, but that they become "in most cases, clear and unambiguous" (Young 2006, 105). This is a very bold claim. Young wisely avoids commenting on the central teachings of *Z*, the *Übermensch*[5] and Eternal Recurrence, which are notoriously ambiguous. However, this very choice of avoiding those ideas as if they did not exist, and instead focusing on a few sayings by Zarathustra that purportedly support a communitarian reading of Nietzsche's philosophy of religion, begs the question if Young himself is not guilty of seeing in *Z* what he wants to see. Before advancing an interpretation of the content of *Z* one should therefore ask, why in the first place it is the case that the work provokes interpretation, why it is that each philosophical interpreter comes to his own conclusions about what kind of a human is an *Übermensch*, what Will to Power is, and whether and in what sense Eternal Recurrence can be affirmed.

The central teachings of Zarathustra remain vague and unspecific. What Marie-Luise Haase writes about the *Übermensch* in an oft-cited article that deservedly has become something of a classic, namely that Zarathustra's vision of a new kind of human remains a surface for projection,[6] applies as much to the rest of his visionary teachings. Already in his afterword to *Z*, Giorgio Colli contends that *Z* reveals in a particularly striking way that for Nietzsche the content is not that which is essential about his communication (KSA 4, 411) and that one therefore seeks in vain for a theory of the *Übermensch*, Eternal Recurrence or Will to Power (KSA 4, 412). The consequence of accepting Colli's viewpoint is that the teachings of Zarathustra cannot be translated into the strict language of philosophical concepts. Indeed, Colli's words can be read as a warning to refrain from the temptation of systematizing the content of Zarathustra's teaching. That most interpreters still go straight for the content or themes of Zarathustra's teaching, is proof enough that Colli's contention

**5** As much as I like Parkes' translation Overhuman (Parkes 2005), I leave the term *Übermensch* untranslated (except in direct citations from Parkes) for the sake of clarity. This is common practice in Anglophone scholarship.

**6** "*Die Vision Zarathustras vom neuen Menschen bleibt für uns ein Vexierbild*" (Haase 1984, 244).

has not been taken with the gravity it deserves. This is all the more true of Anglophone scholarship, which has concentrated on Zarathustra's teaching understood precisely as the philosophical doctrines of *Übermensch*, Eternal Recurrence and Will to Power (e.g. Lampert 1987 and Rosen 1995).[7] Undoubtedly, studies that focus solely on this supposed "content" can be enlightening, in that they often present intriguing interpretations. At their best, such interpretations might even be of independent philosophical interest. Nevertheless, it is very problematic from the perspective of Nietzsche-scholarship when the results are presented as Nietzsche's ideas and not as those of the interpreter.

The alternative approach to *Z* that is taken here is to let Zarathustra's teachings remain unspecific. Young's claim that Zarathustra's words become unambiguous when one takes account of Nietzsche's writings prior to *Z* has to be rejected as too bold, but also as missing the point. Young's claim is too bold, because it is far too easy to get lost in the labyrinth that is *Z*, even when one has a good grasp of the preceding writings. It also misses the point, because it does not recognize the possibility that Zarathustra's teachings might be ambiguous on purpose. To be absolutely clear: To let Zarathustra's words remain unspecific does not mean to leave them uncommented. Paying attention to the affective dimension of Nietzsche's communication helps understand why the "teachings" are so unspecific. Here we come to the second presupposition of approaching *Z*; paying attention to the affective dimension of the text. To gain clarity about the matter, it is therefore necessary to revisit Colli's afterword.

## 6.2 Giorgio Colli on *Z* as communication

Firstly, it is necessary to differentiate Colli's contention that the content is not that which matters most in *Z* from an extreme view that Nietzsche ridicules in *EH*. Nietzsche there mentions the author and critic Karl (Carl) Spitteler, a later Nobelprize recipient, who according to our philosopher treated *Z* as nothing more than an exercise in style in a review in which he furthermore expressed the wish that Nietzsche would in the future care more about the content (KSA 6, 299). Nietzsche counters this critique by going on to explain that the book is to be understood as speaking of and as expressing through language experiences that differ not only from ordinary experiences but essentially from all that has been, i.e. that it is the

7 The only significant exception in Anglophone scholarship that I know of is Kathleen Higgins' monograph on *Z*, which pays due attention to the fictional nature of the narrative (Higgins 1987). Unfortunately, those aspects of her work that are of most concern to us have had a negligible impact on Anglophone scholarship. This is especially regrettable, because Higgins asks the right question about the place of mood in Z; namely, whether Nietzsche's use of mood in the work is best understood as open-ended communication of mood or as an attempt to manipulate the reader's mood (cf. Higgins 1987, 112).

first language for a series of new experiences (KSA 6, 300). Importantly, Nietzsche's explanation culminates in his discussion of good style as expression and communication of inner states (KSA 6, 304). So if we follow Nietzsche's line of thought, the "truth" that is brutalized in Spitteler's review is that the style of *Z* is in itself meant to express the inner experiences that *Z* is about. The philosophical content, Zarathustra's teachings, are to be understood as translations of such inner states. As such, the philosophical value of *Z* would consist in knowledge in and of such states, insofar as they are beneficial to philosophical enterprises. It follows that the communication of such experiential knowledge depends to a great extent on how the text embodies what it speaks of, and with this starting point in mind, we can return to Colli.

Colli explicitly distances his contention from the view that *Z* would be a purely stylistic achievement. Quite to the contrary, he treats *Z* as a particular attempt at communication. As such, Colli focuses on that which Nietzsche purportedly wants to communicate (KSA 4, 412), namely the Dionysian essence (KSA 4, 413) or simply Dionysian immediacy (KSA 3, 414). Unremarkably, Colli is at pains to describe this Dionysian immediacy. He associates it with spontaneity, immediacy of life beyond consciousness; in short an experience of the primordial ground of being [*Ur-Grund*]. Still, he is adamant to stress that Dionysian immediacy is not an inaccessible mystical experience, but accessible to everyone. Between the lines of *Z*, he asserts, moments of Dionysian immediacy can be glimpsed and perhaps even a complex, lasting state of being (KSA 4, 414). This indefiniteness can of course be excused, if one accepts Colli's assertion that Dionysian immediacy can only be expressed as vision. In this view, Nietzsche's attempt to communicate an experience of the Dionysian explains the expressive language of *Zarathustra*, which instead of rising to the level of conceptual thought remains pictorial and symbolical (KSA 4, 412). At this point one is tempted to ask about the philosophical value of Nietzsche's communication, given that in Colli's interpretation the experience that *Z* speaks of can never be clarified. There is, however, a still more pressing question.

What evidence is there that Nietzsche intended *Z* to express Dionysian immediacy? It is of critical importance to note at this stage that it is one thing to claim that Nietzsche meant *Z* to express an extraordinary kind of experience, and another to interpret *Z* as actually expressing such an experience. It is yet another thing to acknowledge that Nietzsche wanted his readers to believe that *Z* expresses a Dionysian experience. In *EH*, Nietzsche clearly leads the reader to makes this connection between *Z* and Dionysus, and between the Dionysian and the air of the heights. According to Nietzsche, *Z* is the result of overflowing power. It is a singular achievement where the Dionysian became deed in the text, and where Dionysus became reality in the type of Zarathustra (cf. KSA 6, 343 – 345). Here too one finds a description of the language of *Z* as a return to immediate pictorial nature. Nietzsche speaks of

a "return of language to its natural state of figurativeness" (Large 2007, 72).[8] One can therefore conclude that Colli's interpretation follows Nietzsche's own "interpretation" in *EH* heel to heel.

Unfortunately, there is no earlier evidence external to the text of Z that would explicitly support or refute the interpretation that Nietzsche intended to establish a connection between Zarathustra and Dionysus all along. There are no decisive clues to be found in the *Nachlass* nor are there any in the letters. We have however already seen, i. e. I have already shown, that it is problematic to rely exclusively on *EH* when interpreting the affective dimension of Nietzsche's writings (see section 4.2 and especially section 4.2.6). Although there are no reasons to raise any fundamental objections against Colli's interpretation at this point, one should nevertheless ask if there is not more to be said of Nietzsche's communication of mood in *Z* than that it is an attempt to communicate Dionysian immediacy. This question is especially pertinent, when one takes account of Nietzsche's playful use of a strategy of raising expectations in the preceding writings.

Despite concluding the discussion about the relevant evidence with such a sceptical question, and irrespective of the initial misgivings that can be read into the question, Colli's afterword is the best available starting point for a more thorough investigation of Nietzsche's affective communication in *Z*, simply because of his emphasis that the work can fruitfully be approached as a specific attempt at communication. Colli is arguably also right to emphasize that even if *Z* can hardly be called a philosophical work (KSA 4, 412), at least judged against the way philosophy has been understood, it is in harmony with Nietzsche's philosophical project (KSA 4, 413) and is to be understood as an attempted renewal of philosophy (KSA 4, 414). It is a different question if Colli's understanding of Nietzsche's philosophical project stands critical scrutiny, and to this question I will return in the following discussions: for now it suffices to explore the consequences of his view. Colli suggests that Nietzsche thought taking account of the Dionysian experience would transform the way philosophy is done, but adds that it is too early to judge whether *Z* can achieve that purpose (KSA 4, 414). To this last point, one might also add Colli's observation that *Z* is not aimed exclusively at philosophers (KSA 4, 414), but at all those who might be susceptible to its communication. The broader aim would then seem to be a general affective reorientation that should enable the renewal of culture. The logical consequence of accepting this picture as starting point is, as Colli suggests (KSA 4, 414), that the ultimate value of the affective communication of *Z* can only be seen if and when the reception of the work initiates or significantly contributes to a cultural or philosophical renewal. That, however, need not mean that one has to wait, perhaps indefinitely, for such a Nietzschean cultural renewal to happen, before one can say anything definite about Nietzsche's intentions regarding the communication of *Z*. After all, the basic idea is familiar from the preceding works: affective reorien-

**8** "*Rückkehr der Sprache zur Natur der Bildlichkeit*" (KSA 6, 344).

tation is a presupposition for a lasting renewal of thinking. In the case of the preceding works, it has been possible to uncover significant hints about the direction in which Nietzsche aims, so it is reasonable to assume that the same applies to *Z*. Precisely wherein the philosophical, as well as the broader, value of Nietzsche's affective communication (in *Z*) potentially resides can only be considered once the nature of this communication has been discussed in more detail. I begin this task by addressing the tone of the work.

## 6.3 The tone of *Z*

Whatever the precise nature of the experience that Nietzsche attempts to communicate, it is mediated through the tone of the work. In *EH*, Nietzsche emphasizes that one must above all heed the tone of Zarathustra: "Above all you have to hear properly the tone that comes out of this mouth, this halcyon tone" (Large 2007, 4; KSA 6, 259). There, Nietzsche explicitly speaks of the supposedly slow tempo of the words that flow through the mouth of Zarathustra, which he associates with the stillness before a storm, and goes on to quote the beginning of the passage *Upon the Isles of the Blest* as example: "*The figs are falling from the trees…*" (Large 2007, 5; KSA 6, 260) That chapter is central when it comes to understanding Nietzsche's attack on religion in *Z*, which means that I will return to it soon enough, but what now requires pointing out is that what Nietzsche seeks to exemplify by quoting the passage is the joy of Zarathustra, the depth of his joy [*Glückstiefe*], which in order to save the consistency of the metaphor one would have to translate as his "height of joy", from which his words fall like ripe fruits. In exemplifying such joy, Zarathustra's words must be interpreted as words of persuasion, words of exhortation. It is in this context that Nietzsche himself asks, whether Zarathustra is not one who tempts: a seducer? (KSA 6, 260; cf. Large 2007, 5) An important clue for interpreting the aim of such affective communication in *Z* can be found in his answer. Interestingly, Nietzsche does not answer his own question directly. Instead, he evades it by merely pointing out that not only does Zarathustra's communication differ from that of saints, redeemers and their kind, but that he "is" different because he does not want believers. Here again, Nietzsche reiterates the by now familiar maxim that if one is to follow him/Zarathustra, one has to follow one's own self. In what sense is this answer so enlightening?

The answer shows that Zarathustra is without a doubt a seducer, one who through his words tempts the reader by suggesting that he himself dwells in a "high mood" of joy and that by listening to him one might perhaps gain the strength to rise to one's highest potential. Yet his words both explicitly and implicitly make it clear that he is a very special kind of seducer, who cannot be followed unless one is willing to think for oneself. How does Nietzsche accomplish the task of both tempting the reader and simultaneously keeping him/her at a distance?

Zarathustra's speech *On Reading and Writing* cannot be overlooked when trying to answer this question (Z I 7, KSA 4, 48). It is most tempting to read this speech as meta-commentary on *Z:* more than any other speech or saying it invites such a reading. The speech famously begins by introducing the metaphor of writing with blood. That writing with blood means to write out of one's most personal experience, is evident from the way in which the speech quickly turns from the topic of reading and writing to Zarathustra's own experience, his way of living and life-wisdom.[9] However, the fact that Zarathustra is a fictional character begs the question in what sense the text of *Z* can be a translation of experience: this should be a warning against a too simplistic reading. In this regard, the last words that still directly connect to the explicit discussion of writing with one's blood are particularly instructive, as they would perfectly seem to fit Nietzsche's own style as practised both in *GS* and *Z:* "The air thin and pure, danger near, and the spirit filled with a joyful wickedness: these things go well together." (Parkes 2005, 35; Z I 7, KSA 4, 48) What follows is something of a demonstration of this joyful yet mocking mood that is meant to reflect Zarathustra's own way of being. It is admittedly near at hand to collapse the distinction between the character Zarathustra and Nietzsche when encountering sayings like the following one, yet it is precisely the impossibility of equating Nietzsche and Zarathustra that creates the distance that is essential to his communication:

> You look upward when you desire uplifting. And I look downward because I am uplifted.
> Who among you can laugh and be uplifted at the same time?
> Whoever climbs the highest mountains laughs about all tragic plays and tragic wakes.
> (Parkes 2005, 36; Z I 7, KSA 4, 49)

The significance of the quoted passage is heightened by the fact that Nietzsche chose it as motto for part three of *Z* (Z III, KSA 4, 192; cf. Young 2006, 107). What at first sight might seem to be nothing more than yet another instance of Nietzsche's off-putting self-aggrandizement, this time through the mouth of Zarathustra, is arguably something far more complex. Indeed, one might even go as far as to suggest that the reader is presented with something of a joke. The perspective of which Zarathustra speaks is one which allows him to see even himself (and his own tragic teaching) from above. As the final words of the speech announce: "Now I am light, now I am flying, now I see myself beneath myself, now a God dances through me." (Parkes 2005, 36; Z I 7, KSA 4, 50) One could of course read these words as speaking about an experience of Dionysian immediacy following Colli, or "a habitation of the perspective of Dionysian pantheism" to borrow Young's words (Young 2006, 111). Yet the fact is that the name Dionysus does not appear in *Z* one single time. The same applies to the term

**9** This interpretation is furthermore supported by Zarathustra's contention that it is not easy to understand another's blood (Z I 7, KSA 4, 48), which closely resembles Nietzsche's recurrent complaints that no one in his time is capable of understanding those of his experiences, which matter most to him.

Dionysian [*dionysisch*]. While this does not mean that the terms should under no circumstances be used to interpret Zarathustra's words, it is important to note that he is clearly describing a state of heightened self-awareness, which is not comparable to the ecstatic rush [*Rausch*] associated with the Dionysian in his early work (e. g. in *BT*).

I therefore find it far more promising to base the interpretation on the intriguing hint within the text that Nietzsche precisely here where he has Zarathustra speak about writing with blood, about expressing one's inner states, lets his protagonist engage in self-parody. On the one hand Zarathustra's words express the distance between the character Zarathustra as teacher and those to whom he speaks, but on the other hand suggests that a specifically self-parodic distance is essential to his teaching, to his role as teacher. This vision is reflected in the tone of the work. Throughout *Z*, Zarathustra teaches but simultaneously laughs at his own teaching, which forces the recipient of his teaching to return to his own self, to make up his/her own mind. In other words, Zarathustra cannot be followed. This initial sketch can be fleshed out by paying careful attention to Zarathustra's curious teaching about the *Übermensch* as a replacement to the dead God.

## 6.4 *Upon the Isles of the Blest*

Zarathustra's speech to his disciples *Upon the Isles of the Blest* (KSA 4, 109), seems to rely on the communication of a mood of expectation in a manner familiar from his preceding works. That which is expected is the *Übermensch*. This new hope is of course already introduced in Zarathustra's prologue [*Vorrede*] (KSA 4, 14), but the crucial difference is that there Zarathustra speaks to the people, not to a select group of disciples. There his teaching fails and not even the vision of the last man, of a type of human incapable of reaching beyond its limited horizon, that Zarathustra conjures up to scare the people make them interested in hearing his words about the *Übermensch* (KSA 4, 19). Speaking to those whom he calls his brothers [*meine Brüder*] (KSA 4, 109), knowers [*ihr Erkennenden*] (KSA 4, 110) and friends [*ihr Freunde*] (KSA 4, 110), Zarathustra employs a more sophisticated art of persuasion.

To his disciples Zarathustra presents his teaching as an intervention in the history of religion. In other words, Zarathustra's directs his words at a specific kind of hearer, who is in some significant sense bound to this religious history. Although Nietzsche already acquaints the reader with the trope that God is dead at the very beginning of *Z*, Zarathustra in fact does not explicitly mention this "event" in his speech to the people. When speaking to his disciples, by contrast, he presupposes that they have acknowledged that God is dead: "Once one said 'God' when one looked upon distant seas; but now I have taught you to say: Overhuman." (Parkes 2005, 73; KSA 4, 109) Thus, Zarathustra begins to teach a redirection of religious desire as a transformation of the highest hopes that mankind has known. Just as in GS,

and especially in the fourth book, Nietzsche here plays with a mood of expectation for a yet higher state of being, now named *Übermensch*, but this time the situation is entirely fictional. Zarathustra is presented as trying to communicate a mood to his disciples, which should enable joyful striving as he stresses that the *Übermensch* will not appear, unless given birth to.

It is crucial that Zarathustra ascribes to his disciples the power to create the *Übermensch*, as his decisive objection against religious hopes was that the highest hope should be within reach, within the possible (KSA 4, 109). Against this background, one might present the following interpretation of why Zarathustra teases his hearers by cautioning that they might not succeed. Thereby Zarathustra seeks to infect his hearers with the lust to create the *Übermensch* by suggesting that it indeed is a heroic task worthy of the efforts of the most ambitious spirits, and in this context it makes sense for him to proclaim that if they do not have the strength to transform themselves, they can at least become fathers and forefathers of the *Übermensch* through their efforts (KSA 4, 109). However, this latter suggestion might also be read as a suggestion that there is no such thing as an *Übermensch* and never will be. This begs the question, whether the *Übermensch* in Zarathustra's teaching serves any function other than that of a replacement for God, and if not, whether this teaching does not contradict the basic thrust of Nietzsche's criticism of religion, which as I have sought to clarify is about reorienting affect in a way that does away with the need for religion, which necessarily also entails doing without replacements.

In this regard, it is instructive to point out what role the idea of the *Übermensch* plays in *Z* as a whole. In parts one and two of *Z*, the *Übermensch* is arguably central to the narrative: Zarathustra's teaching to his disciples revolves around the concept. This changes in part three, in which the *Übermensch* is not explicitly mentioned until the very end, and then only as a passing reminiscence (KSA 4, 248; cf. Haase 1984, 240). Finally, in part four it would seem that the idea is only the target of parodic laughter (cf. Haase 1984, 241–242). Already in the first two parts there are hints that the *Übermensch* is nothing more than a useful tool meant to be thrown away when no longer needed; a metaphorical expression of the longing of the free spirit, who is still guided by religious feelings.

In his speech to his disciples *Upon the Isles of the Blest*, Zarathustra mockingly questions whether they can create a god and instead bids them to use their power to create the *Übermensch*. In part one, however, Zarathustra himself speaks of how he once directed his passion toward other worlds, and in doing so created a God for himself (KSA 4, 35). In other words, creating a God is perhaps no task at all. Likewise, Zarathustra teaches his disciples that all talk of Eternity is just metaphorical, just allegory, and adds that the poets lie too much (KSA 4, 110). Yet Zarathustra "admits" that he himself is a poet.[10] It is of no small consequence that he in this context spe-

**10** "*die Dichter lügen zu viel*" (KSA 4, 110). "*Dass die Dichter zuviel lügen? – Aber auch Zarathustra ist ein Dichter*" (KSA 4, 163).

cifically mentions both gods and overhumans [*Götter und Übermenschen*] as poetic creations (KSA 4, 164), of which he has become tired (KSA 4, 165). These examples again force us to confront the question about parody and self-parody in *Z*, and how they relate to Nietzsche's affective communication within *Z* as well as more broadly.

## 6.5 The question concerning self-parody in *Z*

Is there self-parody in *Z*? Are Zarathustra's teachings undermined by the self-parody within the text? How would such self-parody fit into the picture that I have thus far painted of Nietzsche's affective communication? It is remarkable that the two living scholars who take *Z* most seriously and have written major monographs to advance their interpretations, Claus Zittel and Paul Loeb, present diametrically opposed answers to the first two questions. While both provide strong critiques of those who would consign Z to the dustbin and still save Nietzsche as philosopher (Loeb 2010, 207–213 and Zittel 2011, 13–20), their respective interpretations couldn't differ more: they are utterly irreconcilable.

Claus Zittel argues in favour of the thesis that the text of *Z* parodies all the doctrines that Zarathustra teaches and effectively all "hopes" (e. g. Zittel 2011, 104, 128, 213 and 223). In this view, there are not only occasional hints of self-deconstructive parody scattered throughout the text, but the very design of *Z* ends in self-destructive parody with nihilistic consequences. Zittel goes as far as to claim that a nihilistic interpretation of *Z* is the only viable one; the only one that conforms with textual evidence. Paul Loeb, on the other hand, bluntly denies that there is any self-parody in *Z* (Loeb 2010, 242). Loeb insists that there is no evidence in *Z* that the kind of parody initiated by the protagonist of the text, by Zarathustra, would involve self-parody. In this view, the parody of *Z* is instead directed only at everything that had been taken seriously until Zarathustra's teaching, while Zarathustra's teaching is itself a life-affirming counter-ideal to all ascetic tendencies.

In more recent Anglophone contributions to the discussion on *Z* it has become more of a rule rather than an exception to question whether there is any significant self-parody in the work (e. g. Seung 2005; Young 2006; Young 2010). I will therefore begin by examining the grounds for that view. As the strongest statement of the view is to be found in Loeb's work, and since he articulates his reasons most clearly, I will at first concentrate on his categorical rejection of the possibility that there might be self-parodistic elements at work in *Z*.

Loeb notes that the final aphorism of *GS*, which is almost identical to the opening of *Z*, is entitled *Incipit Tragoedia* (GS 342, KSA 3, 571; cf. Loeb 2010, 240). This title is indeed significant, and it is certainly possible to read it, following the understanding of tragedy and comedy developed in aphorism 1 (GS 1, KSA 3, 369–372), as suggesting that Zarathustra is a teacher of the purpose of existence. Any naive or straightforward interpretation in that direction is however made problematic by

Nietzsche's comment on "*Incipit Tragoedia*" in the foreword to the second edition of *GS*. There Nietzsche singles out the title of the aphorism as an example of the playful, treacherous spirit of *GS* and suggests that what really is about to begin is parody: *incipit parodia* (GS Preface 1, KSA 3, 346). In order to exclude the possibility of readings that take this to suggest that *Z* is at least in some significant sense a work of self-parody, Loeb claims that the *incipit parodia* of the foreword has falsely been interpreted to imply a practice of self-parody (Loeb 2010, 240 – 242). Against scholars who rely on the foreword to justify a self-parodistic reading, Loeb points out that "nowhere in his further explanation does Nietzsche imply that the new kind of parody begun by his protagonist Zarathustra will be self-parody" (Loeb 2010, 242). Loeb, however, overlooks that the foreword is not the only addition made by Nietzsche to *GS* that is significant in this regard. Loeb completely ignores the more decisive addition: the motto, which makes absolutely clear that a "Master" who cannot laugh at himself is someone who one must laugh at (cf. GS Title page, KSA 3, 343).

Of course, it might seem possible to interpret the motto to mean that one has to be able to laugh at one's past self from one's present position. So in *Z* the life-affirming Nietzsche would laugh at his former self who held on to ascetic ideals. Such an interpretation, that would save Loeb's intention, is nevertheless implausible as it is hard to reconcile with the text of *Z*. There is no doubt that Nietzsche's Zarathustra highly values the capacity to rise above tragedy and to laugh at oneself, to view oneself from above, from a distance (cf. KSA 4, 150). In any case, the decisive evidence about self-parody is to be found within the text, and already on the basis of the passage referred to above one cannot exclude the possibility that there are at least hints in the texts that allow a reading emphasizing self-parodic elements. If there is no reason to conclude that there is no self-parody in *Z*, could there be reasons to consider the entire work self-parody?

## 6.6 Claus Zittel's challenge: Nihilistic self-parody?

Claus Zittel's thesis that the text of *Z* not only at times undermines the teachings of its protagonist but culminates in nihilistic self-parody is worth interrogating, since his reading is by far the most sophisticated and powerful attack on all interpretations that read *Z* as in one way or another opening up a future to desire or at least the possibility of creating a desirable future as a free spirit. While I start by acknowledging and emphasizing the relative merits of Zittel's interpretation, I here seek to show that paying careful attention to the question of Nietzsche's communication of mood shows the limits of his interpretation.

Zittel's starting point is solid as a rock: he sets out from the observation that the complex composition of *Z* betrays a high degree of aesthetic reflection. What is so striking about the composition of *Z*, the aesthetic calculation [*ästhetische Kalkül*] (cf. Zittel 2011, 11 – 12) that the title of his monograph alludes to? The text of *Z* abounds with intertextual references (to the literary tradition; above all the Bible)

and intratextual references (to passages within *Z*) (Zittel 2011, 74). With this starting point one can hardly disagree. More controversially Zittel argues that it follows from the parodic treatment of the literary tradition in *Z* that it can be identified as a "late" work that doesn't go beyond the tradition that it parodies but merely points toward the end of that tradition. Similarly, and even more controversially, Zittel argues that part four serves an analogous function within the work, in the sense that the parody that predominates in the first three parts turns into self-parody in the fourth part, which merely points towards the end of Zarathustra's/Nietzsche's philosophical project in failure (Zittel 2011, 126–128 and 223).

Let us for now focus on less far-reaching conclusions that can be drawn from recognizing the complexity of the composition of *Z*, and examine the evidence about the more radical theses later. According to Zittel, acknowledging that the text of *Z* exhibits a high level of reflection precludes treating *Z* as the expression of some kind of primordial experience of immediacy (Zittel 2011, 113–114). Zittel does not mean to say that Nietzsche would not invite such a reading, but that the good reader does not let him- or herself be carried away by Nietzsche's language, his seductive words of affirmation, but listens carefully to the cautions and warnings present in the text (Zittel 2011, 93–94). On this point, Zittel explicitly takes to task those scholars who follow the paradigmatic example of Colli and rely primarily on passages and quotes from *EH* to justify their interpretations (Zittel 2011, 92–93). What immediacy there is in *Z* is in this critical view a carefully crafted and illusory immediacy.[11] In other words, Zittel presents his study as nothing less than an all-out attack on interpretations that privilege the seductive surface of Nietzsche's text, and particularly as an intellectualist corrective to emotionalist readings. In this regard, he especially targets interpretations that take Zarathustra's teachings (*Übermensch*, Eternal Recurrence) at face value, and instead seeks to show in what questionable and deceptive manner those teachings are presented in the text.

While I agree wholeheartedly with Zittel's critique insofar as it is highly problematic to rely solely on *EH* as a guide to Nietzsche's affective communication and/or to take Zarathustra's doctrines at face value,[12] it is necessary to ask to what extent his critique hits its primary target. To be specific, one can question if Zittel does not misread Colli at least in one important respect. After all, Colli also cautions against thinking that *Z* is about the doctrines *Übermensch*, Eternal Recurrence and Will to Power. Be that as it may, there is certainly a fundamental problem in Colli's view of *Z* as an expression of Dionysian immediacy. To recognize that whatever *Z* expresses, the expression is mediated through reflection, is enough to reject a naive understanding of Nietzsche's affective communication, as a communication of ecstatic Dionysian affirmation [*Rausch*]. Contra Zittel, it in no way follows that Nietzsche's

**11** Cf. Zittel's aptly named chapter "Fingierte Unmittelbarkeit" (Zittel 2011, 173–180).

**12** Such readings abound. Recently, for example, Franco has written of the *Übermensch* as Nietzsche's "new ideal" as if that were unproblematic (Franco 2011, 162–170).

affective communication is nothing more than a clever deception that the good reader sees through. Rather than hindering a critical reading, being attuned to the joyful and playfully treacherous mood of *Z* arguably makes an even further reaching critique possible. The warning signs that Zittel speaks of cannot escape the reader, who pays attention to Nietzsche's affective communication. So when Zittel asserts that Zarathustra actually preaches suspicion against all doctrines (Zittel 2011, 104), one need only ask why this would contradict the joyful affirmation that Zarathustra nonetheless equally promotes. Is it not precisely the union of sceptical sentiment and joy, after all, which characterizes Nietzsche's ideal mood?

In fact, a careful reading of *EH* reveals that a similar manner of communication is at work there. No passage exemplifies this better than the one which he begins by proclaiming that he knows his privileges as author [*Vorrechte als Schriftsteller*] (KSA 6, 302). While it would seem that Nietzsche only writes about his right to choose those for whom he writes in a manner quite familiar from his other writings (e. g. BGE 30, KSA 5, 48), he is also issuing a warning to his readers. With characteristic hyperbole, Nietzsche proclaims that he comes from heights where no bird has ever flown, and that only those who can rise to his heights and who are therefore related to him can understand him. In the midst of praising his books as the proudest and finest that there are, he suddenly and mischievously adds that his books now and then reach "the highest thing that can be achieved on earth, cynicism" (Large 2007, 39; KSA 6, 302). Cynicism as the highest peak that can be reached? This if anything is a warning and yet it is a warning told in a language of affirmation familiar from *Z*.

Returning to *Z*, Zittel certainly does a good job in showing what he terms the deceptive character of the visions that Zarathustra plays with and teases his disciples with.[13] The critical question is in what sense, if any, this complicates the question concerning Nietzsche's communication of mood. Does the deconstructive self-parody that some interpreters find in the text necessarily work against the viability of Nietzsche's philosophy and the project of affective reorientation or does it paradoxically play a more constructive role within it? In seeking to answer this question the fourth book of *Z* is decisive, since Nietzsche there confronts his protagonist with various challenges, above all a parody of the teachings of the *Übermensch* and Eternal Recurrence, which arguably culminates in self-parody (cf. Zittel 2011, 128 – 132). In the following section, I focus solely on this most striking example of deconstructive parody within book four of *Z*; namely the *Ass Festival* [*Eselsfest*].

**13** What Zittel calls the "*trügerische Character des verbreiteten Verheissungsoptimismus*" (Zittel 2011, 207).

## 6.7 Deconstructive parody in the Ass Festival

*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* begins with a reminder that God is dead (KSA 4, 14) and it is against this background that Zarathustra teaches the *Übermensch* (e. g. KSA 4, 109). Zittel wryly notes that instead of being presented with the *Übermensch* in part four, the reader is presented with the "enthronement" of an Ass (Zittel 2011, 195). A number of "higher men" have gathered at Zarathustra's cave in the mountains; and they awaken his hopes for he sees in them his own hopes. There is something about them that bothers Zarathustra still, so he leaves his cave to converse with his animals. The higher men are merry [*fröhlich*], which appears to him a sign of becoming healthy, but although they have learned to laugh, he tells his animals that their laughter is not akin to his (KSA 4, 386). Whatever their faults, Zarathustra seeks to shake off his unease. He speaks to his heart that indeed the higher men are on the path to health; that they are convalescents [*Es sind Genesende!*] (KSA 4, 387). Then, suddenly, Zarathustra hears a strange commotion from his cave, which had fallen silent, and a fragrant scent of incense reaches his nose (KSA 4, 388). Thus begins the Ass Festival, the interpretation of which is decisive to settle the question concerning self-parody, and therefore for the interpretation of *Z* as a whole (cf. Higgins 1987, 227–228).[14]

When Zarathustra returns to his cave he finds the higher men on their knees engaged in what he later calls a play [*Schauspiel*] (KSA 4, 391), a parody play of religious rites. What is parodied, however, appears to be more than Christian tradition; specifically it seems as if Zarathustra's teaching of the *Übermensch*, which is indissociable from his teaching of affirmation, were the main source of laughter: the higher men mockingly praise the wisdom of the Ass, whom they call their God. The Ass, however, only ever answers with I-A, with affirmation.[15] Zarathustra interrupts the

**14** While Higgins poses many of the right questions, her reading of book four and particularly the Ass festival as "Menippean satire" modelled after Apuleius' *Golden Ass* is a prime example of over-interpretation. There is no evidence that Nietzsche primarily based his narrative on this one source, the understanding of which would uncover the meaning of the spectacle. (Cf. Higgins 1987.)

**15** "*Amen! Und Lob und Ehre und Weisheit und Dank und Preis und Stärke sei unserm Gott, von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit!– Der Esel aber schrie dazu I-A. Er trägt unsre Last, er nahm Knechtsgestalt an, er ist geduldsam von Herzen und redet niemals Nein; und wer seinen Gott liebt, der züchtigt ihn.– Der Esel aber schrie dazu I-A. Er redet nicht: es sei denn, dass er zur Welt, die er Schuf, immer Ja sagt: also preist er seine Welt. Seine Schlauheit ist es, die nicht redet: so bekommt er selten Unrecht.– Der Esel aber schrie dazu I-A. Unscheinbar geht er durch die Welt. Grau ist die Leib-Farbe, in welche er seine Tugend hüllt. Hat er Geist, so verbirgt er ihn; Jedermann aber glaubt an seine langen Ohren.– Der Esel aber schrie dazu I-A. Welche verborgene Weisheit ist das, dass er lange Ohren trägt und allein ja und nimmer Nein sagt! Hat er nicht die Welt erschaffen nach seinem Bilde, nämlich so dumm als möglich?– Der Esel aber schrie dazu I-A. Du gehst gerade und krumme Wege; es kümmert dich wenig, was uns Menschen gerade oder krumm dünkt. Jenseits von Gut und Böse ist dein Reich. Es ist deine Unschuld, nicht zu wissen, was Unschuld ist.– Der Esel aber schrie dazu I-A. Siehe doch, wie du Niemanden von dir stössest, die Bettler nicht, noch die Könige. Die Kindlein lässest du zu dir kommen, und wenn dich die bösen Buben locken, so sprichst du einfältiglich I-A.– Der Esel aber schrie dazu I-A. Du liebst Eselinnen*

spectacle violently and interrogates the higher men, who only provide joking answers to his question why they put up such a show (KSA 4, 390 – 392). According to one prominent interpretation, the higher men are laughing at themselves and at their own convictions both through their festival and in their answers (Young 2006, 115), which delights Zarathustra, who understands the necessity of periodical release from the seriousness of living according to his teaching (Young 2006, 116). Young goes as far as to claim that the "Ass Festival" shows that the "festival, the rebirth of the life-affirming Greek festival, remains at the centre of Nietzsche's thinking" (Young 2006, 117). Such a reading fits his narrative about a communitarian, religious Nietzsche, who was all the time mostly concerned with creating new communal festivals. Characteristically, Young completely overlooks an important part of the narrative and that is Zarathustra's initial reaction, which is certainly not one of delight.

Instead of joining in on their fun or directly praising the higher men, Zarathustra interrupts them, screams at them and demands answers. It also seems as if he were not pleased at all with the answers he receives as he loudly cries "Oh you buffoons, all of you, you jesters! Why do you disguise and conceal yourselves from me!" (Parkes 2005, 276; KSA 4, 393) and claims that they really want to return to the comforts of a childish faith. After thus castigating the higher men there is a pause, and it is highly significant that only after this pause there is a shift in Zarathustra's attitude toward the higher men. It is as if he has calmed down and regained his composure. Only now, finally, Zarathustra tells the higher men that they delight him. His words about the need for new festivals, which follow, are specifically addressed to the higher men: it seems to him that they need some old Zarathustra-clown and new festivals to cheer them up, and that such rites as the worship of an ass that he just witnessed are really only invented by those who are on their way to health. (Cf. KSA 4, 393 – 394.)

Zittel, who unlike Young builds his interpretation around Zarathustra's initial reaction, speculates that Zarathustra is upset at the higher men, because they not only parody religious traditions but his own teaching (Zittel 2011, 183 – 184). To put it bluntly: the higher men laugh at Zarathustra (cf. Higgins 1987, 227 – 228). More specifically, it would seem that precisely those teachings meant to enhance life after the death of God, above all the *Übermensch* and the associated idea of the highest affirmation of life (i. e. Eternal Recurrence), are the target of ridicule. In other words, the narrative returns to Zarathustra's first attempt to communicate his teaching, where the people of the city mock him. Zittel therefore concludes that Zarathustra's teaching has failed and that he himself realizes that he has no power over his doctrines, which leads to resignation and the self-parodic characterization of himself as just some old comic clown or jester [*Zarathustra-Narr*] (KSA 4, 393; Zittel 2011, 183 – 184). That Zarathustra has no power over his doctrines, however, is not much

*und frische Feigen, du bist kein Kostverächter. Eine Distel kitzelt dir das Herz, wenn du gerade Hunger hast. Darin liegt eines Gottes Weisheit.– Der Esel aber schrie dazu I-A.*" (KSA 4, 388 – 389)

of a problem, if one should take his words seriously about not wanting followers and about following oneself. In other words, one might claim that even if Zarathustra's explicit teaching might have failed, Nietzsche's narrative only gains power when the authority of the teacher is deconstructed. Such an interpretation could point to the fact that the narrative does not end with the Ass Festival and what else Nietzsche recounts about that night, and that instead it ends when Zarathustra early in the morning leaves the higher men behind in his cave, sets off on his own (guided by a vision of "his children"), with his own work in mind (KSA 4, 408). Be that as it may, the Ass Festival does pose a challenge to all readings that rely on Zarathustra's status as teacher, as he arguably fails to live up to his own words.

What is most alarming, following the interpretation developed in this chapter, is that we initially witness a failure on Zarathustra's part to laugh at his own doctrines. Was not Zarathustra supposed to be able to view himself from above and to laugh at himself? One might of course claim that Zarathustra is not seriously shocked and instead only acting. This option is implausible, because the evidence that Zarathustra has serious problems with the higher men is both clear and abundant. What is particularly interesting is that Zarathustra now and again leaves his cave, where the higher men are gathered, in order to get fresh air, i.e. to be alone with himself (and his animals). "Do they not smell good?" (KSA 4, 369), he asks his animals about the higher men. In their presence he cannot breathe free air, his mountain air. Read against this background, the narrative that leads to the Ass Festival takes on new meaning.

Again, Zarathustra has escaped from his cave into the free air (cf. KSA 4, 378) but this time he is lured back as he realizes no noise emerges from his cave and instead there is a fragrant scent in the air: "his nose smelled a fragrant smoke and incense, as if from burning pine-cones" (Parkes 2005, 273; KSA 4, 388). Both fascinated and alarmed by this scent, he rushes back to the entrance of his cave. Whatever hopes Zarathustra might have had turn out to be illusory. It is not the case that the higher men smell any better than before, but that they are burning incense. It is even worse than that; not only are they burning incense, they are worshipping an ass. Is this how the higher men should raise themselves even higher? Has Zarathustra taught them to rise higher through spectacle, through a kind of collective intoxication?

The word intoxication is not entirely out of place here. In the text there are even hints that wine also plays a part in the celebrations. Firstly, we are told that some of the higher men, the two kings to be precise, have brought a supply of wine to Zarathustra's cave: as much as an Ass can carry [*einen ganzen Esel voll*] (KSA 4, 353 – 354). Secondly, the narrative itself becomes drunk, when the celebrations begin to approach midnight. The text clearly hints that there is no certainty about what took place that night ("as some storytellers believe", "There are even those who say" or

"Now it may have been this way or otherwise", Parkes 2005, 278; KSA 4, 396*).*[16] One of the things that "are told" about the night is that the Ass danced (cf. "I should only believe in a God who knew how to dance", Parkes 2005, 36),[17] because it too had been given wine to drink (KSA 4, 396). Interestingly, though it is earlier suggested that Zarathustra himself only drinks water (KSA 4, 353), he also appears drunken as midnight approaches ([*wie ein Trunkener*]; KSA 4, 396; cf. Zittel 2011, 196). An easy, all too easy, solution to the interpretative challenge that these references to intoxication pose is to associate the wine with Dionysus and the celebrations all in all with the ecstasy [*Rausch*] of the birth of tragedy (cf. BT 1, KSA 1, 28 – 30; Colli, KSA 4, 412 – 413) and then to deduce that we witness the rebirth of life-affirming festival (cf. Young 2006). Perhaps such an interpretation would be feasible, were it not for the mature Nietzsche's recurring critique of intoxication and artificially produced high feelings.

Zittel summarizes Nietzsche's key point thus: Only tired human beings, only those who are tired of life [*lebensmüde*], require special means of intoxication (Zittel 2011, 196 – 197). While this viewpoint also finds expression in *Z* (e. g. KSA 4, 353), aphorism 86 of *GS* is particularly instructive in this regard, not least because one could go as far as to extract the following exclamation as the motto of Nietzsche's critique: "Does he that *is* enthusiastic need wine?" (Kaufmann 1974, 142; GS 86, KSA 3, 443 – 444).[18] The importance of the aphorism for the work done here does not derive from the fact that Zittel draws heavily on it in order to justify his interpretation: Indeed, the aphorism is actually apt to problematize his entire reading. The aphorism, *Of the theater*, is so important because it reveals the real reason behind Nietzsche's rejection of artificially induced ecstasy. There, Nietzsche openly expresses his disgust at those artists who cater to people who would not have any idea of higher moods [*höheren Stimmungen*], were it not for the existence of intoxicating means in the shape of either art or wine. They need an art of intoxication that without sufficient reason raises feeling to a higher level. When the artist lowers himself to serve their instincts, the strongest thoughts and passions are made to serve cheap intoxication, which is the only height that a public incapable of dwelling in high moods can reach. Those like himself, who know high moods from their own experience, have no need of such arts and are appalled by such spectacles. (GS 86, KSA 3, 443 – 444).

Aphorism 86 of *GS* represents no rejection of the value of high moods. To the contrary, it is a defence premised on the need to distinguish artificially induced intoxication from those high moods that are philosophically significant; that are an essential fruit of the philosophical life. In his interpretation of *Z*, Zittel fails to take into

**16** "*wie manche Erzähler meinen*", "*Es gibt sogar Solche die Erzählen*", "*Diess mag sich nun so verhalten oder auch anders*" (KSA 4, 396).

**17** "*Ich würde nur an einen Gott glauben, der zu tanzen verstünde.*" (KSA 4, 49)

**18** "*Was braucht der Begeisterte Wein!*" (GS 86, KSA 3, 443 – 444) See also Nietzsche's auto-biographical advise to all spiritual natures to abstain from alcohol (KSA 6, 280 – 281).

account that Nietzsche distinguishes desirable "higher states" from a kind of intoxication that he vehemently criticizes and rejects, and only because of this failure can Zittel claim that Nietzsche's communication of mood is nothing more than artful deception. Still, Zittel's misreading is valuable precisely because it raises the question how the two can be distinguished. In this regard, it is of utmost importance to note that it is not possible to distinguish the two on the level of the text. Whatever high moods Nietzsche presents Zarathustra as experiencing, these cannot simply be interpreted as direct translations of Nietzsche's own experiences of philosophically significant moods. It is simply not enough to point out, as Higgins does, that Zarathustra is "presented as one who engages in honest introspection" (Higgins 1987, 114). In other words, there is reason to reflect on the decisive role that Nietzsche leaves to the reader, who has no means to draw a clear line between the drunkenness of the Ass that supposedly danced and Zarathustra's seeming drunkenness, which is not limited to specific visions (e. g. KSA 4, 396) but pervades his rhetoric.

## 6.8 Zarathustra, the Ass and nihilism

Given the role of the Ass in the fourth part of *Z*, it is not unreasonable to see the Ass as an embodiment of the greatest objection to Zarathustra's teaching. In this regard, the most solid starting point is Jörg Salaquarda's contention in an oft-cited article: The Ass is the actual antipode of Zarathustra (Salaquarda 1973, 205; cf. Zittel 2011, 183 and Young 2006, 115). What matters here is as much the relation as the opposition between the two. The Ass says I-A to everything, the Ass affirms all, and is this not exactly what Zarathustra's *Übermensch* does? Zarathustra himself teaches in the third book, in the speech *On the Spirit of Heaviness*, that only the Ass has learned to say yes to everything. "Always to say Yea-haw––that only the ass has learned, and whoever is of his spirit!" (Parkes 2005, 168; KSA 4, 244) Logically, it would then seem that if the *Übermensch* is to affirm everything, he or she has to have the spirit of an Ass. However, the very same speech by Zarathustra contains the hint that the affirmation that he teaches is in fact first and foremost an affirmation of the individual, of personal tastes (yes-saying) and distastes (nay-saying), and only then through this affirmation, through this specific individual perspective, an affirmation of all.[19] This requires a light spirit, not the kind of heavy spirit, which he associates with the Ass. As he states, one does not learn to fly unless one follows oneself: "This––is just my way:––where is yours?", he asks, and adds: "For the way––does not exist!" (Parkes 2005, 169; KSA 4, 245) Once again, Zarathustra emphasizes the role of the recipient of his words, and this fits the thesis that Nietzsche's communication of

**19** To a great extent, my reading on this point aligns with Deleuze's influential interpretation that the Ass lacks the capacity to say no, which makes his yes a false yes that is akin to Christian renunciation of the self in its acceptance of carrying the weight of the "world" or the "real" (Deleuze 1983, 178 and 180 – 182; cf. Hödl 2009, 450).

mood in *Z* is meant to aid the reader to return to him- or herself, in the sense that any heightening of feeling is only possible through reflection on one's own experience.

Against this background, one can object to the way in which Zittel tries to make the most out of an easily overlooked self-description in book four in which Zarathustra speaks of himself as the one who gives wings to asses ([*Der den Eseln Flügel giebt*], KSA 4, 367). Namely, he reads the passage as a thinly veiled admission of the character of Zarathustra's teaching. After all, Zittel reasons, Nietzsche critically characterizes the artist who seeks to induce intoxication as one who "gives the mole wings" (Kaufmann 1974, 142; GS 86, KSA 3, 444), so should the image of giving wings to asses not be read in this light? According to Zittel, Nietzsche/Zarathustra suggests nothing else than that those who believe his teaching and allow themselves to be carried away by his style are asses (Zittel 2011, 197).[20] Zittel furthermore claims that the image of winged asses makes all the metaphors of flying in *Z* laughable (Zittel 2011, 197). While Zittel is certainly right in his claim that Nietzsche's use of metaphors of heights and flying cannot always be read as only being constructive when one takes account of Nietzsche's critique of intoxication (Zittel 2011, 197), this is not enough to conclude that the playful treatment of the metaphors, which given their centrality in the self-characterizations of Zarathustra amounts to self-parody, is entirely deconstructive. Importantly, the ass-metaphor is also not as exclusively negative as Zittel portrays it. In the speech *On Reading and Writing*, Zarathustra answers those who say that life is hard, that in some sense all of us are asses: "We are all of us pretty sturdy asses and she-asses" (Parkes 2005, 36; KSA 4, 49). Turned back on Zarathustra, and when one adds that he then goes on to speak about how he learned to fly, he is not only the one who gives wings to asses but was himself once an ass. The metaphor allows one to think that one leaves the ass within behind when one grows wings. There is of course still the possibility of thinking of Zarathustra as still primarily an ass; now perhaps a flying ass (cf. Zittel 2011, 198). In this regard, one must simply ask what difference it makes and refer to Zarathustra's "motto": "what does it matter!" (Parkes 2005, 278; KSA 4, 396).

Be that as it may, there is one reason above others to resist Zittel's conclusion that the text of *Z* presents the reader with the alternative of either approaching the text emotionally and following Zarathustra into intoxication, or approaching the text purely intellectually and revealing Nietzsche's true message; the nihilistic despair beneath the surface. I think it can be shown that Nietzsche's communication of mood is not meant to trick the reader into ecstatic affirmation and thus turn the reader away from a confrontation with nihilism, and that therefore Zittel's reading is far too bound to the perspective it tries to get rid of. Indeed, Zittel's interpretation is best read as a corrective to Colli, who claimed that *Z* is an expression of Dionysian immediacy and that the character of this emotional communication of *Z*

**20** "*Zum ersten meint er, daß es Esel sind, die ihm glauben und sich an seinem Stil berauschen*" (Zittel 2011, 197).

makes a nihilistic interpretation of the text impossible (KSA 4, 415). In a less known introduction to *Z*, Colli goes as far as to compare the effect of the book to a drug and to a magic potion (Colli 1993, 92).[21] Colli thus reads *Z* as if it were primarily crafted to induce the kind of ecstasy celebrated in *BT*, i.e. as if Nietzsche's thinking on mood had not advanced at all in the years between the publication of that rather immature work and *Z*. Thus, Colli overlooks that even in *EH*, where Nietzsche connects Zarathustra and Dionysus, he speaks of the experiences expressed in *Z* as "new experiences", not as experiences already known to the ancient Greeks or experiences accessible to anyone (cf. KSA 6, 299–300). Instead of marking a return to *BT* and to a celebration of collective intoxication, *Z* is best interpreted as a sign of that development of Nietzsche's thinking on mood, which leads him to rethink the Dionysian as a philosophical mood and finally to describe himself as a disciple of the philosopher Dionysus (see chapter 7). This is a mood, which ideally allows one to affirm that which is problematic and questionable: it is essentially a generalization of the joy of sceptical questioning. In other words, this ideal mood allows one to enjoy rather than avoid "nihilism".

What after all is nihilism for Nietzsche other than a magic word used to conjure visions of impending catastrophes and thus to scare off certain kinds of reader? In the end, it turns out that Zittel's interpretation is in this regard not primarily based on textual evidence from within *Z*, but on a remarkably rigid interpretation of the death of God (Zittel 2011, 104; 134–136; 223). Again, Zittel's starting point is solid enough. According to him, Nietzsche does not only have the Christian God in mind when writing that God is dead. Rather, all the old gods are dead. All values have become suspicious. All values have become questionable. This then is nihilism. Thus far, it is hard to disagree with Zittel, and it is rather Zittel's interpretation of the psychological consequences of accepting that God is dead which is problematic as it does not conform to the available evidence. His key claim is that since there is no absolute truth, all new values and ideals are illusions that cannot be believed. In other words, they cannot motivate. Zittel's assumption, which Nietzsche does not share, is that if there is no "absolute truth" there is no truth at all, and that my truth, your truth and our truths do not matter. To justify his reading, according to which the death of God inevitably leads to a cultural logic of self-destruction [*Selbstaufhebung*], Zittel relies exclusively on a simplistic reading of the opening aphorism of book five of GS that "explains" what it means that God is dead (cf. chapter 5, section 5.7 of this study). In this light, Zittel asserts that all passages in Nietzsche's oeuvre that suggest a desirable future should be interpreted as deceptive, subjective illusions.[22] Zittel furthermore asserts that he can integrate all of Nietzsche's future-oriented statements into his interpretation, which he contrasts with the supposed in-

**21** "*Daß dieses Buch wie eine Droge wirkt, ist eine mehr oder weniger verbreitete Tatsache, und wenn seine Gegner dies gerne bestreiten, belügen sie sich selbst.*" (Colli 1993, 92)

**22** "*Alle Zukunfts-bejahenden Stellen lassen sich nun als lediglich subjektive Illusionen einstufen, mit welchem z.B. 'Der Freie Geist' sich über den objektiven Untergang hinwegtäuscht.*" (Zittel 2011, 136)

ability of interpreters who favour an "optimistic" Nietzsche-interpretation to integrate his warnings and pessimistic visions (Zittel 2011, 136 – 137).

I do not know much about "optimistic" Nietzsche-interpretations, but the interpretation advanced here argues that Nietzsche counted with a radically open future. In this view, both Nietzsche's "optimistic" and "pessimistic" visions of the future are understood as part of a strategy of communication.[23] Aphorism *GS* 343 is a good example, as it does not present definite answers, but instead forces the reader to make up his/her mind. Neither Nietzsche's promises nor his warnings about future possibilities should be understood as deterministic statements of what is to come. Nietzsche time and again qualifies his visions with scepticism, e. g. by asking who could tell what is to come (e. g. D 453, KSA 3, 274). If Nietzsche thinks "absolute truth" died with God, as Zittel plausibly suggests in his interpretation, then there is even less ground for deterministic claims about the future. That there is no absolute truth, that God is dead, is precisely the presupposition for thinking the future as radically open, and in this context Nietzsche's enticing visions are meant to have an impact on the future. Recognizing that God is dead does not make high moods impossible. Instead, it opens new possibilities, not least the possibility of living one's life as a philosophical experiment and as a result of a different mode of life reach new heights of feeling. For Nietzsche, mood matters more than ever after the recognition that God is dead. Nietzsche's own efforts suggest that while nihilism does not imply an end to creativity, "high moods" gain in importance as sources of motivation when religious ideals lose their credibility. As there cannot be a universal ideal, there must be individual ideals, some of which however might be more compelling than others. This explains why the task of purifying feeling is so important to Nietzsche, and why the highest hopes of mankind should be fundamentally transformed according to the motto "become who you are", not simply redirected. It also explains why the distinction between (religious, Wagnerian or alcoholic) ecstasy and philosophical moods is so important, since only the latter have lasting value for the philosopher. In short, the death of God leads the philosopher to reflect on the question of an ideal philosophical mood.

**23** Curiously, Zittel does in a footnote (Nr. 415) intended to support his thesis that Zarathustra's doctrines should not be believed, mention approvingly that Marie-Luise Haase has questioned whether Zarathustra's talk of the death of God is a message to the reader that is meant to be understood as a statement of fact (Zittel 2011, 204). As much as he emphasizes Nietzsche's aesthetic strategies, Zittel seems unable to accept that the message that God is dead might be yet another strategic test, perhaps to lure the ones to whom he speaks to reorient their striving and/or to become who they are. After all, it was none other than Zarathustra who was originally supposed to announce that God is dead in *GS* (cf. KSA 14, 256).

## 6.9 Conclusion

I have suggested that the teaching of Zarathustra aligns with the project of *GS* (i.e. become who you are [*werde, der du bist*], cf. KSA 4, 297) and provided evidence from within the text that Nietzsche's communication of mood supports this project. To conclude, I will present further support for my reading from Nietzsche's letters, and from a short look forward to his next books, which in no way support Zittel's reading about Nietzsche's philosophical project coming to a nihilistic end in *Z*. Nietzsche himself had no interest in directly explaining what he sought to accomplish through *Z*, but in his letters one can nevertheless find clues that support this reading. Admittedly, all of these letters predate the completion of the fourth book, but they should nevertheless be taken heed of. In an unsent letter addressed to an admirer named Paul Lanzky, dated April 1884, provoked by the admission of Lanzky that he does not see Nietzsche's goals, Nietzsche rhetorically and mockingly asks if he really has to "descend", to lower himself, to explain his Zarathustra.[24] Although Nietzsche does not quite go as far as to "explain" his Zarathustra, he does go some way towards answering the question about the goals of *Z*. First he bluntly writes that he wanted to encourage himself with the work.[25] Only after that does he add something more generally encouraging: that all those men and women who strive for their own goal, will gain strength from reading *Z*.[26]

Nietzsche writes to Köselitz in a similar yet even more sceptical manner in September the same year. In that letter Nietzsche attests that he personally considers the value of *Z* to depend on its function as a book of edification and encouragement, but adds that the book must seem obscure and pathetic to everyone (KGB III/1, Bf. 529).[27] That Nietzsche himself took this encouragement-effect of *Z* quite seriously is beyond doubt, as he explicitly mentions it in a number of letters.[28] More than anything, however, these letters show Nietzsche's recurring doubts about his ability to reach through to his readers through his texts. Although Nietzsche's communication of mood arguably reaches a new height in *Z*, especially in the use of artistic means, the letters still speak of the work as being only an entrance to his philosophy. That prompts one to ask about the relation of *Z* to those two works that at least in

**24** "*Wollen Sie mich reizen, Mehr zu sagen, als ich Lust habe? – – Oder soll ich zu der absurden Rolle hinabsteigen, meinen Zarathustra (oder seine Thiere) erklären zu müssen? Dafür, denke ich, werden irgendwann einmal Lehrstühle und Professoren dasein.*" (KGB III/5, Bf. 506a)

**25** "*Bemerken Sie doch: ich habe mich mit diesem übermenschlichen Bilde ermuthigen wollen.*" (KGB III/5, Bf. 506a)

**26** "*Alle Menschen aber, die irgend einen heroischen Impuls in sich haben zu ihrem eigenen Ziele hin, werden sich eine große Kraft aus meinem Zarathustra herausnehmen.*" (KGB III/5, Bf. 506a)

**27** "*Erbauungs- und Ermuthigungs-Buch*" ... "*dunkel und verborgen und lächerlich für Jedermann*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 529).

**28** E.g. to Franz Overbeck:"*Dieser Zarathustra ist nichts als eine Vorrede, Vorhalle – ich habe mir selber Muth machen müssen*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 494). Cf. to Malwida von Meysenbug: "*Eine Vorhalle zu meiner Philosophie – für mich gebaut, mir Muth zu machen*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 498).

Anglophone scholarship are considered his main works, *Beyond Good and Evil* and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Leiter 2002, xii; cf. Clark and Dudrick 2012, 2–3; cf. Janaway 2007, 1).

In *EH* Nietzsche himself writes that having finished *Z*, the yes-saying part of his task was finished and that the works that follow have a more direct destructive intent (KSA 6, 350). Does this mean that Nietzsche is no longer concerned with the communication of mood in his later works? Though Nietzsche's own distinction is useful, one should take care not to read it in a way that leads one to overlook continuities. In other words, Nietzsche's philosophical writing does not fundamentally change after *Z*, but he does expand on it significantly. So if his project came to a nihilistic end in that book nihilistic ends do not mean much. In this regard, a letter to Jacob Burckhardt is particularly instructive. In 1886, Nietzsche implores Burckhardt to read *BGE* even if its message is the same as that of Z.[29] Arguably, this also applies to *GM*, which despite superficially seeming to be even further away from *Z* than *BGE* is without a doubt a continuation of the philosophical concerns of the preceding works. Indeed, what has changed most in these works is the form, as Nietzsche tones down the use of artistic means in order to return to a more direct form of expression. There is therefore arguably more to be learned from Nietzsche's discussions about feeling-states than from his "use of mood" in these later works. That is of course not to say that communication of mood would play no significant role in the works, but that as Nietzsche's playful "use" of mood is not as apparent and mostly follows the pattern of the preceding works it is not of as great interest to us here as his more direct communication; and specifically his statements about an ideal mood.

A case in point is *BGE*, which in this regard is nothing less than a bridge to Nietzsche's final works.[30] There one can observe a by now familiar strategy of communication at work: that of suggesting a high mood of affirmation (as a specifically philosophical mood) and tempting the reader with visions of the embodiment of this mood in a human being. Nietzsche himself suggests that his book is nourishment for a higher type of human: a dangerous book for all except for those few higher souls who perhaps have the strength to rise to heights above tragedy and who are therefore able to read the book as a challenge for themselves (BGE 30, KSA 5, 48–49). Throughout the text, Nietzsche acts as seducer [*Versucher*]; most notably by introducing his

**29** "*Bitte, lesen Sie dies Buch,* (*ob es schon dieselben Dinge sagt, wie mein Zarathustra, aber anders, sehr anders* –)." (KGB III/3, Bf. 754; cf. KGB III/3, Bf. 768)

**30** I have already discussed the 1887 edition of *GS*, which is very much in tune with the message of *BGE*. When it comes to *GM*, Christopher Janaway has in a boldly argued monograph study sought to cast light on the affective dimension of the text, which he analyses in terms of "affective reorientation" (Janaway 2007). Janaway is certainly correct about the big picture; that Nietzsche also in *GM* seeks to engage the reader's emotions and to persuade the reader to reorient his or her affects. While Janaway's results align with mine in that respect, I do think that there are serious problems with his study if read on its own, as he relies almost exclusively on a speculative, philosophical interpretation of the text of *GM*.

idea of the philosophers of the future both as a test and temptation (BGE 42, KSA 5, 59), as the only hope worth the name in a time of decadence (BGE 203, KSA 5, 126–128). Without disregarding or in any way downplaying the fact that Nietzsche is brutally honest about what he considers absolutely necessary "immoral" preconditions for the emergence of these philosophers,[31] above all an acute feeling of social distance [*Pathos der Distanz*], it is for our purposes more important to note that his main emphasis is elsewhere. Nietzsche explicitly focuses on a by-product of the feeling of social distance, a desire for ever higher states of feeling within the soul (BGE 257, KSA 5, 205).[32] In other words, the feeling of social distance is for him not valuable in itself, but only as a means to an end; to far greater feelings of distance.

The decisive question is why Nietzsche places such emphasis on the heightening of feeling, on high moods? One possible answer is that Nietzsche thus in fact intends to open the way towards a new religion based on experiences of ecstasy. So even as Nietzsche again implies that Christian moral feelings stand in the way of a higher type of life, one might still think that Nietzsche's ideal mood is in some significant sense religious. Such a reading might seem tempting, because Nietzsche's statements about the matter in *BGE* are quite vague, and because he at the end of the book reintroduces Dionysus into his philosophy (BGE 295, KSA 5, 237–239). So while this concise excursus to *BGE* has provided support for my reading of *Z*, insofar as it shows that Nietzsche is still very much concerned with the question of mood, it has also raised the question about the precise nature of Nietzsche's ideal mood. Specifically, the question is whether it is best characterized as a religious state, and that is the question of the following chapter.

**31** Throughout his discussion about the philosophers of the future, Nietzsche employs a vocabulary of breeding [*Züchtung*], speaking of inheritance and blood, and these ideas inform his vision of the social preconditions of the emergence of that higher type. In this regard, he speaks of the necessity of a strict order of rank, and consequently of some form of slavery, in the sense of people to be treated as tools (cf. BGE 257, KSA 5, 205).

**32** "*Distanzerweiterung innerhalb der Seele selbst*", specifically "*die Herausbildung immer höherer, seltener, fernerer, weitgespannterer, umfänglicherer Zustände, kurz eben die Erhöhung des Typus 'Mensch', die fortgesetzte 'Selbst-Überwindung des Menschen', um eine moralische Formel in einem übermoralischen Sinne zu nehmen*" (BGE 257, KSA 5, 205).

# 7 Nietzsche's final ideal

What is Nietzsche's final ideal, as expressed in his last writings, when it comes to moods? This is the question that remains after the discussion of mood and ecstatic intoxication [*Rausch*] in *Z*, and examining it allows us to answer those who perceive a pronounced religiosity in Nietzsche's last writings, specifically in *Twilight of the Idols*, *The Antichrist* and *Ecce Homo*, as well as in the notes and letters from the period. Since Julian Young is undoubtedly the earliest and arguably the most sophisticated and influential of the "revisionists",[1] i. e. those Anglophone scholars who have in the last decades sought to revise the canonical view that Nietzsche's thinking is best described as atheistic to the core, I will here focus solely on his central claim about Nietzsche's late religiosity as a contrast against which I present evidence for what I take to be a more plausible interpretation that supports but also significantly expands the canonical view of Nietzsche's atheism. I will first introduce Young's thesis and then I will provide the foundations of an alternative perspective that builds on the opposition between the psychological types of Jesus and Zarathustra in Nietzsche's late works. Thereafter I will provide further evidence for my interpretation by examining 1) what Nietzsche writes about the interpretation of extraordinary experiences in the context of his late psychology of power, and 2) by establishing that Nietzsche's late thinking on power and experience does not lead him to abandon his striving for independence. Finally, I will shortly reflect on the end of Nietzsche's philosophical life; Nietzsche's very own God delusion.

To be absolutely clear, once more, I claim no radical novelty for most of the presentation insofar as it supports the canonical view, e. g. regarding the role of Jesus in the narrative of *A*.[2] Thus, what is new is to be found in the precise manner of the argumentation.

## 7.1 Young's thesis about Nietzsche's religiosity

Already in his early work on Nietzsche, Julian Young identifies ecstasy as the ideal state that Nietzsche personally strives for and glorifies in all his writings except

**1** Besides Julian Young, the most prominent revisionists are Giles Fraser (cf. Fraser 2002) and Bruce Benson (cf. Benson 2008). More problematically than Young, both Fraser and Benson overestimate the formative influence of Lutheran piety and theology on Nietzsche's later thinking. For a critique of their central claims, see Saarinen 2016.

**2** E. g. Andreas Sommer, who might be said to have taken historical-critical scholarship to a new level, has also done much to show the unfeasibility of treating the portrayal of Jesus in *A* as in some way expressive of Nietzsche's ideal (e. g. Sommer 2103, 146 – 148). Needless to say, if I do arrive at similar conclusions as Sommer I do so independently guided by a different approach to the texts. As in general with this study: paying attention to mood not only transforms the discussion of oft-interpreted passages, it also effectively brings new evidence to light.

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for a brief positivistic phase to which only *HH* is testament. Furthermore, Young is keen to stress the religious nature of that ecstasy as this striking passage shows:

> 23. *Why* does Nietzsche believe ecstasy to be the ideal relationship to the world? Because, in a word, he wants something to *worship* and is aware once again, as he was in *The Birth of Tragedy* (see ch 2, sec 14), that a sense of the holy, of the sacred is a fundamental human need. If the old God is dead then nature herself must be made divine, "perfect" (*Z* IV, 19). The non-ecstatic affirmation of life holds no interest for Nietzsche since it has no bearing on *his* problem; the problem of proving that God, after all, exists. Less provocatively: the problem of achieving a state of mind, "feel[ing] oneself 'in heaven,' ... 'eternal'" (*A* 33), in which a naturalized object is the target of all those feelings and attitudes that used to be directed towards the (no longer believable) transcendent. (Young 1992, 115)

In his more recent work, Young has provided no corrective to this early picture. To the contrary, he still adamantly defends the view that Nietzsche's philosophy culminates in a "Dionysian pantheism", in which ecstasy [*Rausch*] is celebrated as this-worldly salvation (e. g. Young 2006, 110 – 111, 199, 201; cf. Young 2010, 562). Young's claim can fruitfully be compared to, and needs to be balanced by, the more traditional account of Eugen Fink. With *BT* in mind, Young's favourite reference, Fink writes:

> Already at the start of his philosophical path the tragic pathos puts Nietzsche in an irresolvable conflict with Christianity. Christian dogma with its necessary idea of redemption does not only contradict Nietzsche's instincts, it contradicts his basic sentiment, the basic mood of his life and of his experience of reality. The tragic world does not know any redemption, any salvation of the finite being from its finitude. (Fink 2003, 10)

While it might seem that Fink's and Young's claims are irreconcilable, they are perhaps not fundamentally opposed. That they seem opposed follows from a difference in emphasis: whereas Young has a broad view of religiosity in mind, Fink speaks specifically about Christianity as being opposed to the basic mood of Nietzsche's life as expressed in his writings. Indeed, Young's argument is stronger than those of the other revisionists precisely because it does not necessarily rely on the idea that Nietzsche's supposed religiosity is Christianity in disguise, and instead allows it to be conceived of as a new religiosity; a genuine Dionysian pantheism. Admittedly, this is an advance compared to previous scholarship about Nietzsche's thinking on religion since Christianity and Christian conceptions of God have either explicitly or implicitly been the standard against which one has judged whether Nietzsche was an atheist. Already for this reason alone, Young's argument is worth considering carefully.

It should still not be overlooked that Young is at his weakest when making claims about the continuity of Nietzsche's religiosity. His biographical narrative connecting the Christian religiosity of Nietzsche's childhood with the late Dionysianism of the philosopher rests on an untenable foundation, and more specifically a conceptual confusion (cf. Young 2010). It is hard to understand how a Christian need for salvation could possibly turn into a Dionysian need for salvation, when one takes into

account that the concept of salvation differs drastically in the two cases; the crucial distinction being one between a salvation that requires a transcendent instance, or what Nietzsche would call another world, and a salvation that is wholly this-worldly. So if it is admissible to speak of the philosopher's striving for salvation, one must specify that this is not a striving for salvation from finitude, but for salvation in finitude, the striving for a god-like mood. Consequently, contra Young, it is not the case that Nietzsche's late Dionysianism would be concerned with simply redirecting "all those feelings and attitudes that used to be directed towards the (no longer believable) transcendent" (Young 1992, 115). Instead, Nietzsche has from *HH* onward been engaged in a task of purifying feeling, which not only includes leaving some feelings behind altogether but also creating new feelings. What he aims for, the resulting affective reorientation, is more profound than a mere redirection of feeling. It is much more about opening up significantly different moods. So on the basis of my readings of *HH*, *D*, *GS* and *Z* the thesis that there is some significant continuity, in the sense of similarity, between Christian religious feeling and those feeling states that Nietzsche associates with the Dionysian can be refuted. In other words, it is the case that insofar as there is continuity between Christian and Dionysian feeling, the Christian feeling has been purified beyond recognition. Likewise, and I will provide further evidence for this, Nietzsche cannot in his last writings in any meaningful sense be concerned with proving that God "after all" exists, since (the god) Dionysus signifies something quite different from the Christian God. The interesting question is whether Nietzsche's late thinking nevertheless amounts to pantheism; whether his final ideal is a kind of ecstasy that is best termed religious. Does not Nietzsche's striving for heights of feeling seem religious? Does not Nietzsche in his own way strive to be in heaven, as Young suggests? My answer, which I will elaborate on and argue for in what follows, is that Young does have a point, but that it needs to be rescued from a religionist reading.

## 7.2 The type of *Jesus* and the type of *Zarathustra*

Young is certainly right that Nietzsche aims for a high state of mind, and that this aim is one of his central concerns, as his abundant metaphorical invocations of the heights of the soul testify, but I also think it can be shown beyond reasonable doubt that this state should not be classified as religious and does not qualify as pantheistic. In this regard, there is no better place to start the sceptical investigation than the passage in the *Antichrist* that Young refers to, when claiming that Nietzsche's thinking culminates in a desire to be in heaven, to be eternal. The passage in question is not one in which Nietzsche directly speaks about himself, but one in which he speaks about Jesus. It is situated within a psychological discussion, in which he characterizes what he terms the type of the redeemer [*Typus des Erlösers*], though he is quick to specify that it is the type of Jesus [*Typus Jesus*] (A 29, KSA 6,

199) that concerns him; the redeemer *par excellence*. According to Nietzsche, Jesus had:

> The deep instinct for how one must live, in order to feel oneself "in heaven," to feel "eternal," while in all other behavior one decidedly does not feel oneself "in heaven" – this alone is the psychological reality of "redemption." A new way of life, not a new faith. (Kaufmann 1954, 607; A 33, KSA 6, 206)

Taken out of context the passage and the following elaborations can be read as if Nietzsche were only criticizing what he takes to be Christian and scholarly misinterpretations of Jesus, or even more radically as if he in fact were seeking to salvage the truth of Jesus' life for himself and for the future. In a seemingly sympathetic manner, he describes Jesus as a great symbolist, for whom the only reality that counted was the inner reality of feeling. Thus, *pace* Nietzsche, all Jesus' words are parables; they express the "truth" of his being, i.e. "being in heaven". In this rather original view, Jesus does not promise heaven in an afterlife as a salvation from sin, and least of all as a reward of belief, but instead shows a way of living. The real evangelical practice (A 33, KSA 6, 205), is simply to always act in a way that produces the feeling of bliss. Put shortly: "The 'kingdom of heaven' is a state of the heart" (Kaufmann 1954, 608; A 34, KSA 6, 207), no more no less.

It is indeed tempting to interpret Nietzsche's words as a projection: it is hard to avoid the impression that Nietzsche identifies with the Jesus he describes at least in so far as both privilege the inner life of feeling in the here and now over otherworldly or strictly moral concerns. One should, however, not overlook that the description of the psychology of Jesus is part of more general discussion of physiological degeneracy, which is after all the grand theme of *A*. Right at the beginning of his psychological dissection, Nietzsche rejects the scholarly use of terms such as hero or genius as applicable to Jesus and instead insists that if there is any one word that fits Jesus it is idiot[3] (A 29, KSA 6, 200). According to Nietzsche, two components mark out Jesus as a

**3** Ernest Renan, whom Nietzsche now and then targets as a moron in psychological matters and a prime example of a "secular" intellectual melancholically longing for religious moods (cf. BGE 48, KSA 5, 69–70), had used the terms hero and genius to describe Jesus (A 29, KSA 6, 199). Since Nietzsche explicitly refers to Dostoyevski in his discussion on the psychology of Jesus (A 31, KSA 6, 202) quite a few scholars have assumed that Nietzsche was directly influenced in his characterization by the Russian author and especially his novel *The Idiot*. Dostoyevski's novel centres around Prince Myshkin, who returning to Russia from a mental institution in Switzerland causes trouble in the noble social circles through his naivety and goodness, which is too good for this world. While this coincidence allows for intriguing comparisons, there is not enough evidence to conclude with certainty that Nietzsche directly borrowed the idea of Jesus as idiot from his presumed reading of Dostoyevski's novel (cf. Stellino 2007). Sommer contends that Nietzsche at least had second-hand knowledge of the content of that novel, but this is nothing more than speculation (cf. Sommer 2013, 9 and 162). Be that as it may, irrespective of the degree of his knowledge of the *The Idiot*, it is beyond doubt that Nietzsche was inspired by Dostoyevski's example in his psychological elaborations about early Christianity (see Stellino 2007) although his revaluation is what matters.

decadent: An instinctive hatred of reality[4] and an instinctive avoidance of conflict,[5] that both ultimately derive from an acute sensitivity to external stimuli. As the only goal that makes sense for such a type is the maintenance of an agreeable feeling, Nietzsche dubs the resulting way of life a decadent development of hedonism (A 30, KSA 6, 201). That Nietzsche calls Jesus the most interesting decadent (A 31, KSA 6, 202), does not make Jesus any less decadent and any less dangerous as an example to follow. Nor does the fact that Nietzsche calls himself a *décadent* in *EH* change the picture in any way, as he is clear enough to specify that he considers himself that only in part [*als Winkel, als Specialität*] while being healthy as a whole [*als summa summarum*]. As proof of his health, he lists many a characteristic, but given his physiological description of Jesus it is of particular interest that he mentions what I think is best described as an instinctive scepticism: reacting slowly to all stimuli, providing resistance to them, testing them carefully, which he calls a result of a willed cultivation of pride. Unsurprisingly he concludes that he is the opposite of a *décadent* (KSA 6, 266 – 267; cf. Hödl 2009, 541 – 547). So without even taking the possible ironies of Nietzsche's confession of being a *décadent* into account, there is a big enough difference between his self-characterization and his description of Jesus to rule out that Nietzsche would be describing himself as a whole or his ruling instinct when describing Jesus.

Consequently, what little sympathy there is in Nietzsche's characterization is best read in the context of his polemic against Christianity. Nietzsche's seemingly sympathetic understanding of Jesus has the consequence that what he has to say about the religion founded in the name of Christ, above all as "the Church", is all the more damning. To me, Nietzsche's key point seems to be that not only have the followers of Jesus misinterpreted the teaching of their master who they call God; they have essentially failed to recognize that he was a thoroughly decadent type. That Nietzsche prides himself with understanding Jesus better than those in the "Church" who claim to be following him, does not imply that Jesus' way of living is Nietzsche's ideal. While Nietzsche recognizes that the way of life he has described is at all times possible, and adds that there are always some for whom it is the only option (A 39, KSA 6, 211), perhaps a physiological necessity, it is not the kind of life that he presents himself as living, nor does he hold it out as desirable in any of his writings. This

**4** "*Der Instinkt-Hass gegen die Realität: Folge einer extremen Leid- und Reizfähigkeit, welche überhaupt nicht mehr 'berührt' werden will, weil sie jede Berührung zu tief empfindet*.". (A 30, KSA 6, 200)

**5** "*Die Instinkt-Ausschließung aller Abneigung, aller Feindschaft, aller Grenzen und Distanzen im Gefühl: Folge einer extremen Leid- und Reizfähigkeit, welche jedes Widerstreben, Widerstreben-müssen bereits als unerträgliche Unlust (das heißt als schädlich, als vom Selbsterhaltungs-Instinkte widerrathen) empfindet und die Seligkeit (die Lust) allein darin kennt, nicht mehr, Niemandem mehr, weder dem Übel noch dem Bösen, Widerstand zu leisten, – die Liebe als einzige, als letzte Lebens-Möglichkeit…*" (A 30, KSA 6, 200 – 201) More succinctly, Nietzsche characterizes this as: "*nicht sich wehren, nicht zürnen, nicht verantwortlich-machen*" (A 35, KSA 6, 208).

is made abundantly clear in a rare passage of affirmation amidst all the destructive criticism.

In the midst of vehemently damning Christianity, Nietzsche suddenly introduces Zarathustra as a contrast. The key sentences ring thus: "One should not be deceived: great spirits are sceptics. Zarathustra is a sceptic. Strength, freedom which is born of the strength and overstrength of the spirit, proves itself by skepticism." (Kaufmann 1954, 638; A 54, KSA 6, 236) Nietzsche's point is to be understood physiologically, and not as referring to any specific tradition of sceptical philosophy.[6] Scepticism, he here contends, is an expression of power and characteristic of great spirits. When he speaks of the great passion that reigns in such a spirit, that guides it, it is reasonable to assume that he speaks of an instinct that is fundamentally opposed to the instincts of Jesus as much as to the instincts of his followers. The textual evidence for such an interpretation is strong, as I will now show. Whereas Jesus' actions follow from his inability to resist stimuli of a certain kind, which leads him to shut them out completely, Nietzsche associates health with finding joy in seeking out and overcoming resistance (cf. A 2, KSA 6, 170). Whereas Nietzsche's Jesus seeks to maintain peace, an inner state of bliss, at all costs, Nietzsche himself in *EH* claims to find joy in what he at times (metaphorically) calls war (e. g. KSA 6, 274).[7] When it comes to the followers of Christ, Nietzsche opposes the independence, the freedom, of Zarathustra with the dependent state of the believer. Indeed, he goes as far as to write that believers of any kind are out of necessity dependent beings: "The man of faith, the 'believer' of every kind, is necessarily a dependent man – one who cannot posit himself as an end, one who cannot posit any end at all by himself." (Kaufmann 1954, 638; A 54, KSA 6, 236) Thus, Nietzsche affirms his notion of doubt as a sign of inner strength, against the view of doubt as a lack (of faith). In *A*, this notion is the implicit background of Nietzsche's notorious judgement of taste that the only decent character, the only character that deserves respect, in the New Testament is Pontius

**6** In other words, Nietzsche's philosophical point is completely independent of the fact that he enjoyed reading Victor Brochard's *Les Sceptiques Grecs*, a historical work which he mentions with great approval in *EH* (KSA 6, 284). Nietzsche speaks of a general character-type, not of Ancient Greek sceptical philosophers. While great spirits "are" sceptics in this view, i. e. beings who find joy in what is problematic, not all those commonly labelled sceptics are necessarily great spirits. Nietzsche had valued what I have termed a sceptical mood, a mood of joyful doubt, without interruption, at least since *HH,* as should be clear from the evidence presented within this study. That he here explicitly uses the term sceptic is merely a matter of wording. For a radically opposed view, that takes philological obsession with single words ripped out of their philosophical context to a new height, see Sommer 2013, 253 – 254.

**7** The most clear expression of this sentiment, of the agonistic spirit, is without a doubt to be found in the 1887 foreword to *GS:* "Every philosophy that ranks peace above war, every ethic with a negative definition of happiness, every metaphysics and physics that knows some finale, some final state of some sort, every predominantly aesthetic or religious craving for some Apart, Beyond, Outside, Above, permits the question whether it was not sickness that inspired the philosopher." (Kaufmann 1974, 34; KSA 3, 348)

Pilatus, on account of his sceptical question: what is truth? (cf. A 46, KSA 6, 225). This same notion is also the key to understanding Nietzsche's words in *EH* about being atheistic in instinct, by which he precisely means an instinctive questioning resisting easy answers. Atheism, he writes, "is self-evident to me from instinct" (Large 2007, 19; KSA 6, 278), and once again he connects this instinct with an excess of pride, with being besides too curious also "too *dubious*, too high-spirited to content myself with a rough-and-ready answer" (Large 2007, 19; KSA 6, 278 – 279). Even if it does not follow directly from this association of health and strength with scepticism, one can at least cautiously surmise that Nietzsche's ideal mood in his last writings should be a mood that, whatever else characterizes it (pride, joy etc.), sustains doubt. Therefore, the remaining task of this chapter is firstly to present more conclusive evidence that to dwell in a Zarathustra-like mood is Nietzsche's final affective ideal and secondly to give a more detailed characterization of the foundations of this vision in Nietzsche's late writings.

To be absolutely clear, scholarship cannot settle the question, which character Nietzsche deep down in his (perhaps even to himself) unknown depths felt himself to be more related to and identified himself with. What is beyond doubt, and what I want to draw attention to here, is that his self-expression through his philosophy, including his last writings, is more akin with the type Zarathustra than with the type Jesus. In fact, they have little to do with the heavenly feeling he associates with Jesus as they show open hostility and contempt. As *A* is essentially about what type should be cultivated (Nietzsche uses the term to breed [*züchten*], cf. A 3, KSA 6, 170), Jesus should against that background be read as representing weakness and Zarathustra as representing strength. This characterization brings to the fore the framework through which Nietzsche thinks in his final works: will to power. In the next section, I will shortly show how this framework defines his late theory of religion and "religious" experience, whereafter I will in the following section examine what conclusions he draws for himself from his vision of power in the specific sense of how it shapes his own "ideal".

## 7.3 Nietzsche's late psychology of power and the interpretation of extraordinary experiences

In Nietzsche's late thinking, in his efforts to initiate a revaluation of all values, the concept of power, most infamously as will to power, takes central stage (cf. Reginster 2006, 203). This can not only be seen in his plans for a major work on will to power,[8] but also in a more general intensification of his concern with power. While the con-

**8** Such a work is already announced in *GM*, and the title reveals the intimate relation between revaluation and will to power: *Der Wille zur Macht, Versuch einer Umwerthung aller Werthe* (GM III 27, KSA 5, 409; cf. NL 1887 – 1888, 11[414], KSA 13, 192; NL1888, 14[78], KSA 13, 257).

cept is abundant in his published work as well as in the notes from the last productive years, there is one particular note from 1888 that is especially interesting for introducing his late thinking on religion and specifically on the religious interpretation of extraordinary experiences. On its own, this note should not be considered admissible evidence, but the fact is that it echoes longstanding concerns in his published work, and those concerns are arguably more clearly expressed here than anywhere else. What makes this note, in which Nietzsche attempts to think of religion in terms of experiences of power, so interesting, is that the target of Nietzsche's criticism is more than just Christianity. It concerns the psychological foundations of all religion. Having already discussed Nietzsche's fierce rejection of Christianity, this note provides a balancing perspective as it is as much a challenge to "pantheism" as to Christianity. Since the note entitled "On the Origin of Religion" [*Vom Ursprung der Religion*] is quite extensive, I will here only focus on the decisive final part of it.[9]

Already in *HH*, Nietzsche had tackled the problem of religious experience through a critique of the human tendency to (mis)interpret extraordinary experiences metaphysically (see chapter 4). There, he suggested that it was ultimately fear (of nature), the fear of an external power that led the intellect astray and gave rise to religious interpretations. Here, in the late note, he is more subtle: it is ultimately the fear of one's self, which gave and still gives birth to religious interpretations. When feelings of power suddenly overwhelm the primitive self, Nietzsche claims, the power is felt in the self, but not as one's own. Overwhelmed by the strength of feeling, one does not dare think of one's self as the cause of the feeling. While Nietzsche is describing the origin of religion, what he has to say is emphatically not limited to primitive man, but also applies to contemporary religiosity. Unsurprisingly, Christianity is the main target. Although he does not fail to single out the contemporary Christian as the most regressive type of human (NL 1888, 14[124], KSA 13, 305), it is clear that in this view all religion is bound to primitive reasoning. Ignoring the polemical touch, it is difficult to establish whether or not the note should be seen as a theoretical advance from his earlier thinking. In *HH*, Nietzsche drew heavily on Victorian anthropology when trying to explain the human tendency to interpret certain experiences religiously, but his treatment was very cursory. Here, as he adds his reflections about

**9** "*Die psychologische Logik ist die: das Gefühl der Macht, wenn es plötzlich und überwältigend den Menschen überzieht – und das ist in allen großen Affekten der Fall –, erregt ihm einen Zweifel an seiner Person: er wagt sich nicht als Ursache dieses erstaunlichen Gefühls zu denken – und so setzt er eine stärkere Person, eine Gottheit für diesen Fall an. In summa: der Ursprung der Religion liegt in den extremen Gefühlen der Macht, welche, als fremd, den Menschen überraschen: und dem Kranken gleich, der ein Glied zu schwer und seltsam fühlt und zum Schlusse kommt, daß ein anderer Mensch über ihm liege, legt sich der naive homo religiosus in mehrere Personen auseinander. Die Religion ist ein Fall der 'altération de la personnalité'. Eine Art Furcht- und Schreckgefühl vor sich selbst ... Aber ebenso ein außerordentliches Glücks- und Höhengefühl... Unter Kranken genügt das Gesundheitsgefühl, um an Gott, an die Nähe Gottes zu glauben.*" (NL 1888, 14[124], KSA 13, 306)

power into the picture, it can be plausibly assumed that he also relies on his reading of the anthropological, psychological and physiological literature of his time and he still only has a rough sketch of an explanation.[10] This sketch, the central claim of which is that feelings of power can and often do impair causal reasoning, can however fruitfully be read in the light of what Nietzsche writes about experience and causality in *Twilight of the Idols*. There, Nietzsche describes what he takes to be a general human tendency to seek out a cause for whatever one is feeling; an inability to simply let experiences be (KSA 6, 92). He opines that giving an explanation to one's feeling can itself increase the feeling of power (KSA 6, 93). So even while Nietzsche confidently asserts that all of religion and morality should be subsumed under the concept of imaginary causes (KSA 6, 94), it follows that any alternative way of interpretation that he advances should be able to enhance power as much or preferably more than religious reasoning.

This leads us to appreciate that the main advance of Nietzsche's late thinking on religion is not theoretical but practical and that it relates to the possibility of owning one's highest and most disturbing experiences. When Nietzsche writes that religious persons do not dare think of themselves as the cause of their extraordinary experiences, does he not also mean to suggest that one should dare to own one's experiences? Since claiming ownership of one's experience can reasonably within this framework be thought to increase the feeling of power, the most plausible answer is a qualified yes. Owning one's experience, however, cannot mean positing the self as the ultimate cause of any given experience, since Nietzsche is very critical of such ideas (cf. KSA 6, 90). It must rather mean to maintain a sceptical sentiment of not jumping to conclusions regarding one's experiences even as one accepts them as truly one's own. That Nietzsche personally struggled with his experiences of sickness and health and that a philosophical scepticism was his answer is certainly suggested by his description of the philosopher in *BGE*. In any case, ignoring biographical speculation, it is worth paying attention to the presentation of the philosopher in that book, since it speaks volumes about his self-presentation. There he writes that a philosopher is the kind of human, who constantly has extraordinary experiences, and who therefore often "fears himself" [*vor sich Furcht hat*], but who nevertheless always regains his senses, and literally returns to himself, out of curiosity (BGE 292, KSA 5, 235). This passage, which it is hard not to think of as being among the most significant of Nietzsche's self-descriptions, shows that he thinks the philosopher and the religious person are intimately related in that both have extraordinary experiences, but it also shows that they are nevertheless distinct. Unlike the religious person, the philosopher does not think that his or her experience proves that God exists or that the universe is divine. Instead of making unwarranted assumptions, the philosopher always returns to sceptical questioning. This view also

**10** On Nietzsche's reading in the psychology of causal reasoning, see Sommer 2012, 202 and 329–330.

finds expression in *EH*, in Nietzsche's description of his experiences of, as he puts it, what used to be called inspiration: an experience of not being in control, and of nevertheless having a distinct consciousness as well as a tremendous feeling of freedom, power and divinity (KSA 6, 339 – 340). There he explicitly writes that if one had even a bit of superstition left, when having such experiences as he has had, one would think that one were nothing more than the tool of higher powers.[11] However, far from encouraging such an interpretation, Nietzsche exemplifies his philosophical scepticism through his description. Indeed, the most plausible interpretation is that Nietzsche here presents himself as someone who has no superstition left; whose internalized, incorporated scepticism forbids interpreting his experiences religiously (cf. Hödl 2009, 546). In other words, Nietzsche's late thinking about "religious experiences" is in tune with his statements about his instinctive atheism (cf. KSA 6, 278).[12] Now that it has with reasonable certainty been established that Nietzsche even in his last writings thinks all religion relies on misinterpretation of experience and especially of experiences of power, it has become possible to approach Nietzsche's late philosophy of religion from a related perspective: that of Nietzsche's own striving for power or more accurately; the way he presents this striving in his writings.

## 7.4 Nietzsche's late psychology of power and his Dionysian ideal of independence

Already in *GS* and *GM*, one finds statements suggesting that all animals, perhaps all living beings, are animated by will to power.[13] There is nevertheless a notable development in his very late thinking, a shift in emphasis from "is" to "ought". Nietzsche no longer stops at describing the human animal as moved by will to power, he also praises what is perhaps best interpreted as a specific form of this striving. One example must suffice to illustrate this change. While he was in *GM* careful to point out that he speaks about an instinctive striving for power and explicitly not about a path to joy ([*Weg zum Glück*], GM III 7, KSA 5, 350), he takes a more radical approach in *A*. There, at the very beginning of the text, he first defines the good as that which in-

**11** "*Mit dem geringsten Rest von Aberglauben in sich würde man in der That die Vorstellung, bloss Incarnation, bloss Mundstück, bloss medium übermächtiger Gewalten zu sein, kaum abzuweisen wissen.*" (KSA 6, 339)

**12** An altogether different question is whether Nietzsche himself, as human being, was always able to maintain such a scepticism, and this question is especially relevant when it comes to the events in late 1888 and early 1891 that put an end to his independent philosophical life. I will return to this question in the final section of this chapter.

**13** "*Jedes Thier, somit auch la bête philosophe, strebt instinktiv nach einem Optimum von günstigen Bedingungen, unter denen es seine Kraft ganz herauslassen kann und sein Maximum im Machtgefühl erreicht*" (GM III 7, KSA 5, 350; cf. GS 349, KSA 3, 585 – 586).

creases the feeling of power (in the human being) and then goes on to define joy [*Glück*] as the feeling that power grows, and specifies that he means the feeling of overcoming resistance (A 2, KSA 6, 170). In fact, Nietzsche goes as far as to define (the meaning of the term) life, for himself, as the instinct for power (A 6, KSA 6, 172). To put it simply: power equals joy in this vision.

As is to be expected, Nietzsche does not exempt himself from this picture. As a philosopher, it follows that he cannot speak of any generally desirable goals, because what way of life generates the greatest feeling of power differs from individual to individual. Nevertheless, the Nietzsche of the texts is not content to declare "to each his own", but seeks instead to tempt his readers to cultivate specific experiences and a specific mood through his own example. So the crucial question is this: where, in what kind of experience, does Nietzsche, the way he presents himself in his writings, find his own maximum of power? Without losing the thread, and adding a significant layer of meaning, the question can also be formulated thus: Who or what is Nietzsche's Dionysus? What does the enigmatic name signify?

On the basis of the evidence provided by his last writings, I argue that Nietzsche finds his maximum of power in a ceaseless striving for independence within the world, and that the name Dionysus signifies his affirmation of his own way of life (and by extension: of all life, cf. Hödl 2009, 536). In other words, I argue that once again, as in *GS*, Nietzsche seeks to unite a sceptical spirit, a mood of doubt, with joy and laughter. The critical edge of my argument is that, contra Young, put in terms of a mental state Nietzsche's late "ideal" is a high mood that both requires and enhances individuation, not an ecstatic extinction of individuality (cf. Young 2010, 501–503). Furthermore I argue that as "personal" as Nietzsche's vision is, it is tied to his vision of new philosophers, i.e. that he considers it of importance to the practice of philosophy understood as free thinking, as the activity of free spirits. In other words, one can again assume that what Nietzsche presents as personal is quite revealing of what he sought to communicate.

### 7.4.1 The philosopher's independence and Dionysus

To begin to provide a more specific characterization of this ideal, and to provide a better picture of its significance for philosophical practice, it is necessary to consult *GM* and Nietzsche's description of the independence that defines the philosopher's life. There, Nietzsche asks what the ascetic ideal means for a philosopher. In other words, he asks why it exerts such a magnetic pull on the thinker. Speaking at least as much for himself as for the great philosophers of history, Nietzsche contends that the philosopher sees in asceticism the means to an end, specifically the means to independence ([*Brücken zur Unabhängigkeit*], GM III 7, KSA 5, 351). An ascetic life provides the optimal conditions for free thinking: freedom from coercion, disturbances and duties to mention but a few of the benefits that Nietzsche associates with withdrawing from society. The true extent to which Nietzsche's list of the fruits prom-

ised to the philosopher by the ascetic ideal is personally coloured is revealed by the fact that he chooses to associate the ascetic ideal with the experience of the air of the heights.[14] So, *summa summarum*, for the philosopher asceticism is the opposite of a turning away from life, the opposite of life-denial; namely, it is the affirmation of the philosopher's life (GM III 7, KSA 5, 351). Nietzsche, too, understands himself as a philosopher, and there is every reason to think that his new philosophers are also in some minimal sense "ascetics", but as I will show next he is adamant that they will have to strive for a greater freedom from morality than their predecessors in order to reach a greater independence and with it an even higher mood of affirmation.

Nietzsche takes it upon himself to show the way, and it is in this context that the meaning of Dionysus emerges. It has been argued, and with good reason, that Dionysus signifies Nietzsche's philosophy, as a philosophy of affirmation (Hödl 2009, 534, 582 and 589). When Nietzsche for the first time calls himself a disciple of the god Dionysus, he also breaks the news that this god is a philosopher (cf. BGE 295, KSA 5, 238). Nietzsche himself is from the beginning acutely aware of the dissonance he creates by conjoining the words Dionysus and philosophy, as he notes that the idea of a god philosophizing is an idea that is apt to create suspicion precisely among philosophers (BGE 295, KSA 5, 238). To have grounds for suspicion, one need only remind oneself that Nietzsche's own early celebration of the Dionysian in *BT* was to a great degree a celebration of ecstasy, opposed to the spirit of rational inquiry. The questions is whether Nietzsche in his late writings has anything substantial to offer to allay the suspicion that the two do not go together, beyond simply associating Dionysus and philosophy by insisting that he is to be known as a "disciple of the philosopher Dionysos" (KSA 6, 160; KSA 6, 258). While Nietzsche's self-characterizations seem cryptic on their own, any reader acquainted with Nietzsche's earlier texts is by now familiar with his ideas concerning new combinations of feeling and world-orientation. From HH onwards, Nietzsche's writings express the vision of a new kind of philosopher who draws on and in this sense unites the legacies of both science and art in order to make a yet higher way of being possible.[15] So when Nietzsche speaks of Dionysus as a philosopher there it is very reasonable to think he has this new union in mind, which he this time expresses as a synthesis that sums up his career, or the core of his efforts, from *BT* to *EH*.

This perspective has the advantage that one can make sense of Nietzsche's claim in *TI* that he now stands on the same ground as in *BT* (cf. KSA 6, 160). This is emphatically not a return to the project of creating a new religion to replace the old. Having during the years following the publication of *BT* abandoned the hope he

**14** "*eine gute Luft, dünn, klar frei, trocken, wie die Luft auf Höhen ist, bei der alles animalische Sein geistiger wird und flügeln bekommt*", which makes "*das Herz fremd, jenseits, zukünftig, posthum*" (GM III 8, KSA 5, 352).

**15** Arguably, a related vision is already suggested in *BT* in the image of a music-making Sokrates [*musiktreibenden Sokrates*] (BT 17, KSA 1, 111).

had placed on Wagner, and with it all hope of an artistic or religious renewal, Nietzsche perhaps now understands himself as the one who will give birth to tragedy; not as an art form, nor as a religion, but as a philosophical way of life, as a philosophical mood. In any case, the two cannot be thought of as separated but only in tandem; the new way of life and the new mood. As a way of life it is one in which artistic creation and ascetic philosophical independence are united; as creation and destruction of values and thus of truth. As a mood, it is one in which an acute feeling of distance, of doubt, is united with a tragic, joyful feeling of affirmation. It is above all this union that he seeks to communicate in his late works.[16] To be absolutely clear, Nietzsche doesn't give up on philosophy despite his criticism of asceticism, nor does he give up on Dionysian affirmation, despite his rejection of ecstasy as in itself desirable. As Nietzsche "admits" in *TI*, it was after all sexual ecstasy (KSA 6, 160), which gave him the key to the concept of tragic feeling, as well as of the Dionysian. The metaphor of the key is worth reading carefully: The key to the concept is not the concept itself. Thus, Nietzsche suggests that tragic feeling, the Dionysian feeling of the joy of becoming, which is a joy even when becoming is terrible, is sublimated sexual ecstasy. The feeling that Nietzsche values as the highest as philosopher should then not be conceptualized as a raw experience of the Dionysian but as its sublimation into a high mood that is particularly fruitful for approaching philosophical problems.

### 7.4.2 Interpreting Nietzsche's late Dionysian statements

Such a reading of Nietzsche's self-characterization as a disciple of the philosopher Dionysus, allows one to reread his late "Dionysian" statements, statements that can also be read as suggesting pantheism, as confirming instead of as challenging his commitment to atheism and philosophical independence. This is even the case with a *Nachlass*-note, which contains a sentence that at the surface seems to go most against my own interpretation: "Highest state that a philosopher can reach: to relate to Being in a Dionysian manner" (NL 1888, 16[32], KSA 13, 492).[17] The critic can point at the note and say, look, this note clearly states that the highest state is a

**16** Cf. the concealed self-presentation in *Twilight of the Idols:* "*Was theilt der tragische Künstler von sich mit? Ist es nicht gerade der Zustand ohne Furcht vor dem Furchtbaren und Fragwürdigen, das er zeigt? – Dieser Zustand selbst ist eine hohe Wünschbarkeit; wer ihn kennt, ehrt ihn mit den höchsten Ehren. Er theilt ihn mit, er muss ihn mittheilen, vorausgesetzt, dass er ein Künstler ist, ein Genie der Mittheilung.*" (KSA 6, 127–128) It is reasonable to assume that what Nietzsche here describes relates as much if not more to Nietzsche's own writings, as well as to the activity of the philosopher of the future and the problems he/she confronts without fear, as to the activity of the tragic artist of Ancient Greece.

**17** Own translation. Original: "*Höchster Zustand, den ein Philosoph erreichen kann: dionysisch zum Dasein stehn*" (NL 1888,16[32], KSA 13, 492).

Dionysian (i. e. ecstatic) state, and this should be the end of the debate. However, the Dionysian state that the note speaks of is not best read as a state of ecstatic union with some mythic ground of being ([*Ur-Eine*], cf. BT 1, KSA 1, 30), or with a naturalized yet divine universe, but one of facing the world from a non-moral philosophical perspective in a mood of affirmation. There are both strong philological and philosophical reasons to support such an interpretation.

The note does speak of the striving of Nietzsche's experimental philosophy as a striving for Dionysian affirmation of the world as a whole (NL 1888, 16[32], KSA 13, 492), but from the context it is clear that this does not mean that the activity of experimental philosophy comes to an abrupt end when an ecstatic Dionysian state is reached. The Dionysian state is rather a state of heightened consciousness, as Nietzsche explicitly connects it to the activity of revaluation, of viewing the world from a non-moral perspective. Indeed, the note suggests that giving up moral feelings that have their origin in suffering and/or recognition and compassion for suffering is a prerequisite for dwelling in the Dionysian state (NL 1888, 16[32], KSA 13, 493), which implies that the Dionysian state is an at least potentially lasting perspective and the fruit of Nietzsche's efforts at affective reorientation. It would then seem that the world as a whole is not worshipped in the Dionysian state, but affirmed through self-affirmation; through a high mood attained by a distinct self that is affirmed in its individuality. The Dionysian state would consequently not simply be a goal, but a further development of the activity of experimental philosophy.

The reading sketched out here can be further supported by asking the philosophical question: Why would ecstasy, in the sense of ecstatic moments, be the goal of Nietzsche's philosophical striving? Imagine a philosopher who lives his everyday life, works, but gets drunk every weekend. This is a release from his everyday consciousness, which allows him to affirm the world and perhaps even to return to his life with new energy. Crucially, however, this experience does not necessarily have any impact on his philosophizing. By contrast, I am claiming that Nietzsche is not just advising philosophers to let go occasionally, but to incorporate a Dionysian perspective into their lives, in order to become even more daring and independent in their thinking.

The result would be a mood of affirmation or what Nietzsche himself on one occasion curiously calls a faith ([*Glaube*], KSA 6, 152); grounded in a perspective from which one can say yes to all of life, to all of existence as a whole. According to Nietzsche, this Dionysian faith[18] is the faith of Goethe, and while one might be tempted to think of the historical Goethe's sympathies for pantheism, Nietzsche does not describe his Goethe that way and instead calls him a realist. In fact, Nietzsche describes Goethe as the height of individuality; not as one who seeks either to extinguish or to transcend his self. Goethe, a name that here most probably stands as

**18** "*ein solcher Glaube ist der höchste aller möglichen Glauben: ich habe ihn auf den Namen des Dionysos getauft*" (KSA 6, 152).

much for Nietzsche, disciplined himself and thus created a whole out of himself.[19] Only through this disciplining and the resulting independence does the Dionysian mood of affirmation open itself, and there is no suggestion that it negates the independence that is its precondition. So whatever might be said about this Goethe's pantheism, he is not exactly a model for a person worshipping Dionysus in ecstatic states, nor is there any suggestion that the Dionysian state "can only be achieved through transcendence of the ego" in some less demanding sense (cf. Young 2010, 503).[20] Similarly, it follows, Nietzsche can be called a pantheist only as long as one specifies that his is a form of philosophical pantheism indistinguishable from atheism. In other words, it is definitely not a religious pantheism that seeks transcendence from finitude.

To conclude, I am willing to concede that in the late notes one can find statements critical of overvaluing conscious states, or more specifically states of "rational consciousness". One particularly striking example is a note in which Nietzsche explicitly speaks of philosophy as decadence and the false presupposition of the Greek philosophers that consciousness is the highest state (NL 1888, 14[129], KSA 13, 310 – 311). Yet this fact is only apt to show the huge problems involved in relying on single notes from the *Nachlass*, disconnected from the concerns of the published works, since there is no way of knowing what use Nietzsche would have made of them. Least of all can one conclude that Nietzsche values ecstatic or unconscious states higher than conscious ones. Indeed, one could equally well, and with stronger support from the published work, take ones cue from a late note which states that an overvaluation of unconscious states is a sign of decadence.[21] As the ambivalence of the *Nachlass* does not allow any definite interpretations, the most plausible interpretation is one that relies on the published work, and there the ideal of independence reigns.

## 7.5 The end: Nietzsche's final letters

With Nietzsche, the story always ends the same way. From his breakdown in Turin in January 1889 until his death in Weimar in 1900, he did not utter anything of philo-

**19** "*er disciplinirte sich zur Ganzheit, er schuf sich*" and in his work he presented the "*sich selbst im Zaume habenden, vor sich selber ehrfürchtigen Menschen*" (KSA 6, 152).

**20** Arguably, such a denial of any need for transcendence is precisely the point of characterizing Goethe as someone who has shaped himself into a whole. Being a whole, he is more or less self-sufficient. Thus, there is no need for him to transcend the self into a higher whole. Of course, he can and does view the world as a whole and affirms it as such, but that happens through his individuality and not by transcending it.

**21** In this note, Nietzsche lists various symptoms of decadence, the fourth of which is that "*man ersehnt einen Zustand, wo man nicht mehr leidet: das Leben wird thatsächlich als Grund zu Übeln empfunden, – man taxirt die bewußtlosen, gefühllosen Zustände (Schlaf, Ohnmacht) unvergleichlich werthvoller als die bewußten: daraus eine Methodik…*" (NL1888, 17[6], KSA 13, 527 – 528)

sophical significance. I personally find that there are no better words to describe his state in that period than those of the wonderful German expression: *Geistige Umnachtung*. Although my study is not of a biographical nature, there is a need to address Nietzsche's final letters if not his descent into madness, since it has been suggested that they reveal the true nature of his thinking on religion, even if in a confused form (cf. Young 2010, 530). Instead of engaging in biographical speculation, I ask to what extent if any Nietzsche's mad identification of God with himself can be considered a logical development of his philosophical thinking on human possibilities (cf. Young 2010, 562).[22]

It is remarkable that the "return of God" to the centre of Nietzsche's concerns coincides with his last great experience of health, given that he in his late speculations on the psychology of religion claims that the experience of health can be enough for the sick person to feel the presence of God and to believe in God (NL 1888, 14[124], KSA 13, 306). Nietzsche's letters testify that he felt his ailments diminish significantly since his arrival in Turin on 20 September (KGB III/5, Bf. 1122) and that he consequently plunged into a frenzy of work (cf. KGB III/5, Bf. 1137). So on 13 November, amidst praising the Turin-weather, he can report that *Twilight of the Idols* is ready to be printed, that the manuscript of *Ecce Homo* is likewise finished, and that the first book of the re-evaluation [*Umwerthung*] (i. e. *Antichrist*) is also completed (KGB III/5, Bf. 1143). Then, the following day, on 14 November, he writes what he himself calls a completely senseless letter [*völlig sinnlosen Brief*] (KGB III/5, Bf. 1144) to Meta von Salis, in which he jokingly suggests that the good weather is proof that the old God is still alive (KGB III/5, Bf. 1144). Already in December of the same year, in a sketch of a letter meant to accompany copies of *EH* to the same Meta von Salis, the old God has been abolished and Nietzsche is about to take his place.[23] What can and should the scholar make of this?

Firstly, it is worth noting that the description of that autumn in *EH* matches that of the letters to a great extent: Nietzsche opines that he never experienced such an autumn, never thought such a season possible and records that having finished the re-evaluation (i. e. *Antichrist*) he felt like a god. He specifically speaks of strolling as a God along the Po river (KSA 6, 356). Notably, however, one does not find the kind of self-divinization in *EH* as in letter Nr. 1177 or as one finds in the final letters (e. g. KGB III/5, Bf. 1239 and KGB III/5, Bf. 1246), where Nietzsche writes as if he had taken over the attributes of God as world-ruler and creator. What self-divinization

**22** However, I am explicitly not concerned with vain speculations about whether Nietzsche's philosophizing was destined to end thus. I also feel I have neither the right nor the competence to weigh in on the question whether Nietzsche's own way of living philosophy should be considered a contributing factor in his downfall. Such speculation started immediately after Nietzsche's mental breakdown, and has not abated to this day. One can ask if that is a scholarly endeavour at all, given the nature of the available evidence. Be that as it may, the question is beyond the scope of this study.
**23** "*ich sende Ihnen hiermit etwas Stupendes, aus dem Sie ungefähr errathen werden, daß der alte Gott abgeschafft ist, und daß ich selber alsbald die Welt regieren werde.*" (KGB III/5 Bf. 1177; cf. Bf. 1187)

there is in *EH* can instead be read as part of Nietzsche's play with all that is holy and as the representation of the possibility of a god-like mood of affirmation. In other words, there is a difference that is more than a difference of degree. Still, it is impossible to deny that there is some significant continuity in Nietzsche's thinking until the very end.[24] Unlike Young, who argues that the continuity is to be sought in the Dionysian content of the letters (cf. Young 2010, 530), I think it is more helpful to think of the continuity in question as one of style. Therefore, I will now pay attention to the crazed laughter that the letters exhibit. It cannot be established with any certainty, to what extent Nietzsche's final words on the matter (about being God) should also be read (as an elaborate joke?) in the context of the "world-historical laughter" that he mentions in one of the final letters (KGB III/5, Bf. 1232; cf. KGB III/5, Bf. 1240). There is no denying that Nietzsche became incapable of taking care of himself and that he became mad, to use a vulgar expression. Still, one can in retrospect conclude that he went into this madness with his characteristic style; turning tragedy into comedy. This is no more apparent than in the infamous letter to Burckhardt, from 4 January 1889, which he begins by proclaiming that he'd much rather be a Basel professor than God but has not dared to be such an egoist as to refrain from taking care of the creation of the world (KGB III/5, Bf. 1256).[25] While the letter contains "Dionysian" statements,[26] the mode of presentation itself is perhaps even more significant. Indeed, it is such that one need not be surprised that the letter found its way into André Breton's groundbreaking surrealist anthology of black humour (Breton 2001). There is a biting irony in it that defies the apparent madness of the message, yet one can do no more than to note that it is there. Of course, the possibilities of interpreting the letter from within Nietzsche's own philosophy are abundant.[27] Julian Young has suggested that one might interpret it as resulting from a "habitation of the

**24** In this regard, I fully agree with Young's view of the letters when he writes: "All this of course is madness. Yet there is method in it, a vein of fragmented sanity that runs back to his best writings" (Young 2010, 529).

**25** "*Lieber Herr Professor, zuletzt wäre ich sehr viel lieber Basler Professor als Gott; aber ich habe nicht gewagt, meinen Privat-Egoismus so weit zu treiben, um seinetwegen die Schaffung der Welt zu unterlassen.*" (KGB III/5, Bf. 1256)

**26** E. g. the identification of himself with all beings, in the sense that all persons are his incarnations: "*Was unangenehm ist und meiner Bescheidenheit zusetzt, ist, daß im Grunde jeder Name in der Geschichte ich bin; auch mit den Kindern, die ich in die Welt gesetzt habe, steht es so, daß ich mit einigem Mißtrauen erwäge, ob nicht Alle, die in das 'Reich Gottes' kommen, auch aus Gott kommen.*" (KGB III/5, Bf. 1256)

**27** As is the case with Nietzsche's late philosophy in general. When Nietzsche writes his "autobiography" *EH*, and claims that he shall be known for having cut history in half (KSA 6, 373), does he not precisely do that, which he in *D* claims is a sign of impending death? In the aphorism *Der Philosoph und das Alter* he writes: "*Indem er sich selber kanonisiert, hat er auch das Zeugnis des Todes über sich ausgestellt: von jetzt ab darf sein Geist sich nicht weiter entwickeln, die Zeit für ihn ist um, der Zeiger fällt. Wenn ein großer Denker aus sich eine bindende Institution für die zukünftige Menschheit machen will, darf man sicherlich annehmen, dass er über den Gipfel seiner Kraft gegangen und sehr müde, sehr nahe seinem Sonnenuntergange ist.*" (D 542, KSA 3, 312–313)

Dionysian state", but in a sense that is more related to Nietzsche's early understanding of a metaphysical primal unity that creates the world as an artist-god instead of what Young takes to be his later naturalistic interpretation of Dionysian ecstasy (cf. Young 2010, 530 and 562). Following this logic, one might even go as far as to claim that Nietzsche now had reached the goal of his philosophy, the Dionysian state, and no longer had any need of philosophy. Such an interpretation, however, presupposes that Nietzsche idealizes and strives for an ecstatic transcendence of the self, and I have shown that such interpretations are very problematic if not impossible. To me it seems far more plausible to deny that there is any significant continuity between Nietzsche's philosophy and the "philosophical" content of the letters, as the letters are evidence of an inability to maintain the scepticism that characterizes the philosopher's relation to extraordinary experiences. In other words, one can despite what seems like self-deconstructive irony in the letters detect in them an inability to distinguish an extreme feeling of power from actually being God.

## 7.6 Conclusion

In the last letters, in the inability to maintain what one might, following Jacob Golomb, call a mood of doubt, we witness the end of the philosophical Nietzsche, the end of Nietzsche as philosopher, not the (inevitable) end of Nietzsche's philosophy. Despite the laughter with which this came to pass, it was a tragedy insofar as one can hardly claim Nietzsche was finished with his philosophizing, not to speak of claiming that he did not dream of still accomplishing quite a few things. It can of course be argued that I have downplayed the contradictoriness of Nietzsche's work, i. e. the presence of disease (and/or metaphysical interpretation) in his earlier writings. That has not been my intention. Instead, I have sought to clarify what kind of striving, and what kind of ideal concerning moods, is the dominant force within Nietzsche's writings until his final days of sanity. The interpretation of Nietzsche's last works advanced here supports the contention that this striving is a by its nature atheistic questioning, and that his ideal mood is a mood of joy in doubt. Now it only remains to be specified, how best to describe this atheism, i. e. precisely what kind of an atheism his atheism is.

# 8 Nietzsche's radical atheism?

After having cast doubt on the religionist interpretation of Nietzsche's words that God is dead and of the nature of his final ideal, this chapter asks if it makes sense to describe Nietzsche's mature philosophical thinking as "radical atheism". Although scholars of Nietzsche's philosophy who have emphasized his atheism often warn not to equate his thinking with "vulgar" atheism, they seldom specify how Nietzsche's position actually differs as an atheism.[1] In other words, the precise character of Nietzsche's atheism stands in question. The general trajectory of Nietzsche's criticism suggests that it is an atheism that goes beyond a mere intellectual rejection of the existence of God through a questioning of the emotional sources of religion. The investigation of mood supports the reading sketched in the introductory chapter that Nietzsche thinks a more thoroughgoing rejection is required, specifically a fundamental reorientation of desire or in other words an affective reorientation. Against this background, Martin Hägglund's thinking appears as particularly promising for the task of clarification, because he has advanced thinking about the question of desire like no other contemporary atheistic thinker. Drawing on Hägglund's thought arguably also allows one to appreciate the contemporary relevance of the central thrust of Nietzsche's criticism.

Given the pivotal role of the idea of a need for religion in 19th-century debates, it should not surprise us that precisely questions concerning the "need for God" or a "desire for transcendence" still are central to contemporary discussions in both theology and philosophical atheism.[2] Besides attempts to reconstruct and defend the notion of a need for God,[3] there have been plenty of attempts at deconstruction,

**1** Michael Skowron has similarly argued that simply labelling Nietzsche an atheist does not tell much about the precise character of Nietzsche's atheism (Skowron 2002, 3). However, Skowron's attempt to cast Nietzsche's atheism as a specifically religious atheism is typical of attempts to deny the radicality of his atheism. While Skowron is correct to point out that (at least some forms of) Buddhism can be considered both religious and atheistic, it is precisely such analogies which are misleading, since all forms of Buddhism that can be defined as religious still hold on to an absolute value (Enlightenment/Nirvana) and consider transcendence of time desirable even if they deny that there are gods. Only by depriving the concept religion of any meaningful content can one claim that Nietzsche's atheism is religious. (Cf. Skowron 2002.)

**2** Though I here emphasize the influence of 19th-century discussions, the roots of the debate arguably go back to the distant past. Nietzsche himself was convinced that the intellectual genealogy of the idea of the human as essentially religious went back all the way to Plato, who wanted to prove "*dass Vernunft und Instinkt von selbst auf Ein Ziel zugehen, auf das Gute, auf ‚Gott*" and Nietzsche also did not fail to add polemically that "*seit Plato sind alle Theologen und Philosophen auf der gleichen Bahn*" (BGE 191, KSA 5, 112). Judging from the frequent invocation of the name of Plato in the contemporary discussion, Nietzsche certainly has a point, although it must be added that Plato is nowadays at least as frequently criticized as followed on this point.

**3** A case in point would be the theological movement of "radical orthodoxy" (Milbank and Oliver 2009), in which the idea of a *desiderium naturale* (a natural desire for God) is central and which

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most of which do not go any further than Nietzsche already did in the 19th century. As already suggested, a most remarkable exception is to be found in the work of Martin Hägglund, who has undertaken the task of rethinking the question of desire from the roots. Besides being at the forefront of serious atheistic thinking, his contribution to the understanding of desire is of such significance that it alone arguably justifies the critical attention his work has already attracted (e. g. Hägglund 2009).

## 8.1 Traditional and radical atheism

Hägglund bases his intervention in the philosophical discussion on atheism and religion on what he takes to be an important distinction between traditional and radical atheism. Traditional atheism questions and denies the existence of God, but does not question the desire for God and immortality (Hägglund 2008, 1). Radical atheism goes further as it also questions the desire for God and denies the desirability of God and of immortality (Hägglund 2008, 1 and 8). Because this distinction seems perfectly to fit the distinction between Nietzsche's own atheism and the kind of atheism he targets in his criticism, I will begin by questioning it critically; thereby also paying homage to the deconstructionist spirit of Hägglund's own efforts.

For two weighty reasons it is best to think of Hägglund's distinction as a heuristic construct, as a useful conceptual tool, rather than as a thesis that would apply generally to the history of atheism. First of all, it needs to be pointed out that not explicitly questioning the desire for God and immortality does not mean that one would accept that all men and women feel such a desire, not to speak of personally recognizing that one is driven by such a desire if asked about the matter. So unlike what Hägglund polemically suggests, the fact that atheists traditionally have concentrated on the question of God's existence instead of on the question of desire does not generally mean that mortal existence is still seen by all "traditional" atheists as a lack that it is desirable to transcend (cf. Hägglund 2008, 1). All that can be said is that merely denying the existence of God does leave the door open for thinking of the condition of the atheist as one of both denying and desiring transcendence. That would indeed be a lamentable condition, and types of atheism that do exhibit such a self-understanding need to be distinguished from more radical atheisms. Yet even if the distinction between traditional and radical atheism is in this regard more than a false dichotomy, it is in lack of unambiguous evidence simply unwarranted to ascribe

in this regard draws on earlier attempts to resuscitate that idea by Henri de Lubac (cf. Milbank 2005). The more mainstream appeal and influence of such ideas can be seen in Charles Taylor's influential tome *A Secular Age* (Taylor 2007). Taylor's historical excursions are all embedded in and serve to support the premise that all humans desire fullness and that perhaps only a reference to transcendence can fully account for the human condition. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that he expresses agreement with Milbank on this point and ends up pleading for a return to a "Plato-type" understanding of the human condition as a remedy to secularization (cf. Taylor 2007, 775).

to atheist X the view that transcendence is desirable. A case in point would be Bertrand Russell, probably the most widely read Anglophone critic of religion in the 20th century, who in his published work on religion was very traditional and focused on the one hand on the question of the existence of God, specifically "belief in God and immortality", and on the other on moral questions (Russell 2004, 2). Despite this focus, it is not hard to find traces of an anthropological view completely at odds with any desire for transcendence in his work; e. g. quite succinctly formulated in the conclusion of an essay from 1952, which remained unpublished during the lifetime of the philosopher:

> My conclusion is that there is no reason to believe any of the dogmas of traditional theology and, further, that there is no reason to wish that they were true. Man, in so far as he is not subject to natural forces, is free to work out his own destiny. The responsibility is his, and so is the opportunity. (Russell 1997, 548)

In other words, the difference between traditional and radical atheism must be rethought as a difference of focus, if it is to be of any general use in making sense of the historical record.

Secondly, the distinction between traditional and radical atheism seems to bypass the fact that there is a great variety of atheistic traditions; a fact which the flowering of research on atheism in recent years has done much to illuminate.[4] The distinction conjures up the impression of a uniform tradition of atheism, which is confronted by a radical atheism without tradition, a radical break from tradition. It only needs to be added that Hägglund explicitly associates radical atheism with Jacques Derrida and no one else in order to arrive at the conclusion that the distinction is nothing more than a polemical invention meant to highlight the supposed originality and superiority of that French "master". Although such a conclusion would be premature, there is still reason to be sceptical of Hägglund's portrayal of the history of atheism. While his further elaborations do not give reason to think of traditional atheism as one single tradition, and fortunately also do not suggest that the story of radical atheism begins and ends with Derrida, he is far too keen to reduce history to fit his ends, i. e. to illustrate the distinction. Hägglund himself on one occasion speaks of three prominent models of traditional atheism: melancholic, pragmatic and therapeutic (Hägglund 2009, 228 – 229).

Melancholic atheism denies the existence of God, but assumes that humans still desire transcendence and are therefore doomed to disappointment. Pragmatic atheism likewise agrees that religious transcendence is an illusion, but that the desire for transcendence is nevertheless real and the question is how to channel this desire.

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**4** For a taste of this variety, consult the *Oxford Handbook of Atheism*. See specifically the introductory essay for an overview (Bullivant and Ruse 2013). There the editors promise to present atheism in its varied manifestations (Bullivant and Ruse 2013, 4) and there is even mention of the "endless forms" of atheism (Bullivant and Ruse 2013, 5), which is perhaps going a bit too far.

Finally, therapeutic atheism, which Hägglund claims originates with Epicurus and Lucretius and which he furthermore associates with psychoanalysis, tries to cure the desire for transcendence. (Cf. Hägglund 2009, 228–229.) What is wrong with these types of atheism, according to Hägglund, is that all simply assume that each and every desire at its most fundamental really functions as a desire for transcendence.[5] Needless to say, all of these types of atheism can be found in 19th- and early 20th-century history; the melancholic model is found in Ernest Renan (cf. Chadwick 1975, 248 and 254), the pragmatic in Ludwig Feuerbach and Auguste Comte (cf. Watkin 2011, 2; cf. Chadwick 1975, 238), and the therapeutic in Sigmund Freud (Hägglund 2012, 110–111). The question is rather whether the 19th century with its turn to the human was typical in this regard, and whether there were not also atheists in that era as well as in others who simply would have denied that any such desire existed in the first place.[6]

Far from being a reason to dismiss the distinction altogether, this lack of concern with historical detail is rather a sign that for Hägglund allusions to historical models of atheism serve only to introduce the argument proper. Likewise, Derrida's thinking serves Hägglund only as a favoured example of the "logic of radical atheism". This of course does not mean that the strict definition of the distinction is worthless for historical research. To the contrary, it is especially fruitful to understand the contrast between certain prominent 19th-century atheisms, above all that between Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's atheisms, which means that the distinction is also useful to understand the history of atheism after Nietzsche. While it is hardly meaningful to try to write a comprehensive history of radical atheism, as such an effort could easily degenerate to a kind of cataloguing, the value of the distinction lies in its capacity to illuminate specific cases. For example, Hägglund's distinction can be applied to understand the difference between the atheism of Jacques Lacan and that of Jacques Derrida: Lacan acknowledges that God is an illusion, but nevertheless thinks humans necessarily desire the impossible existence of God, whereas Derrida denies both the existence and desirability of God (cf. Hägglund 2008, 192–193). It has to be explicitly pointed out, however, that this means the distinction can definitely

**5** "The common denominator for all these models of atheism is the assumption that the religious desire for absolute immunity *is operative*. When we desire the good we desire an absolute good that is immune from evil, and when we desire life we desire an absolute life that is immune from death. The fundamental drama of human existence is thus seen as the conflict between the mortal being that is our fate and the immortal being that we desire." (Hägglund 2009, 229)

**6** As a historical curiosity it is also worth mentioning that it is very well possible to deny the desirability of the existence of God without necessarily denying the existence of God, e.g. one might take the Promethean view that the interests and desires of mankind conflict with those of God and that God must be overthrown. That there have been a number of thinkers who have espoused such views is worth recognizing, but unfortunately the recent "history" of such thinkers by Bernard Schweizer, which for the most part reads more like a catalogue, is unduly sensationalistic in general and utterly misleading in particular for its treatment of Nietzsche as someone whose criticism of religion was above all an expression of hatred against God (cf. Schweizer 2011).

not be used to distinguish "philosophical atheism" of the continental kind from popular kinds of humanistic and naturalistic atheism, because philosophical atheism might just as well be traditional as radical and because most humanists who subscribe to a naturalistic view of the human would deny that there really is such a thing as a desire for transcendence.[7]

To conclude the introductory clarification of Hägglund's distinction, it has become clear that the definition of traditional atheism has to be reinterpreted if not reformulated if it is to apply to the history of atheism in general: if one reads the word "question" in the sentence "traditional atheism does not question the desire for God" (cf. Hägglund 2008, 1) in the sense of explicitly questioning (and not in the sense of denying), everything is in order insofar that traditionally atheists have concentrated on the question of the existence of God and not on the existential question concerning the desirability of God. Nietzsche of course is one of the few thinkers critical of religion, who were more concerned with the latter question than the former, which is hardly of any concern to him. On account of this focus, he stands out in the history of atheism (before the 20th century). Hägglund, however, has not thus far mentioned Nietzsche in his major works[8] and first masked his radically atheist theory of desire as a reading of Derrida. Nevertheless, or rather precisely therefore, it is of great scholarly interest to confront Nietzsche's thinking with Hägglund's theory. Therefore, I will in the following section ask in what specific sense Hägglund's radical atheism questions the desire for God, before turning back to Nietzsche.

## 8.2 Hägglund's argument: The logic of radical atheism

Hägglund's most basic claim is that all purported desire for immortality (or God, viz. an incorruptible instance) is preceded by an investment in survival which contradicts it from within. Hägglund does not simply seek to replace the notion of a constitutive desire for immortality by positing something like a more basic drive or desire for survival (cf. Hägglund 2012, 12). Rather than substituting one teleological principle with another, i.e. a theological with an atheistic principle, he seeks to develop a theory of desire that allows one to take account of the purported desire for transcendence without taking the self-interpretations of those who write about such a desire for granted as expressing the truth of desire. Consequently, he writes about the "so-

**7** In recent years, quite a few scholars have sought to distance the more philosophical forms of atheism that they consider intellectually respectable from what they consider the naïve atheism of certain popular authors, and have consequently emphasized the difficulty of atheism. It is therefore necessary to point out that Hägglund's distinction cannot in itself be used to serve that purpose, unless one adds to it some theory about the lasting power of religious ideals on humanistic forms of atheism, which I assume is only to a limited extent possible.

**8** However, I have been informed this will change with the publication of Hägglund's next book, currently entitled *This Life: On Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom,* scheduled for release in 2019.

called desire for immortality" (Hägglund 2008, 1), and the task he puts to himself is to take account of how such a desire can arise within mortal life. Put in more Hägglundian terms, he seeks to read the "desire for immortality/God" against itself from within. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a short characterization of the model of desire against which Hägglund works.

The view that Hägglund seeks to deconstruct is the view that what we really desire is immortal, and the two canonical texts that he above others singles out as having formed this view are Plato's Symposium (Hägglund 2012, 2) and St Augustine's Confessions (Hägglund 2008, 107). In the platonic dialogues, though especially in the Symposium, Socrates argues that all desire is fundamentally desire for what is immortal; for that which cannot be lost. In Augustine's formulation, all desire is desire for God, the eternal. The logic behind the view is that one can only desire what one does not have or what one is not. So if I truly am happy, I cannot desire to be happy. In other words, one desires what one lacks. One strives for fullness because one lacks fullness. When someone who is or seems happy then objects that he or she does still desire to be happy this is because he or she is not perfectly happy since the happiness can be lost (Hägglund 2012, 4). Only that which is eternal is perfect and safe from corruption, wherefore the desire for happiness is really a desire for that which is eternal. Following this logic, only that which is eternal can satisfy desire and as all desire is fundamentally desire for the eternal it is wise to rise up from mortal desires toward the immortal. In other words, Plato's Socrates teaches an orientation of desire to the transcendent; to another world. From this view there is only a short step to Augustine's influential and more rigid understanding of detachment from the mortal as a precondition for the turn to the immortal, to God (cf. Hägglund 2008, 109).

In the texts of Plato and Augustine, Hägglund nevertheless finds traces of an alternative understanding of desire, in which desire is conceptualized as essentially conditioned by time. In this alternative view, which is present in the texts and yet suppressed by the authors in question, the reason why someone who is happy still desires to be happy is not interpreted as suggesting a desire for perfect happiness, which requires transcending time, but as a desire to hold onto the happiness one has, which requires a continuation of life within time (cf. Hägglund 2012, 4–5). So within all desire there is a desire to go on. The desire to live on, to survive, cannot in its turn according to Hägglund aim at immortality, at transcending time, since time is the condition of survival, and transcending time would erase the possibility of desiring anything just as much as it would erase the frustration of desire (Hägglund 2008, 2 and Hägglund 2012, 9). Hägglund explicitly cautions that this does not mean that desire never reaches its goals, but rather that any fulfilment is necessarily temporal and bound to pass away. In this sense, Hägglund finds in all desire, or better yet: at the root of all desire, an "unconditional affirmation of survival" (Hägglund 2008, 2), or what he later specifies as a "constitutive investment in survival" (Hägglund 2012, 13). This means nothing more than that for a living being, it is impossible to be completely indifferent to survival; to living on in time. If life

could not be lost, if the objects of desire could not be lost, one would not care about anything at all. It is the bond to temporal life that opens up the possibility of both positive and negative affective responses, the chance of life and of death. In other words, one can seek to weaken or even destroy the bond to life instead of continuing it, but one cannot be indifferent to it, unless one is already dead.[9]

Now, according to Hägglund, it is precisely the co-implication of desire and mortality that leads religious teachers to preach detachment as the way to God or salvation. Desire for the mortal, attachment to mortal life, is necessarily haunted by loss and hence it has been reasoned that detachment is the way to God and immortality, to a state beyond loss. By redirecting desire, it is then argued, one could transcend the inevitable extinction of life and of all that is valuable. However, and this is the radically atheist point, immortality is equivalent to absolute death. In a state where there is no loss, there is also no time of survival, no time of life. Moreover, the radically atheist logic of desire implies that the religious ideal of detachment and the desire for immortality are born out of a preceding attachment to life. This is because attachment to transient things and mortal beings, *chronophilia*, is necessarily accompanied by fear of loss, *chronophobia*, which in its turn can generate the idea that one could escape time into a state where nothing can be lost. For Hägglund then, it is the very commitment to mortal life that engenders the turn away from the mortal. The turn away from the mortal is however, if drawn to its conclusion, a turn toward death because life, mortality and the desirability of anything are inextricably linked. This means that the prospect of immortality, when thought through, cannot cure the fear of loss and death, i. e. cannot cure *chronophobia*, since immortality/God is death. Neither can the prospect of immortality satisfy the desire to live on for the very same reason. There is, in other words, a contradiction in the supposed desire for immortality, as the state where nothing can be lost is arguably undesirable (cf. Hägglund 2008, 111). Thus, Hägglund concludes that the "desire for fullness/absolute emptiness is not the truth of desire but rather a self-defeating attempt to deny the attachment to temporal life that is the source of all care" (Hägglund 2012, 9). The logic of the argument is admittedly elegant, but I am here not concerned with evaluating its truth. Instead, I seek to show what use can be made of it for understanding Nietzsche's criticism of religion.

In concluding that desire for absolute transcendence is desire for death, that God is death/nothingness, Nietzsche and Hägglund are in full agreement.[10] However, it is

**9** "I am not claiming that temporal finitude is desirable as such but that it is the condition for both the desirable *and* the undesirable." (Hägglund 2012, 14) Ergo: "finitude is not something that comes to inhibit desire, but precipitates desire in the first place. It is because the beloved can be lost that one seeks to keep it, and it is because the experience can be forgotten that one seeks to remember it." (Hägglund 2008, 111)

**10** Of course one can ask if this is the only possible understanding of the concept God, and Nietzsche himself associates it most with the Christian concept of God (A 47, KSA 6, 225), whereby he seems mostly to refer specifically to a "Platonic" concept of God, in which the attribute of immortality is

also worth asking whether the logic of desire that Hägglund elucidates can be considered a challenge to Nietzsche, and this is the question I will pursue in the next section, after initially showing why it is worth asking. A particularly noteworthy consequence of Hägglund's theory is that there can be no full affirmation of life. Just as he argues that the idea of immortality cannot cure *chronophobia*, he also argues that more *chronophilia* cannot cure *chronophobia* (Hägglund 2012, 111). It is rather the case that the more one is attached to mortal things, to life, the more one will fear loss and the greater will the desire be to keep what one loves safe from time. If one did not fear death and loss, one would be indifferent and incapable of attachment. This means that the affirmation of the human condition, or generally the condition of any mortal being, is always haunted by death and that one is always moved by both *chronophilia* and *chronophobia*. So in this perspective, "therapeutic atheism" is misguided, if and when it seeks to cure religious desires for immortality by encouraging either acceptance of death or love of life. As Nietzsche seeks to reorient desire to the earth, and seeks the highest possible affirmation of life, the question is whether his philosophy does not amount to yet another futile attempt to cure *chronophobia?*

## 8.3 Nietzsche's ideal mood: Escape from time or heightening of experience in time?

The distinction between traditional and radical atheism allows one to read the dispute between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche as a dispute over desire, more than as a dispute about epistemology and the existence of another world.[11] Schopenhauer thinks that there is a metaphysical need to transcend time, to rise from becoming into being/non-being, and teaches detachment from mortal life as the path to fullness/emptiness. By contrast, and as a reaction, the entire trajectory of Nietzsche's criticism of religion is shaped by his privileging of becoming within time, and he con-

central and is thought of in terms of being as opposed to becoming. Not least due to Augustine's influence, such an understanding of God has been dominant in the Western tradition of religious thinking. Whereas Augustine's God is where his heart finds rest beyond time, Nietzsche identifies the desire for rest with disease and absolute rest with death (e. g. GS Foreword 2, KSA 3, 348; cf. NL 1887, 9[60], KSA 12, 365). There are perhaps other ways to conceptualize the final end of religious life, even within the Christian tradition, e. g. as ever closer union (without ever coming to rest), but that is beyond the point here. Hägglund's point can also be expressed thus: insofar as there is a God or are Gods, he/she/it/they must be mortal.

**11** In this regard, it is particularly interesting to note that Nietzsche, in his early critique of Schopenhauer, concedes that there might be a metaphysical world, but argues that the desires that have led to thinking that a metaphysical world would be valuable to us arise from self-deception and error, and that if there was a metaphysical world it should be of no concern to us (HH I 9, KSA 2, 29 – 30). In his late work, Nietzsche is very clear that it is precisely Schopenhauer's nihilistic interpretation of desire, i. e. of the Will, that interests him as a psychologist (cf. KSA 6, 125).

sequently advocates a greater love of earthly life. This love of the earth is however not a simple love of what has been and what is, but of the possibilities of becoming, and specifically of a heightening of life. This heightening is expressed as high moods within this life (cf. BGE 257, KSA 5, 205), and it is through such moods that one reaches the highest possible affirmation of life.

Basically, two options of reading Nietzsche's thinking about the highest possible affirmation are worth considering. One can either read it as an escape from time as Julian Young does, i. e. as an immunization strategy, or as an enhancement of experience in time, i. e. as an optimization strategy. Just as one would expect from Hägglund's theory, Nietzsche's statements about the affirmation of temporal life seem contradictory, but I do think the evidence speaks stronger in favour of the latter interpretation. The apparent contradictoriness is most evident in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where Zarathustra on the one hand praises the embrace of transience and all the pain of loss as a precondition of the life he considers desirable (KSA 4, 110 – 111), but on the other speaks of how a mere acceptance of transience cannot be satisfying and that time and all its woe have to be redeemed (KSA 4, 180 – 181). The greater the attachment, the greater the pain, and the temptation to deny all attachment. Nietzsche's Zarathustra seems to be aware of this basic problem, and his only answer is this: "Woe says: Now Go! Yet all joy wants Eternity" (Parkes 2005, 199; KSA 4, 404). While it is clear enough that the formula that all joy wants eternity cannot be interpreted in terms of a traditional religious desire,[12] and that instead of pointing to a specific human desire for what is eternal it rather expresses a desire for becoming within all desire, one must ask what consequences this understanding of desire has for the high moods that he holds out as desirable. Nietzsche's protagonist clearly rejects the adequacy of the solution that "not-willing" at all is the answer (cf. KSA 4, 181), that one could escape time, and instead simply emphasizes that the pain that wants to end attachment is not as original as the joy that wants to go on in Eternity. This suggests that Nietzsche does not seek to cure *chronophobia* with *chronophilia*, but rather simply to point out that *chronophilia* is more fundamental in the same way that he speaks of all life as fundamentally will to power (cf. GM III 7, KSA 5, 350; cf. GS 349, KSA 3, 585 – 586). This view has consequences for Nietzsche's thinking on the heightening of life, as the question then is whether there is a way of dealing with the necessary pain of life other than through detachment; without turning away from life. What is the highest possible affirmation of life, once one recognizes that even the fullest affirmation will be marked by pain?

**12** This is of course how Charles Taylor seeks to reinterpret Zarathustra's/Nietzsche's words that all joy wants eternity. Taylor specifically interprets it to mean that death undermines meaning (cf. Taylor 2007, 722), whereas to me it seems that Nietzsche is far closer to Hägglund's understanding of time, loss and death as preconditions for meaning. Nietzsche repeatedly emphasizes that if there is to be creation, there has to be destruction; a view from which it follows that it is misguided to think that death threatens meaning as it is far more the precondition of meaning.

Nietzsche's emphasis on becoming allows him to conceive of a distancing from one's own pain and from one's own time that does not entail detachment from mortal life, but rather a heightening of one's experience in time. This distancing is enabled by an orientation toward the earthly future; an orientation which, as his writings suggest, makes possible experiencing moods that are in effect moods of the future. This is the case, because Nietzsche thinks the orientation toward the future is indissociable from the creation of the future; it is not a real orientation unless it informs all of one's actions.[13] One can thus conceive of the following scenario: As Nietzsche through thinking and writing orients himself towards the greater independence that characterizes his philosophers of the future, who have overcome the religious past, he already experiences a distancing from his own era and an approximation of the desired independence. As he thinks about and works towards the affirmation made possible by that independence, about the affirmation that characterizes their relation to life, he already experiences a greater joy. That Nietzsche himself sought to live with his pain through such a strategy is certainly suggested in his published writings as well as in his letters. In one particularly striking letter to his sister from summer 1883, in which he complains about the dreadful impact of the weather on his health, he goes as far as to state that thinking about the future of humanity is his only solace.[14] Whatever value one might ascribe to such biographical speculation, one thing is clear: As Nietzsche's thinking expressed in his texts is fundamentally oriented toward the earthly future and that which is possible in time, instead of toward a timeless state of being, it qualifies as radically atheist.

That Nietzsche's thinking can be considered radically atheist of course does not mean that his thinking about the highest affirmation is unproblematic, nor that his statements about high moods are free from contradiction. Needless to say, having eyes only for the future necessarily has devastating ethical consequences, and in Nietzsche's case it is especially clear that a distancing from his own pain goes hand in hand with a distancing from the pain of those around him. One might seek to point out that the philosopher is but one mask of the human being, but the philosophical Nietzsche's emphasis on treating all of life as an experiment speaks against any attempt to treat his thinking as harmless in this regard. When it comes to moods, there is also a very strong tendency or drive toward wholeness, to the idea of one dominating mood (e. g. GS 288, KSA 3, 528 – 529; cf. NL 1882, 1[3] 252, KSA 10, 83), and consequently, one finds justifications of such practices as slavery for the purpose of creating or literally breeding beings capable of dwelling in high moods (cf. BGE 257, KSA 5, 205). In the *Nachlass* one can of course find notes cautioning against the idea of privileging one mood (e. g. NL 1882, 1[70], KSA 10, 28),

**13** E. g. when Nietzsche, in order to challenge the joy of the free spirit, introduces the thought of Eternal Recurrence, the affirmation of which he considers the highest affirmation possible (cf. NL 1888, 16[32], KSA 13, 492), he specifically asks if incorporating the thought would not inform all of one's actions (GS 341, KSA 3, 570).

**14** "*Die Zukunft der Menschheit – daran zu denken ist mein einziges Labsal*" (KGB III/1, Bf. 453).

and in the published works there are statements about the value of being capable of many different affects (e. g. GM III 12, KSA 5, 365), but there is no suggestion that this would have any ethical consequences. For example, the capacity to feel compassion [*Mitleid*] is in this view certainly valuable, but that does not mean one should direct such feelings at the weak. In other words, statements stressing an openness to different affects and moods do not have to do with the fundamental orientation that Nietzsche strives toward, which is perhaps best thought of as a background mood from within which specific affects are felt and which constrains the expression of specific feelings. Whether one can, and to what extent it makes sense to, dissociate Nietzsche's thinking on mood from his specific visions is ultimately a philosophical question that should not concern us here. However, let it be said that Nietzsche's emphasis on independence by necessity forces the reader to make up his or her own mind about what is valuable in the philosopher's thinking.[15]

To conclude, Nietzsche's thinking on desire and his communication of mood do not contradict his atheism. To the contrary, viewing Nietzsche's criticism of religion from this perspective allows one to specify that his atheism is a radical atheism that not only denies the existence of God but also questions the desire for God. Nietzsche's questioning of the desire for God leads him to think that a reorientation of desire toward the earthly future is an opportunity that should be pursued, not least because of the promise of a higher culture of higher moods.

**15** Just as one can question William James' reasons for thinking that only a religious perspective can open up the "strenuous mood" of striving (cf. Lekan 2007) one might dispute that Nietzsche has valid reasons for thinking that heightening moods requires deepening social hierarchy. The difficulty of course is that Nietzsche, unlike James, is not all too clear about his reasons when it comes to this particular issue and prefers to speak in a prophetic voice on the matter. Perhaps this preference means that there is all the more reason to question Nietzsche's interpretation.

# 9 Conclusions

This concluding chapter consists of two parts. I will first present a summary of the most important results of the research undertaken, and thereby answer the questions asked in the introduction (section 9.1 and subsections). Thus, I clarify the relevance of the study for scholarship on Nietzsche. After that, I will reflect on the implications of the results for further research on the emotional dimensions of secularization (section 9.2 and subsections).

## 9.1 The big picture: Nietzsche on the death of God and the moods of the future

The evidence examined and the interpretations presented in the preceding chapters support the contention, which was an important provisional starting point of this study, that Nietzsche is at least as critical of the idea that the recognition that God is dead necessarily results in a melancholy mood as he is critical of philosophies that either explicitly or inadvertently replace religion with new convictions such as a faith in the idea of an inevitable progress of humanity or in the idea that a natural morality must be a morality of equal human rights. His most important philosophical works are rather characterized by a sceptical play with such ideas, suggesting a genuine openness towards the future.[1] Consequently, his thinking cannot, without either abandoning or doing violence to the spirit that defines it, be used to support narratives of modernization in general and of secularization in particular that exaggerate loss just as it cannot be used to bolster optimistic narratives of progress. While the general openness that defines his vision of the moods of the future thus works against any rigid interpretations, his works also allow one to reconstruct more specific objections. Most importantly, Nietzsche dissects ideas of a need for God and seeks to move beyond the kind of doubt and atheism that leaves desire for God intact, and thus rejects the central premises of interpretations that contend that lack of faith implies dwelling in a melancholy mood. For Nietzsche, the rejection of both the idea of an ineradicable need for God and of the desirability of God necessarily also means rejecting the need for and desirability of "secular" equivalents, i. e. replacements for lost faith, "shadows of God" (cf. GS 108, KSA 3, 467). This is the case, be-

**1** Put simply, I have argued that neither Nietzsche's visions of desirable futures nor his visions of catastrophe should be read as statements about what will inevitably come to pass. A few more words about progress seem called for, since I have not paid much attention to the issue. Already in *HH*, Nietzsche rejects the idea that any kind of progress would be inevitable (HH I 24, KSA 2, 45). However, more typical expressions of Nietzsche's play with the idea of progress and the related idea of natural morality are to be found in the late works, where he mockingly reclaims the term "progress" and the motto "return to nature" for his own immoralist project. (KSA 6, 150; cf. A 4, KSA 6, 171)

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cause Nietzsche's criticism of religion and his criticism of secular convictions both have their roots, besides in historical criticism and language criticism, in his psychological thinking, which is arguably the most important force in his mature criticism. Specifically, they both stem from the same psychological revaluation; namely a distrust of the value of having "faith" and an associated vision of a greater health and a greater joy in a greater scepticism; i.e. in an eminently desirable mood.

### 9.1.1 A reconstruction of Nietzsche's psychology of faith

Nietzsche's psychology of religion culminates in opposing religious faith, which he diagnoses as a sign of weakness, to freedom from binding convictions, which he diagnoses as a sign of strength and associates with the psychological type that Zarathustra represents (cf. A 54, KSA 6, 236–237, cf. GS 347, KSA 3, 581–583). This intuition that is clearly articulated in his late work is operative in all of the writings following *HH*, in which he began his attack on faith. Although one can cautiously surmise that it seems ultimately to rest on his own experience and self-interpretation,[2] and that his writings from *HH* onward can be read as attempts to communicate this experience, one should not overlook that philosophical argumentation is essential to his communication. After all, he can only through argument transmit a sense of why he does what he does. Thus, Nietzsche argues for his view throughout his works, e.g. by trying to show that binding convictions can be harmful to science and to life (e.g. D 19, KSA 3, 32) and that freeing oneself from such convictions opens up possibilities of heightening life. Against this background, one can begin to see why Nietzsche besides questioning religion and religious believers also, though not as frequently, questions atheism and those who understand themselves as having moved beyond religion. Instead of merely assuming that the joy of those who deem themselves free spirits is a strong joy he questions it. In other words,

**2** As might be claimed of what is most important in Nietzsche's psychological thinking in general, namely his revaluations. Although defending Nietzsche is not my task, it needs to be explicitly pointed out that his critical reflection on the nature of experience is best interpreted as more than an "appeal to experience" that has no value other than for the understanding of Nietzsche's eccentric character. In other words, at least some of his claims can be intersubjectively verified, and the logic behind them can be clarified. In this regard, it is interesting to note that Wilhelm Dilthey, whose philosophical thinking differs markedly from that of Nietzsche yet was also above all a continuous reflection on experience, came to similar conclusions about the potentials of freeing oneself from convictions in a work originally published in 1910: "*Das historische Bewusstsein von der Endlichkeit jeder geschichtlichen Erscheinung, jedes menschlichen oder gesellschaftlichen Zustandes, von der Relativität jeder Art von Glauben ist der letzte Schritt zur Befreiung des Menschen. Mit ihm erreicht der Mensch die Souveränität, jedem Erlebnis seinen Gehalt abzugewinnen, sich ihm ganz hinzugeben, unbefangen, als wäre kein System von Philosophie oder Glauben, das Menschen binden könnte*." (Dilthey 1979, 290) Needless to say, Dilthey did not see that such a view could have the kind of moral implications Nietzsche associated with it.

he challenges it, for instance with imagery familiar from narratives of loss (cf. GS 125, KSA 3, 480 – 482), to test their mood. His questioning is not meant to deny that living a joyful life without religion is possible, as might be assumed. To the contrary, it is meant to point to the possibility of heightening life. The logic behind this procedure can be reconstructed thus: because life is full of uncertainty, only a joy that needs no convictions, that plays with convictions and finds joy in doubt and uncertainty, is a sure sign of a truly life-affirming spirit.[3] The consequences for the understanding of atheism might sound paradoxical: for atheism to be viable and to rest on a secure foundation, it must be of a radical kind that can deal with ambiguity that thrives in uncertainty. Yet it is arguably precisely this intuition, which makes Nietzsche such a perceptive diagnostician not only of religion but also of atheism. For it provokes the questions: Is this the kind of atheism that we know from history and experience? If not, might that not be problematic as one can hardly think of a more atheistic position than such a radical scepticism toward belief?[4] While I already noted that Nietzsche's work is characterized by a general openness toward the future, a specific kind of openness is thus essential to his vision of the moods of the future in an even more significant sense. His reflections on what would most heighten experience, and especially on what moods are most desirable, thus circle around fostering and maintaining a life-affirming scepticism. Above all, Nietzsche seeks to present this specific kind of atheism in his writings, perhaps even to prove that such an atheism is possible, and this can be established through paying attention to Nietzsche's communication of mood.

### 9.1.2 Nietzsche's communication of a mood of joyful doubt

Nietzsche's writings are rich in affects but the results of this study suggests that a vision of a specific mood plays a central role for him. From *HH* onward, Nietzsche seeks to communicate a philosophical mood, a mood conducive to living a philosophical life that unites scepticism and joy. While his emphasis shifts from the one to the other, both aspects are present in all of his mature writings. So while

**3** In this spirit, Nietzsche at times positively suggests the free spirits should seek out danger and challenges in order to become stronger and to reach a higher joy. An extreme example is to be found in *GS:* "The secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is – to live dangerously! Build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius! Send your ships into uncharted seas!" (Kaufmann 1974, 228; GS 283, KSA 3, 526 – 527)

**4** In other words, the question is how atheistic the most common forms of atheism are, in comparison with Nietzsche's vision. In a recent article, Simon During asks whether absolute secularity is conceivable, and ends up with the view that it is to be found only in a position which "appeals to limitless enquiry, limitless questioning openness to future contingencies" and therefore has no fixed identity, i.e. it "can never secure its own endpoint" (During 2017, 166). During mentions Nietzsche as a possible example of such absolute secularity, but also notes that this is contested by some scholars who view him as a religious thinker (During 2017, 159).

some scholars have emphasized the mood of doubt in *HH*, and the mood of joy in *GS*, both works are best read as seeking to communicate both doubt and joy, i. e. of joyful doubt.[5] From the nature of this mood it follows that Nietzsche's communication of mood, from *HH* onward, is best not grasped in terms suggesting manipulation, e. g. as "use of mood". Following my interpretation, what Nietzsche demands of his readers (e. g. in *EH*, cf. KSA 6, 303 and 304), is not to have precisely the same particular experiences as he has, nor to have the same ideas, but instead to have a similar independence (as what he claims to have). This independence can of course be put in terms of experience; as the experience of doubt as a joyful state instead of as a negative condition. Nietzsche is well aware that he cannot simply transmit this experience to the reader (e. g. GS 286, KSA 3, 528),[6] but can communicate it by showing it in his writings. With this in mind, we can return to Stefan Zweig's contention that if Nietzsche "teaches" anything he teaches freedom (Zweig 1925, 322), and conclude that Zweig's judgement hits the spot; it is not only intriguing but also basically correct. Such a teaching cannot be direct, it cannot be uttered as a command to do this or that, for such an approach would be contrary to the spirit out of which the teaching grows and would therefore undermine its own credibility. It can also not be forced on the recipient through manipulation of mood for the same reason. So against Friederike Reents' suggestion that Nietzsche's "privileging" [*Fundamentierung*] of mood might explain his adoption by the National Socialists (Reents 2015, 242 – 243), one must note that while Nietzsche recognized the power of mood and the possibility to manipulate mood, the mood that Nietzsche sought to communicate was one that would rather make the recipient more instead of less sceptical of authority.[7] This understanding of Nietzsche's communication of mood also allows us to see why Karl Jaspers is wrong to conclude from the observation that Nietzsche does not directly show the way toward an ideal mood that he does not have such an ideal at all and does not intend to communicate any such ideal (cf. Jaspers

**5** One can of course ask, in what work this mood is best expressed or when this mood finds its most mature expression, but answering such questions would require a different kind of evaluative study (cf. Stegmaier 2012).

**6** See also Nietzsche's contention that nothing is as misunderstood in his time than philosophical states of mind (BGE 213, KSA 5, 147). Nietzsche specifically targets the view that the philosophical experience of thinking must be heavy, slow and utterly serious, to which he opposes the joyful doubt that is more akin to dancing.

**7** It is also worth reminding that the one and only comment by Nietzsche on the manipulation of mood by power-hungry men was highly critical (D 29, KSA 3, 38 – 39). In other words, I think that the appropriation of Nietzsche by the National Socialists is still best explained by referring to what use could be made of certain citations from his texts and notes. There is certainly no lack of passages that can be used in service of certain ideologies, which is evident in the original German e. g. "*Die Schwachen und Missrathnen sollen zu Grunde gehen*" (A 2, KSA 6, 170) or in *EH:* "*Jene neue Partei des Lebens, welche die grösste aller Aufgaben, die Höherzüchtung der Menschheit in die Hände nimmt, eingerechnet die schonungslose Vernichtung alles Entartenden und Parasitischen…*" (KSA 6, 313)

1981, 336 – 338). For Nietzsche's communication is in this regard out of necessity primarily an example of what he himself termed *exhortatio indirecta*, i. e. indirect persuasion.

### 9.1.3 Nietzsche's communication of mood is anti-religious

Furthermore, the mood that Nietzsche sought to communicate can – following this line of reasoning – hardly be described as religious. I have accordingly argued that Nietzsche's atheism is expressed in the style of his writings, in the mood he seeks to communicate. Nietzsche himself provides the foundation for such an interpretation when he in his early work describes the style of the religious person. He insists that the style of communication that the priest employs should directly allow one to identify the author or speaker as a religious person (HH II, WS 79, KSA 2, 588). In this regard, it is telling that his own writings exhibit precisely those affects that he forbids the style of the religious person, namely irony, arrogance, mischievousness, hate, as well as rapid changes in emotional tone. Does not such a style provoke doubt? Arguably it does, and precisely in this sense, I have suggested that the playful mood, that sceptical joy in the destruction of convictions that characterizes Nietzsche's writings, is profoundly irreligious. It effectively provides resistance to any discourse that claims eternal and transcendent authority; a defining feature of religious discourse (cf. Lincoln 2012, 1). In this regard, it is finally worth noting that since Nietzsche started using the metaphor of mountain air to characterize his philosophy in the period around the publication of *HH*, i. e. in the late 1870s, he regularly opposes it to the stink of Churches, Christianity and Wagnerianism. This is of course most apparent in *Z* but one finds such statements scattered throughout his texts.[8] It is precisely the idea that style is an expression of mood that similarly leads Nietzsche to call for an architecture that reflects the inner life of the free spirit (GS 280, KSA 3, 524 – 525).[9] Although Nietzsche's attack is primarily directed against Christianity, the evidence reviewed in chapter 7 strongly suggests that his criticism is directed against religion more generally, and that he only plays with that which is considered holy. Without acknowledging that such play is an expression of a sceptical mood, as an expression of freedom over and against religious interpretations, one easily misreads Nietzsche's use of religious terminology, and especially his "Dionysian" statements in the late works.

**8** Zarathustra is presented as an incarnation of the fresh air of the heights (e. g. KSA 4, 375). Unsurprisingly, he therefore bemoans the "air" of priestly architecture: "Churches they call their sweet-smelling caves. 'Oh what falsified light, what musty air! Here the soul to its heights may –– not fly up!" (Parkes 2005, 78; KSA 4, 118; cf. BGE 30, KSA 5, 49)

**9** In *EH*, Nietzsche goes as far as to talk about founding a city that would reflect his nature, and compares this plan to the efforts of the supposedly atheistic and therefore intimately related Emperor Frederick II to build the city of Aquila as a bulwark against the Church (KSA 6, 340).

The examination of Nietzsche's statements about extraordinary states and desirable moods has shown that his ideal mood is evidently not an ecstatic state that extinguishes individual, temporal consciousness. The high mood that he has in sight is an individual, philosophical state, reached through living an experimental, philosophical life. Put differently, Nietzsche's scepticism is not provisional; it is not a tool abandoned when a higher state is reached, but informs his thinking about what an ideal mood is like. Nietzsche explicitly voices his disgust at collective intoxication (e. g. GS 86, KSA 3, 443 – 444), which means that he can also hardly be thought of as intending a renewal of Dionysian religion when he invokes the name of Dionysus. Instead, my reading has provided further support for the thesis that the name Dionysus signifies Nietzsche's own philosophy, considered as a philosophy that affirms life as uncertain, as problem, as a question mark. In this specific way, the study has been a contribution to reinstating Nietzsche as a disciple of a philosophical Dionysus (cf. Hödl 2009).

### 9.1.4 Concluding remarks on the role of mood in Nietzsche's thinking

Whatever one might think of the finer details of the interpretation presented here, one should at least admit that the study has proven that Nietzsche was preoccupied with questions concerning mood, not least concerning moods of the future, and that the study has therefore shown mood to be a significant issue in Nietzsche-scholarship. Indeed, my study strongly suggests that mood is of such importance to the philosopher that he should be counted among those few thinkers (e. g. Emerson and Heidegger), for whom mood is a key to understanding existence. Consequently, interpretations that seek to clarify Nietzsche's thinking but wholly ignore the question of mood must be deemed incomplete if not outright problematic. I have thus repeatedly suggested that there are limits to what purely historical-critical scholarship on sources can reveal, and that clarification must be aided by other strategies of reading. To put it bluntly: if the sources were so important for determining Nietzsche's philosophical intention, he himself would have given transparent citations and added detailed bibliographies to his works. In this sense, what is truly new and valuable about this work for scholarship on Nietzsche is not to be found primarily in the finer details concerning historical-critical evidence about sources but rather in the attempt to recognize the role of mood in a rigorous manner and then to re-examine traditions of scholarship. I have argued that such a procedure is especially important when it comes to Nietzsche's philosophy of religion and nowhere more so than when it comes to the interpretation of the words that God is dead. In this regard, to reiterate, the results of my study support the argument of Hödl that Nietzsche's manner of presenting the message that God is dead is meant to point to possibilities of being human (Hödl 2009, 361 – 362), and specifies that what concerned Nietzsche most were the possibilities of dwelling in the world that different moods open up. Even more specifically, my study strongly suggests that one can conclude that Nietzsche's

challenge to the coming generations is the call for a radical atheism that bears a life-affirming mood.

## 9.2 On the significance of the study for research on secularization

Now that the most important results of the work done here have been discussed, I will finally present the case that the significance of this study is not limited to Nietzsche-scholarship, nor even to philosophy in a strict sense. Specifically, I argue that the clarification of Nietzsche's criticism of religion, and above all of the psychological vision that guides it, might yet contribute to the interdisciplinary discourse on secularization. That the discourse on secularization itself is quite important hardly needs to be defended. Indeed, it is a massive understatement to say that the discussion is important. The narrative of the decline of religion in modernity, the narrative that explains why it might be said that we live in a secular age (cf. Taylor 2007), is central to the self-understanding of the modern West, and therefore unsurprisingly also in the academic study of religion. What then could a specialized study about the philosopher Nietzsche, even if focused on his thinking about the crisis of faith, possibly contribute to the academic discussion on secularization that was until recently mostly associated with historical and empirical research in sociology?[10]

It is precisely what might be termed the crisis of sociological theories of secularization, and the philosophical interventions that have followed in its wake, which justify a turn to the resources that can be found in Nietzsche's thinking. Next I will provide a brief sketch of the crisis in question, and then I will clear up a misunderstanding that has hitherto prevented the wider reception of Nietzsche's ideas among non-philosophers doing research on religion and secularization. After that, I will through a discussion of some vexing problems in the new dialogue between sociology and philosophy, demonstrated by the work of Charles Taylor, move on to show how Nietzsche's psychological intuitions can be made fruitful. I can of course here only suggest avenues that might be worth pursuing further, but I will provide reasons for the pursuit.

**10** From the 1960s to the early 2000s, sociological research on secularization was without a doubt dominant. One might even claim that secularization was first and foremost a topic of the sociology of religion. Thus, to give but one prominent example, the intellectual historian Owen Chadwick felt the need to provide a thorough justification why one should at all pay any attention to intellectuals and their ideas when narrating secularization, instead of simply focusing on more general social changes (cf. Chadwick 1975, 11–14).

### 9.2.1 The crisis in the discourse on secularization

The crisis of the sociological discourse can be illustrated by the example of Peter Berger, who used to be known as one of the foremost proponents of secularization theory (cf. Norris and Inglehart 2004, 4) due to his early work (Berger 1967), in which he argued that modernization inevitably leads to a marked decline of both institutional religion, due to the differentiation of social spheres, and individual religiosity, due to the rationalization of worldviews. In the 1990s, Berger became convinced that the empirical evidence, not least about the vibrant religiosity of the USA,[11] did not match the basic assumptions of his theory nor his predictions about the future and therefore recanted much of his earlier work. Berger has now reverted to the speculative idea that there is such a thing as a "religious impulse", which "has been a perennial feature of humanity", and on account of this he has even suggested that there is something to the critique of resurgent religious movements that claim life without reference to transcendence is necessarily shallow and impoverished (cf. Berger 1999, 13). It is indeed noteworthy that the idea of a metaphysical need has returned to the scholarly discussion on religion through the discourse on secularization, as an explanation of why religiosity persists even in the modern West, since theories of secularization once played no small role in marginalizing that idea within academia.[12]

This return is apt to draw attention to what is at stake in current discussions; such is the extent of the crisis of secularization theory that the most basic foundations of earlier research are questioned. This questioning is concerned with nothing less than the nature of religiosity, the nature of rationality and the self-understanding of modernity. It is in this context that the discussion has become more philosophical, and open to philosophical interventions: for whenever an academic discipline doubts its own basic theoretical assumptions philosophy has its feast. Notably, however, the question about need is at the centre of the discussion. Arguably, adopting

**11** I am not suggesting that the debate would have focused solely on the USA, e. g. the resurgence of fundamentalist Islam and the spread of evangelicalism in Africa and Latin America certainly contributed to a change in scholarly perceptions. But pointing to these cases is not really a challenge to classical theories of secularization that focus on the West, i. e. on countries whose modernity does not stand in question. The religiosity of the USA has therefore been the most serious objection to the idea that modernization and secularization go hand in hand (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 83), and this justifies granting it a special place as example.

**12** While the idea that the human being is by its nature *homo religiosus* was influential in the early development of the study of religion (cf. Lang 1993, 164 – 172), the sociology of religion and particularly theories of secularization showed that research could do better without it. The most cited classic works on secularization either paid no heed to the assumption (Berger 1967) or explicitly rejected it (Wilson 1966, xv-xvii), on the grounds that it is hardly helpful for understanding the very real changes in religiosity that they were concerned with. Thus, the idea fell out of favour among serious scholars of religion during the latter part of the 20th century, only to return to the centre of the debate at the onset of the 21st as critics attacked the fundamental premises of secularization theory.

the idea of a universal and perennial need for religion is as problematic as not to speak of religious needs at all, for one is then confronted with the task of taking account of the reality of atheism and all that secularization that has in fact taken place. In other words, it is hardly helpful to replace one crude theory with another that is just as crude. In the following, I will therefore argue that Nietzsche's thinking about the matter is still relevant precisely because of his dissection of the metaphysical need and because of the richness of the resulting understanding of the emotional dimension of secularization. First of all, however, one can and must correct a rather trivial yet fatal misconception, which has more recently hindered the reception of Nietzsche in non-philosophical research on religion.

### 9.2.2 Nietzsche in contemporary research on religiosity

There is this idea among a number of contemporary researchers that Nietzsche was a proponent of a simplistic story of the inevitable and total disappearance of religion, and that since such narratives of secularization have been refuted, Nietzsche would have been refuted. The argument can be presented thus: Nietzsche said that God is dead, but globally religious belief is as strong if not stronger than ever; so therefore Nietzsche was wrong. Irritatingly, even some of the brightest researchers on contemporary religiosity repeat this nonsense (cf. Norris and Inglehart 2004, 240 and 2011, 281; cf. Vail et al. 2010, 84). As I already suggested in the introduction, mentioning Nietzsche and quoting the words that God is dead does not say much about the influence of the philosopher, since it can evidently be done without ever acquainting oneself with his writings. In fact, Nietzsche noted that even most Europeans of his time still needed religion or some functional equivalent (e. g. GS 347, KSA 3, 581–582), and that this was unlikely to change much for quite some time if ever (cf. GS 108, KSA 3, 468), as not everyone would be up to the required emotional change. My study has furthermore strongly suggested that Nietzsche thinks the future is genuinely open, and that his criticism of religion is meant to point to possibilities of change.[13] Consequently, what Nietzsche actually thought about religion and atheism might still be relevant to the discussion on secularization. I do not mean to deny that much of what Nietzsche wrote rests on outdated 19th-century scholarship and science, but rather to point out that some of his psychological intuitions might yet be of value and give new impetus for research. If Nietzsche is the pre-eminent diagnostician of 19th-century unbelief, and this study has contributed to making that case, it of course follows that his writings are at least valuable for research on the

**13** In this regard, the results of my study are fully compatible with the conclusions of Johann Figl and Michael Skowron, who mostly on the basis of *Nachlass*-notes argue that Nietzsche thinks it is very well possible that new gods will be born, and that even the old God might be reborn (Figl 2000, 101 and Skowron 2002, 3 and 37). What I cannot emphasize enough, however, is the fact that if Nietzsche holds such a thing possible, it does not mean that he thinks it is desirable.

19th century. However, one need not accept Taylor's exaggerated claim that the "deeper, more anchored forms of unbelief arising in the nineteenth century are basically the same as those which are held today" (Taylor 2007, 369) in order to assume that Nietzsche's diagnosis might be of relevance to the discussion about the contemporary situation as well. It is enough to note that the idea of a universal need for religion, viz. a metaphysical need, is back; for the return of that idea certainly suggests that it might be profitable to reconsider the philosopher who more than any other questioned such ideas. At this point it is necessary to mention that the introduction of philosophical speculation into the discussion has not gone unquestioned; i.e. that the new dialogue between sociology and philosophy has caused some unease among sociologists, who used to dominate the discussion. Therefore, for fairness sake, I will consider what can be gained from the sociological critique of philosophy before moving on.

### 9.2.3 The dialogue between philosophy and sociology

The sociologist Bryan S. Turner has noted that philosophers, not sociologists of religion, have in recent years set the terms of the debates about secularization and the future of religion (Turner 2010, 649). This is obviously true in the sense that philosophers, above all Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor, have profoundly influenced the direction of both historical and empirical research,[14] but Turner goes further by claiming that the voice of philosophy has overpowered that of the sociology of religion in the public debate. One is tempted to add that there are other disciplines that are relevant to the debate but receive even less attention, e.g. anthropology and psychology. A sense of why the dominance of philosophy might be problematic can be drawn from Turner's pointed formulation: "Philosophical discussions of the crisis of religious belief and authority all too frequently ignore social science empirical investigations and findings. Their abstract speculations rarely refer to any actual findings of social science." (Turner 2010, 650) While the philosopher might in turn point out that the sociological discourse on secularization has been philosophically naive, as illustrated above by the recent eagerness to "refute" Nietzsche's words that God is dead, and has traditionally rested on problematic assumptions about rationality, religiosity and modernity,[15] and that only because of such deficits have philosophers

**14** Habermas is often credited with having made the term post-secular common (see Calhoun, Mendieta and VanAntwerpen 2013). The influence of his own thinking is nevertheless far overshadowed by that of Charles Taylor, whose work (Taylor 2007) has spawned an entire industry of interdisciplinary commentary that is vibrant to this day (for an exemplary work that contains a detailed bibliography, see: Zemmin, Jager and Vanheeswijck 2016). Put simply, Taylor's work cannot be ignored, if one values intellectual integrity.

**15** Typically, rationality is associated with modernity, and religiosity with irrationality, and thus one ends up with the view of the incompatibility of any form of religiosity with modernity (e.g. Berger

been able to take the role they now have in the interdisciplinary discussion, there is still more than a grain of truth in Turner's polemic. His statement should nevertheless be qualified or one needs to note that he himself already qualifies it ("all too frequently", "rarely"). Firstly, it is not philosophy per se, which is problematic, but a kind of philosophy that does not take specialized research seriously and instead escapes into abstractions. Secondly, it is of course not the case that sociology or other relevant disciplines would be entirely absent from the philosophical discourse, but it certainly seems as if a few classics were cited only in order to allow a retreat into abstract speculation (cf. Turner 2010, 650). Insofar as the philosophical debate ignores more recent empirical and historical research, it must necessarily rest on a questionable foundation, especially as there have been advances relevant to the understanding of secularization.[16] In this regard, Turner specifically criticizes the neglect of the body and emotions in the philosophical debate.[17] While this criticism certainly hits the target in Habermas, in whose work feeling plays a subordinate role compared to a very problematic ideal of rationality,[18] it might seem particularly

1967). It needs explicitly to be pointed out that more recent sociological research has abandoned the idea that rationalization is the driving force of secularization (e. g. Norris and Inglehart 2004, 8 – 9).

**16** E. g. if the story of secularization is told as a story of loss, one should take account of empirical research on responses to loss (e. g. Bonanno 2004). Relying solely on outdated theories of loss, such as can be found in the classic works of Freud, is problematic to say the least. Arguably, one then bases one's philosophical thought on a perspective that not only necessarily distorts the historical record, but also clouds one's vision of the future.

**17** Having referred to the general disregard of the body and feelings, Turner specifically mentions that the "sociology of the emotions has in recent years developed as an important field of contemporary research" and adds "but it has not played a significant part in recent philosophical debate" (Turner 2010, 650). The same could be said about the history of emotions (cf. Plamper 2015) and the increased interest in emotions and moods by scholars of literature (cf. Reents 2015). A common denominator is that all of these disciplines promote and provide evidence for a view of emotional life as to a great extent historically constructed and malleable, instead of thinking of it as an expression of perennial and unchanging impulses of human nature. It is finally worth noting that an aversion towards research on emotions can not only be found in philosophy, but that certain currents within the study of religion also explicitly rule out taking emotions seriously other than as "discourse" (e. g. Stuckrad 2003; cf. Turner 2010, 650).

**18** Habermas built much of his work on a simplifying narrative of modernization as rationalization = secularization, in which rationality replaces religion and thus functions as a "substitute for lost faith" (cf. Milbank 2013, 322). Having understood that anything like that does not seem to be happening, he has more recently developed an "awareness of what is missing", i. e. a respect for emotional resources that he now thinks have only been preserved in religious practice (cf. Milbank 2013, 324). That notwithstanding, he still thinks that rationality can and should transcend not only religious feeling but all feeling in general, as if feeling were a primitive rest to be overcome by pure reason. In other words, he still holds on to an untenable, unrealistic ideal of rationality. I therefore fully agree with the general thrust of John Milbank's scathing critique of Habermas' idea of translating the archaic impulses of religion into rational language, in the sense that the idea is based on an erroneous dichotomy between feeling and rational thought that does not acknowledge that feeling mediates thought (cf. Milbank 2013, 332). The title of Milbank's article hits the spot: "What Lacks is Feeling" (Milbank 2013). Needless to say, there is also much that can be questioned in Milbank's critique, not least as it is

odd when directed at Taylor. After all, Taylor has contributed to a shift in the discussion away from the theme of rationalization to that of lived experience (cf. Taylor 2007, 4–5). Nevertheless, I do think that one can charge Taylor with a neglect of a wealth of more recent historical and empirical research that bears on the matter, not to mention a neglect of philosophical objections, which make his most fundamental anthropological assumptions untenable. Taylor's work is worth questioning, since it is symptomatic of the return to notions of religion as an expression of a fundamental impulse in human nature, and since his articulation of the idea has been widely influential.

### 9.2.4 Charles Taylor, metaphysical need, and the nature of experience

Despite his talk of subtle languages, the model that Taylor bases his discussion of experience on is anything but subtle; in fact, it is irritatingly unsubtle. A very traditional prejudice, namely the idea that all desire stems from a fundamental lack, shapes his entire work and allows him to fit all experience into a preconceived scheme. The most problematic thing about Taylor's assumption that it is this lack which leads all of us to strive for some kind of fullness, is how he conceives of fullness as a place. While he himself is well aware that this might be considered problematic, and a particularly Christian understanding of fullness, he seeks to justify it through a "structural analogy" (cf. Taylor 2007, 6–7). To simplify, his argument runs thus: Just as the believer strives for heaven, the atheist, the "unbeliever", wants to find his or her life fully satisfying. In other words, the atheist is also always striving toward a place of fullness, but thinks that the place can be here on earth. The main problem with this analogy is of course the spatial metaphor and particularly the static picture that it evokes. Needless to say, Taylor does not draw on any evidence to support his understanding of the direction of the unbeliever's striving, nor does he provide any reasons for the conspicuous absence of time in his picture. The atheist who supposedly hasn't reached the place of fullness and always strives onwards might for example be interpreted as not striving for a place at all but for (experiences in) time (cf. Hägglund 2008). A full recognition of the temporality of all experience, that time both animates and haunts all striving, would of course break Taylor's framework, since fullness could then not be thought of as a place. This preliminary conclusion suggests that Taylor's image serves a specific purpose. Indeed, Taylor frames his discussion the way he does in order to keep open the possibility that the unbeliever really strives towards something else than what he thinks he strives for; namely transcendence. So even as there are atheists and might always have been, they are on the same path as the believer and only fail to recognize the true

premised on the idea that religion grows naturally as a response to a fundamental human lack and that it is this lack that prevents secularization.

nature of their striving. Unsurprisingly, this is precisely what Taylor suggests in his final chapter detailing examples of conversions where one "recognizes" desire as desire for transcendence (Taylor 2007, 728). Thus, Taylor's narrative of secularization seeks to identify the "conditions" that in the modern world prevent people from recognizing their desire for what it really is. The specifics of Taylor's narrative are of no concern here, since however strong these conditions might be, human nature will in his view nevertheless prevent anyone from becoming fully secular. To conclude, this is yet another formulation of the idea of a metaphysical need. As Simon During puts it:

> his notion of an elemental spiritual lack belongs to philosophical anthropology not to history, and it is this a-historical condition of human nature that means that secularization will always meet resistance. Of course, this is not a new idea: the notion that human nature longs for fullness is traditional to Christian apologetics. (During 2017, 155)

It is of course not enough to point out that the idea has certain theological uses to discredit it. That it does not do justice to the self-understanding of the non-religious is rather obvious, but that should in itself not be considered an objection.[19] As Peter Berger also states, it should be accepted that the idea itself is not a theological one, in the sense of requiring faith, but an anthropological one (Berger 1999, 13) that might play a constructive role in scholarship. In other words, it should be criticized on philosophical and evidential grounds. Arguably, such an understanding of experience as Taylor's covers up far more than it reveals about the emotional dimension of religion and atheism. One can especially question whether it does justice to what the historical record as well as empirical research tell about secularization. It is precisely what During terms the a-historical that is problematic about most articulations of a religious or metaphysical need, and this is where Nietzsche with his emphasis on historical philosophizing comes into play. In the following concluding sections, I 1) briefly present a Nietzschean interpretation of empirical research that can be used to challenge Taylor's anthropological assumptions and 2) present the case that accept-

**19** Just as the self-understanding of the religious need not be allowed to have the last word in the study of religions. It is, however, worth mentioning that Phil Zuckerman's qualitative research among non-religious Scandinavians suggests to the author that he is concerned with genuine existential positions instead of a denial of a fundamental aspect of being human (i.e. an ontological lack or a perennial need for religion, cf. Zuckerman 2010, 5). Far from supporting ideas of *homo religiosus*, the fact that those of his research subjects who explicitly affirmed that life is ultimately meaningless lived satisfying lives (Zuckerman 2010, 5) leads the author to conclude that the rest of the world might learn something about contentment by getting to know more about secular Scandinavian culture. Of course, one might question whether Zuckerman's method of conducting 150 in-depth interviews (Zuckerman 2010, 3) can in itself provide any decisive answers as his results ultimately rest on what his subjects report. In other words, the philosophical interpretation of the results is decisive. Needless to say, more comparative empirical research into existential positions and interpretations of desire is called for, both among members of different religions and among those who adhere to no religion, to provide a more solid foundation for philosophical interpretation.

ing Taylor's perspective leads to a distorted view of history, which can be corrected by a perspective inspired by Nietzsche.

### 9.2.5 The existential security thesis and the need for religion

Empirical scholarship can in itself perhaps not disprove such a fundamental philosophical framework as guides Charles Taylor's notion of experience, but with a little help from a Nietzschean perspective, it can certainly cast doubt on it. The main problem that one faces if one assumes that there is a perennial need for religion, or a desire for transcendence that grows out of a fundamental lack, is that one has to provide an explanation for the very real variation in the intensity of religiosity that can be observed historically between periods, geographically between societies such as the USA and the UK, and between different groups (e.g. gender, class etc.) within any given society.[20] Research on secularization has therefore traditionally suggested that there is no such thing as a single need for religion, nor an ineradicable desire for transcendence, and that whatever needs are met by religion vary and change over time, but this has been more of a presupposition taken for granted than the main focus of investigation. Due to the shifts in the discussion alluded to in section 9.2.1, empirical research has more and more turned to explain variations in demand for religion. Psychological research has long suggested that religion grows out of fear. Put more diplomatically, it has been argued that the main function of religion is to allay anxiety in the face of the troubling aspects of life; above all in the face of death. A number of studies in psychology, i.e. a "large body of research", tends to support the idea that religious worldviews can provide a sense of existential security (Vail et al. 2010, 85). All this fits very well with Nietzsche's basic assumptions about the role of fear in producing religious interpretations, but this research has most often been used to support the notion of a perennial need for religion, not least since death and destruction are not about to disappear from our world (cf. Vail et al. 2010, 84 and 91). Building on yet modifying such research, the existential security thesis (Norris and Inglehart 2004 and 2011) suggests that most of the variation in religiosity worldwide can be explained by differences in felt security. To put it simply, religion can strengthen the sense of existential security, but this presupposes that the basic conditions of life are sufficiently insecure. While this idea is not unproblematic if read as a theory of religion,[21] it is particularly interesting that the empirical evi-

**20** Taylor's own historical narrative, which focuses on changes in understandings of the self, is particularly unhelpful to understand the divergence between Western Europe and the USA, as they are culturally very similar when it comes to conceptions of the modern self. As Taylor himself admits "a fully satisfactory account of this difference, which is in a sense the crucial question for secularization theory, escapes me" (Taylor 2007, 530).

**21** The theory would have to be considered extremely reductionistic. The crude yet elegantly simple idea is that experiences of danger, of the risk of not surviving and of not having one's basic needs

dence suggests there is a strong correlation between societal development and decreasing demand for religion (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 219–220 and 2011, 281). It would certainly seem to be the case, as Norris and Inglehart suggest, that increased basic security also translates into felt existential security, which in its turn increases acceptance of risk, ambiguity and all the troubling aspects of life (cf. Norris and Inglehart 2004, 19), and therefore has a negative impact on demand for both rigid moral rules and religious promises of otherworldly rewards.

It is important to note, however, that taken as such these findings presents no challenge to Taylor's model, as they can easily be reinterpreted into a language less reductionistic than that of Norris and Inglehart.[22] Besides, nowhere do these researchers suggest that it would be possible for an individual to be completely untouched by those forces that create the need for religious faith, not to speak of suggesting that societal developments strengthening existential security could completely eradicate demand for religion in society as a whole. Nevertheless, one can interpret the results as suggesting that not feeling a need for religion, or a need for binding convictions, might be a sign of a heightened feeling of existential security. This proposition can in its turn be disconnected from any assumptions about societal development; there might after all be individuals, in any time and place, who for one reason or another have a particularly strong feeling of existential security. Here we enter the territory of Nietzsche's philosophy, and his idea that a certain form of atheism that does without binding convictions, that is free to play with convictions, is an instinctive expression of health. One need not accept Nietzsche's polemical association of faith with disease, in order to acknowledge that there

met, especially when growing up, produce stress, and the experience of stress in its turn leads to a demand for rigid moral rules and strict predictability (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 19). Such are best provided by religions that can invoke a transcendent authority, wherefore religiosity should thrive in adverse circumstances, such as in the "developing world". Indeed, this happens to be the case (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 220). Importantly, the existential security thesis also predicts much of the variation within developed societies, e.g. the poor are generally almost twice as religious as the rich and even in the USA the poor are significantly more religious than the rich (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 108). Still, the theory is best not read as a comprehensive theory of religion, but as a strong critique of the idea that there is a perennial religious need and that demand for religion does not change. For example, the theory is incapable of fully explaining the vibrant religiosity of the USA: even the authors admit it is not possible to explain the case simply by referring to the fact that the country lacks functioning social security as in Europe (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 226 and 240). An approach more sensitive to historical factors could certainly provide a more complete picture.

**22** I am explicitly referring to Taylor's understanding of experience here, not to Taylor's historical narrative. In other words, I am not disputing that the results of Norris and Inglehart provide the most serious challenge to Taylor's narrative as a whole, as they clearly show that there are factors that influence demand for religion that he does not take account of at all. It would certainly seem, contra Taylor, that the philosophical idea of the autonomous self is rather insignificant in comparison with actual experiences of self-sufficiency, i.e. of existential security. My point is rather that challenging Taylor's most basic assumptions requires a philosophical interpretation of the empirical evidence in question.

might be some truth in his idea that atheism (too), or at least a certain kind of atheism, can be a sign of a strong affirmation of life. It is enough to note that such an atheism can be conceived. Crucially, even acknowledging this possibility contradicts the most fundamental assumptions of Taylor's thinking on experience, in which the atheist's life is defined as lacking in an even more significant sense than the life of the believer. The atheist is in this vision driven by the same fundamental lack as the believer, but can only strive onward toward a place he or she can never fully reach, whereas the believer at least has some hope of contact with a transcendent source of fullness. If, on the other hand, human experience, and specifically the experience of the atheist, need not be thought of as fundamentally shaped by an ontological lack, the picture is shattered. To simplify, the thought of radical atheism is a direct challenge to the logic of lack (cf. Hägglund 2008).[23] While Nietzsche's psychological dissection of the metaphysical need uncovers this potential union of existential health and scepticism, which parallels the findings of empirical research on religiosity, one can of course ask if any free spirit ever, Nietzsche included, fully experienced life as such an overflow of power as Nietzsche speaks of. This question is certainly worth asking, but it is of no concern to us here, because even an approximation of such self-sufficiency, just as the mere possibility that such a supremely healthy type can in due time emerge, is enough to cast doubt on Taylor's most basic assumptions about human nature. Whereas Taylor's assumption about a fundamental lack is a-historical, a historically sensitive view would suggest that under certain conditions human experience can be more fundamentally shaped by feelings of power than of lack. Minimally, Taylor's model would have to be corrected to acknowledge that a sole focus on lack as fundamentally defining the experience of being human is inadequate. Any more definitive answers would naturally require a thorough philosophical study of its own, wherefore I will now focus on how a Taylorian perspective approaches the historical experience of the 19th-century crisis of faith, and contrast it with a more Nietzschean perspective.

### 9.2.6 The 19th-century crisis of faith and the question of mood revisited

Charles Taylor's understanding of experience necessarily leads to an emphasis on the loss in loss of faith (cf. Taylor 2007, 307). Although Taylor himself seeks to emphasize that modernity does not make faith impossible, and that melancholy is only one part of the story of our time, he nevertheless cannot avoid thinking of a secular age as an age defined by the possibility (and reality) of a malaise or melancholy unknown in earlier times: the experience of total meaninglessness (Taylor 2007, 302–

**23** If a life-affirming religion or interpretation of Christianity is truly possible (cf. Figl 2002, 160), then this might also be considered a challenge to Taylor's model, as such a religion could hardly be bound to the idea of a fundamental lack that requires salvation and would perhaps rather be an expression of gratitude for life.

303). Unfortunately, it is precisely this aspect of his work that has been influential in historical scholarship. How this might be problematic can be illustrated by the work of the literary theorist Colin Jager. Just like Taylor, Jager is convinced that understanding the 19th-century situation is essential to understanding our own time (Jager 2014, 4–7). Jager conceives of the "modern secular" as a kind of background mood shaping experience. Following Taylor, he associates it with a shallow "celebration of ordinary life" (Jager 2014, 9) to which he contrasts the disquiet of romantic authors. While Jager is to be commended for paying attention to mood in his discussion of secularization, and while it is certainly the case that a melancholy mood was widespread among intellectuals in the Romantic era, his take on the issue is deeply problematic insofar as he suggests the romantic criticism revealed the truth about "the secular", i.e. that "its characteristic mood is melancholy" (Jager 2014, 23). Jager is decent enough to admit that in this regard his work aligns to a great extent with a tradition of histories that "tend to construe the secular as a form of loss" (Jager 2014, 182), but his stated intention to expand on this view is half-hearted to say the least, since his definition of "the secular" as melancholic leads him to treat any non-melancholic way of dwelling in the modern world as some kind of breakthrough to a position "after the secular", "after atheism" (cf. Jager 2014, 179 and 224), that has first had to overcome melancholy.[24] This is not merely a conceptual matter, because the language chosen by Jager would make no sense if the consciousness that God is dead were not essentially melancholic. This, however, is exactly what Nietzsche's criticism suggests is nothing more than a specific interpretation. Instead, Nietzsche counts with a variety of possible responses to modernity in general and secularization in particular; with a variety of moods of dwelling in the world. Nietzsche does, however, recognize the power of historical forces over most of us, such as the emotional legacy of Christianity, and therefore a perspective inspired by his philosophy would also pay careful attention to expressions of melancholy. In this regard, the distinction between traditional and radical atheism is extremely valuable, since it provides the grounding for a more fitting language than that which by necessity must associate atheism with lack. A study of 19th-century literature and intellectual culture that would take the striving for such a language as a starting point, might thus provide quite a different perspective on the emotional culture of the time, since not only the focus might be less exclusively on laments and loss, but the texts that do speak of loss might be read in a different light. Above

**24** Though I focus here on Jager's work, he is by no means alone in this interpretation. To mention another example, Theodore Ziolkowski similarly links secular modernity with melancholy, noting about the 19th-century crisis of faith that "the poets were among the first to sense the mood of the age" (Ziolkowski 2007, 10). However, Ziolkowski focuses on what he takes to be secular surrogates of lost faith (in the 1920s), attempts to overcome the melancholy of secular life; and explicitly affirms that they grow out of a perennial need for faith (cf. Ziolkowski 2007). Here one can again witness the connection between the idea of a perennial need for religion/faith/God and the idea that life that seeks to do without religion is necessarily melancholic.

all, they would not be used to derive perennial truths, as if generalizing from the experience of a few rather morbid poets were unproblematic. While one can without reservation agree with Taylor's view about modernity insofar as modernity arguably makes new forms of melancholy possible, the question is whether a specific form of melancholy should be taken to define secular modernity, or whether it is not rather the case that modernity also makes joyful moods possible that were unknown and unfelt in earlier times, and that this is of no small significance. In this sense, a perspective closer to that of Nietzsche is a precondition for more fruitful historical research on secularization and moods. Needless to say, it is also a precondition for more constructive thought about the moods of the future.

# 10 Literature

## 10.1 Works by Nietzsche, translations and abbreviations

In this work, I basically follow the practice of citing Nietzsche's works established in German-language scholarship, in the sense that all references to Nietzsche's works are primarily to:

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1980): *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe* (KSA). 15 vols. Ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Munich: dtv/De Gruyter.

Letters sent by or to Nietzsche are cited according to:

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1975 ff.): *Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Briefwechsel* (KGB). 24 vols. Ed. Giorgio Colli, Mazzino Montinari, Norbert Miller and Annemarie Pieper. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

However, for the sake of readability all direct quotations of Nietzsche's works in the main text are from English translations. As there is still no complete direct translation of the Colli-Montinari edition (KSA) into English, and since the quality of translations varies a lot, the choice of translation might seem eclectic. The translations chosen reflect my personal judgement about the quality of translation. In order to highlight that the translations at best are an approximation of the original text, I have employed the following solution in the case of direct quotations: I first cite the translation and only then mention the abbreviation of the Nietzsche-work that contains the cited passage as well as the place of the work and the passage in the KSA (e. g. Handwerk 1997, 88; HH I 110, KSA 2, 110). The following translations have been used:

Clark, Maudemarie and Brian Leiter (eds.)
1997. *Daybreak. Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality.* Transl. by R.J. Hollingdale. (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Handwerk, Gary
1997. *Human All Too Human I.* Transl. with an afterword by Gary Handwerk. Vol. 3 of the Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
2012. *Human All Too Human II and Unpublished Fragments from the Period of Human, All Too Human II (Spring 1878–Fall 1879).* Transl. with an afterword by Gary Handwerk. Vol. 4 of the Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kaufmann, Walter
1954. *The Portable Nietzsche.* Ed. and transl. by Walter Kaufmann. London: Penguin.
1974. *The Gay Science.* Transl. with commentary by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage.

Large, Duncan
2007. *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is.* Transl. with an introduction by Duncan Large. (Oxford World's Classics). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Parkes, Graham
2005. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.* Transl. with an introduction by Graham Parkes. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The following works are cited using these abbreviations:

A *The Antichrist*
BGE *Beyond Good and Evil*
BT *The Birth of Tragedy*

DOI 10.1515/9783110621075, 

D *Daybreak*
EH *Ecce Homo*
GM *On the Geneaology of Morals*
GS *The Gay Science*
HH *Human, All Too Human*
RWB *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*
TI *Twilight of the Idols*
TL *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*
Z *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

HH I refers only to the original publication of 1876, while HH II refers to all of HH as presented in the KSA, including *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (WS) as well as *Mixed Opinions and Maxims* (MOM).

WNB refers to the *Weimarer Nietzsche-Bibliographie*, ed. Stiftung Weimarer Klassik, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek. Susanne Jung, Frank Simon-Ritz, Clemens Wahle, Erdmann von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Wolfram Wojtecki (eds.). Stuttgart/Weimar: J.B. Metzler. Cited volumes:

2002a. Vol. 3: *Sekundärliteratur 1867–1998: Nietzsches geistige und geschichtlich-kulturelle Lebensbeziehungen, sein Denken und Schaffen*.
2002b. Vol. 5: *Sekundärliteratur 1867–1998: Wirkungs- und Forschungsgeschichte. Register zu den Bänden 2–5*.

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Bamford, Rebecca (ed.) (2015): *Nietzsche's Free Spirit Philosophy*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.
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