

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

Maudemarie Clark

Biography

Appointed professor of classical philology at the University of Basel when he was just 24 years old, Nietzsche was expected to secure his reputation as a brilliant young scholar with his first book, *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (The Birth of Tragedy) (1872). But that book did not look much like a work of classical scholarship. Bereft of footnotes and highly critical of Socrates and modern scholarship, it spoke in rhapsodic tones of ancient orgiastic Dionysian festivals and the rebirth of Dionysian tragedy in the modern world. Classical scholars, whose craft and temperament it had scorned, greeted the book with scathing criticism and hostility; even Nietzsche eventually recognized it as badly written and confused. Yet it remains one of the three most important philosophical treatments of tragedy (along with those of Aristotle and Hegel) and is the soil out of which Nietzsche's later philosophy grew. By 1889, when he suffered a mental and physical collapse that brought his productive life to an end, Nietzsche had produced a series of thirteen books which have left a deep imprint on most areas of Western intellectual and cultural life, establishing him as one of Germany's greatest prose stylists and one of its most important, if controversial, philosophers.

Nietzsche appears to attack almost everything that has been considered sacred: not only Socrates and scholarship, but also God, truth, morality, equality, democracy and most other modern values. He gives a large role to the will to power and he proposes to replace the values he attacks with new values and a new ideal of the human person (the *Übermensch* meaning 'overhuman' or 'superhuman'). Although Nazi theoreticians attempted to associate these ideas with their own cause, responsible interpreters agree that Nietzsche despised and unambiguously rejected both German nationalism and anti-Semitism. Little else in his thought is so unambiguous, at least in part because he rarely writes in a straightforward, argumentative style, and because his thought changed radically over the course of his productive life. The latter is especially true of his early criticism of Socrates, science and truth.

Nietzsche's philosophizing began from a deep sense of dissatisfaction with modern Western culture, which he found superficial and empty in comparison with that of the ancient Greeks. Locating the source of the problem in the fact that modern culture gives priority to science (understood broadly, including all forms of scholarship and theory), whereas Presocratic Greece had given priority to art and myth, he rested his hopes for modern culture on a return to the Greek valuation of art, calling for a recognition of art as 'the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life'.

He soon turned his back on this early critique of science. In the works of his middle period he rejects metaphysical truth but celebrates the valuing of science and empirical truth over myth as a sign of high culture. Although he had earlier considered it destructive of culture, he now committed his own philosophy to a thoroughgoing naturalistic understanding of human beings.

He continued to believe that naturalism undermines commitment to values because it destroys myths and illusions, but he now hoped that knowledge would purify human desire and allow human beings to live without preferring or evaluating. In the works of his final period, Nietzsche rejects this aspiration as nihilistic.

In his final period, he combined a commitment to science with a commitment to values by recognizing that naturalism does not undermine all values, but only those endorsed by the major ideal of value we have had so far, the ascetic ideal. This ideal takes the highest human life to be one of self-denial, denial of the natural self, thereby treating natural or earthly existence as devoid of intrinsic value. Nietzsche saw this life-devaluing ideal at work in most Western (and Eastern) religion and philosophy. Values always come into existence in support of some form of life, but they gain the support of ascetic religions and philosophies only if they are given a life-devaluing interpretation. Ascetic priests interpret acts as wrong or 'sinful' because the acts are selfish or 'animal' - because they affirm natural instincts - and ascetic philosophers interpret whatever they value - truth, knowledge, philosophy, virtue - in non-natural terms because they share the assumption that anything truly valuable must have a source outside the world of nature, the world accessible to empirical investigation. Only because Nietzsche still accepted this assumption of the ascetic ideal did naturalism seem to undermine all values.

According to his later thought, the ascetic ideal itself undermines values. First it deprives nature of value by placing the source of value outside nature. Then, by promoting the value of truth above all else, it leads to a denial that there is anything besides nature. Among the casualties of this process are morality and belief in God, as Nietzsche indicated by proclaiming that 'God is dead' and that morality will gradually perish. Morality is not the only possible form of ethical life, however, but a particular form that has been brought about by the ascetic ideal. That ideal has little life left in it, according to Nietzsche, as does the form of ethical life it brought about. Morality now has little power to inspire human beings to virtue or anything else. There is no longer anything to play the essential role played by the ascetic ideal: to inspire human beings to take on the task of becoming more than they are, thereby inducing them to internalize their will to power against themselves. Modern culture therefore has insufficient defences against eruptions of barbarism, which Nietzsche predicted as a large part of the history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

But Nietzsche now saw that there was no way to go back to earlier values. His hope rested instead with 'new philosophers' who have lived and thought the values of the ascetic ideal through to their end and thereby recognized the need for new values. His own writings are meant to exhibit a new ideal, often by exemplifying old virtues that are given a new, life-affirming interpretation.

1. Life

Nietzsche was born in Rocken, a small village in the Prussian province of Saxony, on 15 October 1844. His father, a Lutheran minister, became seriously ill in 1848 and died in July 1849 of what was diagnosed as 'softening of the brain'. His brother died the following year, and Nietzsche's mother moved with her son and daughter to Naumburg, a town of 15,000 people, where they

lived with his father's mother and her two sisters. In 1858, Nietzsche was offered free admission to Pforta, the most famous school in Germany. After graduating in 1864 with a thesis in Latin on the Greek poet Theognis, he registered at the University of Bonn as a theology student. The following year he transferred to Leipzig where he registered as a philology student and worked under the classical philologist Friedrich Ritschl. The events of his Leipzig years with the most profound and lasting influence on his later work were his discoveries of Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (The World as Will and Representation) and F.A. Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus* (History of Materialism), and the beginning of a personal relationship with Richard Wagner (see Schopenhauer, A. §§3–6; Lange, F.A. §2). Nietzsche became Ritschl's star pupil, and on Ritschl's recommendation he was appointed to the Chair of Classical Philology at Basel in 1869 at the age of twenty-four. Leipzig proceeded to confer the doctorate without requiring a dissertation.

Basel's proximity to the Wagner residence at Tribschen allowed Nietzsche to develop a close relationship with Richard and Cosima Wagner. Sharing with the composer a deep love of Schopenhauer and a hope for the revitalization of European culture, he initially idealized Wagner and his music. His first book, *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (The Birth of Tragedy) (1872), used Schopenhauer's philosophy to interpret Greek tragedy and to suggest that Wagner's opera constituted its rebirth and thereby the salvation of modern culture. Torn between philology and philosophy since shortly after his discovery of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche devoted much of his teaching to the texts of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy and hoped that his first book would establish his credentials as a philosopher. Instead, its unorthodox mixture of philosophy and philology merely served to damage his reputation as a philologist.

In 1879, he resigned his chair at Basel because of health problems that had plagued him for years. In the meantime, he had become progressively estranged from Wagner, a process that culminated in the 1878 publication of the first volume of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (Human, All Too Human), a positivist manifesto that praised science rather than art as indicative of high culture. The ten productive years left to him after his retirement were marked by terrible health problems and a near absence of human companionship. Living alone in Italian and Swiss boarding houses, he wrote ten books, each of which has at least some claim to being a masterpiece. His last seven books mark a high point of German prose style.

In January 1889, Nietzsche collapsed in Turin. He wrote a few lucid and beautiful (although insane) letters during the next few days, and after that nothing of which we can make any sense. Following a brief institutionalization, he lived with his mother and then his sister until his death in Weimar on 25 August 1900.

2. Writings and development

During the sixteen years between his first book and his last productive year, Nietzsche's thinking underwent remarkable development, usually with little notification to his readers. The traditional grouping of his writings into three major periods is followed here, although there is significant development within each period. In addition to *The Birth of Tragedy* his early work consists of four essays of cultural criticism - on David Strauss, history, Schopenhauer, and Wagner -

published separately but linked together as *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (Unfashionable Observations) (1873–6), plus a number of largely finished essays and fragments that belong to the Nachlaß of the period. The most important of the essays are ‘Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne’ (‘On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense’), ‘Homer’s Wettkampf’ (‘Homer’s Contest’), and ‘Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen’ (Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks’).

These early writings sound a note of great dissatisfaction with European (Enlightenment) culture, of which Socrates is taken as the earliest representative and continuing inspiration. At the base of Socratic culture Nietzsche finds the belief that life’s highest goal is the theoretical grasp of truth at which science and philosophy aim. Theory’s claim to provide truth has been undermined, he thinks, by the doctrine of Kant and Schopenhauer that discursive thought gives access not to things-in-themselves but only to ‘appearance’ (see Kant, I. §5; Schopenhauer, A. §§2, 4). Nietzsche’s suggestion for saving European culture is that art should replace theory as the most valued, the ‘truly metaphysical’, human activity. At first, his main argument for elevating art is that it is more truthful than theory. But he also suggests a very different argument: that theory is destructive of culture unless it is guided and limited by the needs of life which art serves. In his essay on history, the second argument has largely replaced the first. He argues that when practised as autonomous theory, devoted solely to truth, history destroys the limited and mythical horizons required by life and action. And if we emphasize for another generation the naturalistic understanding of human beings at which Socratic culture has now arrived (for example, the denial of a cardinal distinction between humans and other animals), we will only further our culture’s disintegration into chaotic systems of individual and group egoism. Nietzsche suggests that history can be harnessed to serve the needs of life, for instance when it is written to emphasize great lives and other aspects that encourage individuals to set lofty and noble goals for themselves. Such history is as much art as it is theory or science.

Nietzsche turns decisively away from such criticism of pure theory in the writings of his middle period, *Human, All Too Human* (1878–80) and *Morgenröte* (Daybreak) (1881). He here celebrates as a sign of high culture an appreciation of the little truths won by rigorous method, and presents his own philosophy as a form of natural science that serves only truth. He also commits himself to the truth of the naturalism he earlier considered so dangerous: there is no cardinal distinction between humans and other animals; everything about human beings, including their values, can be explained as a development from characteristics found among other animals. At the beginning of this period Nietzsche struggles with how naturalism can be compatible with a commitment to values, for he sees it as exposing and thereby undermining the illusions that are needed in order to find value in life. In *Human*, his hope is that knowledge will gradually purify ‘the old motives of violent desire’ until one can live ‘as in *nature*’, without preferring or evaluating, but ‘gazing contentedly, as though at a spectacle’ (*Human* §34 [*Werke* IV.2: 50]). Nietzsche later has Zarathustra mock this spectator conception of knowledge and life as ‘immaculate perception’ (*Zarathustra* II: §15 [*Werke* V.1: 152–5]).

Nietzsche’s final period begins with *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (The Gay Science) (1882), which replaces the spectator conception with one in which the ‘knower’ belongs to the dance of

existence and is one of its 'masters of ceremony' (*The Gay Science* §54 [*Werke* V.2: 90]). This formulation expresses his new confidence that naturalism, which he often calls 'knowledge', is compatible with commitment to values. In this period, Nietzsche once again celebrates art, criticizes Socrates and denies the autonomy of theory, suggesting to some that he has reverted to the viewpoint of his early period. Evidence is provided throughout this entry for an alternative interpretation: the later Nietzsche does not deny that theory can provide truth, and he remains as committed to the pursuit of truth as he was in his middle period. The difference is that he now recognizes in even the apparently autonomous theory of his middle period a commitment to an ideal that is external to and served by theory, namely, the ascetic ideal. Nietzsche returns to the suggestion of his first book, that theory is not autonomous; however, he now objects not to theory, but only to the ideal that theory has served (see §§6 and 7 of this entry). The works of Nietzsche's final period are largely devoted to uncovering, criticizing and offering an alternative to that ideal.

Gay Science was followed by *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (Thus Spoke Zarathustra) (1883–5), a fictional tale used as a vehicle for Nietzsche's most puzzling and infamous doctrines, including the overhuman (*Übermensch*), will to power and eternal recurrence. He considered this to be the deepest work in the German language and suggested that chairs of philosophy might one day be devoted to its interpretation. Our surest guides to it at present are the other books of his final period, especially the two that followed it: *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (Beyond Good and Evil)(1886) and *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (On the Genealogy of Morality)(1887). These masterpieces show Nietzsche at the height of his powers as a thinker, an organizer and an artist of ideas. Yet some prefer his last five books. At the beginning of 1888, Nietzsche published *Der Fall Wagner* (The Case of Wagner) and then composed four short books before the year was out: *Die Götzen-Dämmerung* (The Twilight of the Idols), an obvious play on Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* (Twilight of the Gods), puts the finishing touches to his accounts of knowledge and philosophy and offers his final critique of Socrates; *Der Antichrist* (The Antichrist), a critique of Pauline Christianity, offers a relatively sympathetic portrait of Jesus; and *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche's own portrait of his life and work under such chapter headings as 'Why I write such good books'. It is easy to hear signs of his impending insanity in the shrill tone and self-promotion that sometimes takes over in these books (although not in the very funny and brilliantly anti-Socratic chapter headings of *Ecce Homo*), and perhaps also in the fall-off in organizational and artistic power from the masterpieces of the previous two years. Nietzsche's *Contra Wagner*, which he dated Christmas 1888, leaves a different impression. Nietzsche's shortest and perhaps most beautiful book, it is a compilation of passages from earlier works, with a few small improvements, as if aiming at perfection. He collapsed nine days later.

3. The *Nachlaß*

Nietzsche left behind a large body of unpublished material, his *Nachlaß*, which technically should include *The Antichrist* and *Ecce Homo*, published by his sister in 1895 and 1908 respectively. However, Nietzsche had made arrangements for their publication and prepared a printer's copy of each. For purposes of understanding his philosophy, these are therefore accorded the same status as his earlier works and are not usually considered to be part of his

Nachlaß. This entry gives a very secondary role to the remainder of Nietzsche's Nachlaß, which includes the relatively polished essays written in the early 1870s (mentioned in §2 of this entry). These essays are informative about Nietzsche's early views, and are sometimes also thought to provide a clearer statement of his later views of truth and language than do the works he published. The interpretation of Nietzsche's development offered here supports a very different view: that Nietzsche chose not to publish these essays because he soon progressed beyond them to quite opposed views.

Another issue that divides interpreters concerns the weight to give to the notes of Nietzsche's later years. Many treat them as material he would have published if he had remained productive for longer. But since he might instead have rejected and disposed of much of this material, others advise great caution in its use. Further, we often cannot determine the use Nietzsche had in mind for particular notes even when he wrote them. Nietzsche *composed* his books to lead prepared readers to certain views. The rich context and clues for reading supplied by his books, when they are attended to, provide a check on interpretive licence and a basis for getting at Nietzsche's own thinking that has no parallel in the case of the Nachlaß material. This applies to the entire contents of *Der Wille zur Macht* (The Will to Power), which some have regarded as Nietzsche's magnum opus. Although he did announce it as 'in preparation', there is evidence that he dropped his plans to publish a work of this title; the book we have is actually a compilation of notes from the years 1883–8 selected from his notebooks and arranged in their present form by his sister and editors appointed by her. Such notes may sometimes help in understanding what Nietzsche actually did publish. But it is difficult to justify giving them priority when they suggest views that differ from and are even contrary to those suggested by a careful reading of Nietzsche's books (see §§11–12 of this entry).

4. Truth and metaphysics

In the writings of his early and middle periods, Nietzsche often appears to deny that any of our theories and beliefs are really true. By the end of his final period, he denies only metaphysical truth. The rejection of metaphysics forms the cornerstone of his later philosophy.

What Nietzsche rejects as metaphysics is first and foremost a belief in a second world, a metaphysical or true world. *Human, All Too Human* offers a genealogy of this belief. Receiving their first idea of a second world from dreams, human beings originally share with 'everything organic' a belief in the existence of permanent things (substance) and free will. When reflection dawns and they fail to find evidence of these in the world accessible to empirical methods, they conclude that these methods are faulty, and that the real world is accessible only to non-empirical methods. They thus take the empirical world to be a mere appearance or distortion of a second world, which is thereby constituted as the true one. Metaphysics is purported knowledge of this non-empirical world. *The Birth of Tragedy* affirms metaphysics in this sense - 'an artists' metaphysics' he later called it - in the suggestion that perception and science confine us to mere appearance, whereas truth is accessible in the special kind of preconceptual experience characteristic of Dionysian art.

Human, All Too Human sets out to undermine metaphysics by showing that knowledge of a non-empirical world is cognitively superfluous. Nietzsche's Enlightenment predecessors had already established the adequacy of empirical methods to explain what goes on in the nonhuman world. However, belief in a metaphysical world persisted because that world is assumed to be necessary to account for the things of the highest value in the human world. Nietzsche sought to explain the origin of this assumption and to undermine it. The assumption was made, he claims, because thinkers were unable to see how things could originate from their opposites: disinterested contemplation from lust, living for others from egoism, rationality from irrationality. They could deny this origination only by positing for 'the more highly valued thing a miraculous source in the very kernel and being of the "thing-in-itself"'. Nietzsche offers a naturalistic account of higher things, which presents them as sublimations of despised things and therefore as 'human, all too human'. Once it is clear that we can explain their origin without positing a metaphysical world, he expects the interest in such a world to die out. We cannot deny the bare possibility of its existence, however, because 'we view all things through the human head and cannot cut this head off; yet the question remains what of the world would still be there if we had cut it off' (*Human* §§1, 9 [*Werke* IV.3: 19, 25]).

Nietzsche later goes a step further and denies the very existence of a metaphysical world. His history of the 'true' world in *Twilight of the Idols* offers a six-stage sketch of how the metaphysical world came to be recognized as a 'fable'. Stage Four corresponds to the position of *Human*: the 'true' world is cognitively superfluous. In Stage Five, its existence is denied. Stage Six adds that without a true world, there is no merely apparent world either: the empirical world originally picked out as 'merely apparent' is the only world there is. Nietzsche thus makes clear that he has moved beyond the assumption that there *might* be a metaphysical world to a positing of the empirical world as the only one. He dismisses the whole idea of a second world as unintelligible. The books after *Beyond Good and Evil* proceed on this assumption: they no longer claim that the empirical world is a mere appearance or, what amounts to the same thing, that empirical truths are illusions or falsifications.

5. Knowledge

The position on knowledge to which Nietzsche is led by his rejection of metaphysics is a combination of empiricism, antipositivism and perspectivism. Claiming in his later works that 'all evidence of truth comes only from the senses', and that we have science 'only to the extent that we have decided to *accept* the testimony of the senses - to the extent to which we sharpen them further, arm them, and think them through', he considers the rest of purported knowledge 'miscarriage and not yet science', or formal science, like pure logic and mathematics (*Beyond Good and Evil* §134 [*Werke* VI.2: 96]; *Twilight* III §3 [*Werke* VI.3: 69–70]). The latter, he now insists, departing from his earlier stand that they falsify reality, make no claim about reality at all. Nietzsche's empiricism amounts to a rejection of any wholesale disparaging of sense experience, an insistence that the only bases for criticizing or correcting particular deliverances of the senses are other sense experiences or theories based on them.

Nietzsche's antipositivism involves a rejection of two aspects associated with some other versions of empiricism. First, he rejects foundationalism. Anticipating many later critics of

positivism, he denies that there is any experience that is unmediated by concepts, interpretation or theory. Sense experience, our only evidence of truth, is always already interpreted, and knowledge is therefore interpretation, as opposed to the apprehension of unmediated facts. Nietzsche also avoids the problem of needing an a priori theory to establish his empiricism, which he bases instead on his genealogy of the belief in a metaphysical world (a genealogy that is itself empirical in that it accepts the testimony of the senses) and a diagnosis and working-through of the intellectual confusions that have locked previous philosophers into that belief. Clearing away these confusions (especially pictures of knowledge that set the world's true nature over against its appearances) removes all intellectual basis for considering sense experience in principle problematic, and all intellectual motivation for pursuing a priori knowledge. Philosophers may, however, still have non-intellectual motives for this pursuit (see §6 of this entry). The upshot of Nietzsche's antipositivism is that what counts as knowledge is always revisable in the light of new or improved experience. This reinforces his empiricism, and in no way devalues empirical theories or denies that they can give us truth.

Nietzsche's perspectivism is often thought to imply that empirical knowledge offers us 'only a perspective' and not truth. But is perspectivism itself only a perspective? If not, it is false; if so, it is not clear why we should accept perspectivism rather than some other perspective. And Nietzsche himself puts forward as truths not only perspectivism, but also many other claims.

We can avoid saddling Nietzsche with these problems by recognizing that, at least in its mature and most important formulation (at *Genealogy* III §12[*Werke* VI.2: 381–3]), perspectivism is a claim about knowledge; it is not a claim about truth, and it does not entail that truth is relative to perspective. Further, 'perspectives' are constituted by affects, not beliefs. The point is *not* that knowledge is always from the viewpoint of a particular set of beliefs and that there are always alternative sets that would ground equally good views of an object (see Relativism). Such a view inevitably saddles perspectivism with relativism and problems of self-reference. Nietzsche's explicit point in describing knowledge as perspectival is to guard against conceiving of knowledge as 'disinterested contemplation'.

His early essay 'Truth and Lie' did use the impossibility of disinterested knowledge to devalue empirical knowledge, arguing that the latter was only a perspective and an illusion. But the point of the *Genealogy*'s claim that there is 'only a perspective knowing' is quite the reverse: to guard against using the idea of 'pure' knowing to devalue the kind of knowledge we have. The metaphor of perspective sets up disinterested knowing as the equivalent of the recognizably absurd notion of seeing something from nowhere. If the conception of knowledge ruled out by perspectivism really is absurd, however - and Nietzsche insists that it is - then it excludes only a kind of knowledge of which we can make no sense and which we could not really want. This explains why so many find perspectivism obvious and even self-evident; but so interpreted, it does nothing to devalue empirical knowledge.

Why does Nietzsche deny the possibility of disinterested knowledge? That surely does not follow from the impossibility of seeing something from nowhere. His early basis for this denial was Schopenhauer's doctrine that the intellect originates as servant to the will, but he accepted the same doctrine in later works on the basis of a thoroughgoing Darwinian naturalism. Human

cognitive capacities exist because of the evolutionary advantage they confer on the species, and no such advantage is to be found in attending to any and all features of reality. The intellect must be directed to certain features - initially at least, those most relevant to human survival and reproduction. Affect - emotion, feeling, passion, value orientations - turns the mind in a particular direction, focusing its attention on certain features of reality and pushing it to register them as important; knowledge is only acquired when the intellect is so pushed and focused. Nietzsche's perspectivism is a metaphorical formulation of this naturalistic understanding of knowledge.

Because knowledge is always acquired from the viewpoint of particular interests and values, there are therefore always other affective sets that would focus attention on different aspects of reality. Nietzsche's use of the metaphor of perspective thus implies that knowledge is limited in the sense that there are always other things to know, but not that perspectives block our access to truth. Affects are our access, the basis of all access to truth. If its perspectival character raises any problems for knowledge, it is only because being locked into a particular perspective can make one unable to appreciate features of reality that are apparent from other perspectives. Nietzsche's solution is simple: the more affects we know how to bring to bear on a matter, the more complete our knowledge of it will be.

This does not mean that true knowledge requires assuming as many perspectives as possible. Knowledge does not require complete knowledge, and complete knowledge is not Nietzsche's epistemological ideal. In fact, he suggests that the greatest scholars tend to serve knowledge by immersing themselves deeply and thoroughly in some particular perspective, so much so that they damage themselves as human beings. The situation is different for philosophers because their ultimate responsibility is not knowledge, but values. To undertake the task to which Nietzsche assigns them, they need practice in shifting perspectives. This explains much that is distinctive about his way of writing philosophy: why it involves so much affect and seems so given to extremes of expression. He uses different affective stances - assuming them for a while - in order to show us features of reality that are visible from them. More importantly, by moving from one perspective to another, he attempts to show philosophers the kind of 'objectivity' that is required for their task: objectivity understood not as disinterested contemplation, but as a matter of not being *locked into* any particular valuational perspective, as an ability to move from one affective set to another.

6. Philosophy and the ascetic ideal

According to Nietzsche, philosophy has been understood as an a priori discipline, a deliverance of pure reason. Given his empiricism, what role can he allow philosophy? In *Human, All Too Human* he claims to practise 'historical philosophy' and denies that it can be separated from natural science, suggesting that he counts empirical theories as philosophy if they illuminate topics of traditional philosophical concern. Attention to the more conceptual aspects of such theories might especially count as continuing the philosopher's traditional role (§§8–9 of this entry provide an example).

Further, Nietzsche's thinking on topics of traditional philosophical concern (§§4–5 of this entry) is philosophical in a more traditional sense, to the extent that it deals with conceptual as opposed to empirical matters. Such 'pure' philosophy is a matter of battling the images and pictures that beguile the mind and lead philosophers into thinking that there are purely philosophical questions to be answered concerning knowledge, truth and reality. Philosophy in this sense functions as therapy, and to the extent that Nietzsche practises it, he counts as a forerunner of Wittgenstein (see Wittgenstein, L. §§10–13).

Like Wittgenstein, Nietzsche gives language a major role in generating the problems and confusions of previous philosophy. He sometimes seems to criticize language itself for falsifying reality, holding the subject-predicate structure of Indo-European languages responsible for philosophers' propensity to think that reality itself must consist of ultimate subjects that could never be part of the experienced world: God and the ego, or indivisible atoms of matter. But he would probably say of language what he ultimately says of the senses: only what we make of their testimony introduces error. Language misleads us into traditional philosophy only if we erroneously assume that linguistic structure offers us a blueprint of reality that can be used to challenge the adequacy of empirical theories. This is similar to Wittgenstein's diagnosis that philosophical problems arise when language is taken away from the everyday tasks for which it is suited and expected to play a different game. Nietzsche's philosopher forces language to play the 'game' of affording insight into a non-empirical world.

Unlike Wittgenstein, however, Nietzsche fights the confusions of traditional philosophy to free us not *from* the need to do philosophy, but *for* what he considers the true task of genuine philosophy. And this task is not a matter of offering empirical theories. In his later work, Nietzsche insists that philosophers should not be confused with scholars or scientists, that scholarship and science are only means in the hands of the philosopher. Gradually it has become clear to him, he says, that philosophers' values are the 'real germ' from which their systems grow. While pretending to be concerned only to discover truth, philosophers have actually been wily advocates for prejudices (values) they call 'truths'. They interpret the world in terms of their own values, and then claim that their interpretation, which they present as objective knowledge, gives everyone reason to accept these values - as the Stoics justified their ideal of self-governance on the grounds that nature itself obeys laws, an interpretation they arrived at by projecting their ideal of self-governance onto nature (*Beyond Good and Evil* §§1–9 [*Werke* VI.2: 207–16]).

Because Nietzsche believes that interpretations of the world in terms of values provide something that is as important as truth, he wants the philosophy of the future to preserve this function of traditional philosophy. He does not, however, wish to preserve two aspects of the way in which previous philosophers have gone about this task: the lack of courage evident in their failure to recognize that they were reading values into the world rather than discovering truth, and the particular values they read into the world.

These values, he claims, have been expressions of the ascetic ideal, the ideal that takes the highest human life to be one of self-denial, denial of the natural self. Behind this ideal, which he finds in most major religions, Nietzsche locates the assumption that natural or earthly existence

(the only kind he thinks we have) is devoid of intrinsic value, that it has value only as a means to something else that is actually its negation (such as heaven or nirvana). He claims that this life-devaluing ideal infects all the values supported by most religions (although The Antichrist retracts this in the case of Buddhism). Having come into existence in support of some form of life, values gain the support of the ascetic priest only if they are given a life-devaluing interpretation. Acts are interpreted as wrong or 'sinful', for instance, on the grounds that they are selfish or animal, that they affirm natural instincts. Traditional ('metaphysical') philosophers are successors to the ascetic priest because they interpret what they value - truth, knowledge, philosophy, virtue - in non-natural terms. In the background of their interpretations Nietzsche spies the assumption of the ascetic ideal: that whatever is truly valuable must have a source outside the world of nature, the world accessible to empirical investigation. What ultimately explains the assumption that philosophy must be a priori, and therefore concerned with a metaphysical world, is philosophers' assumption that nothing as valuable as philosophy or truth could be intimately connected to the senses or to the merely natural existence of human beings.

The philosophy of Nietzsche's early and middle periods can itself be diagnosed as an expression of the ascetic ideal. We can understand his devaluation of human knowledge in 'Truth and Lie' (his claim that human truths are 'illusions') as a response to the recognition that knowledge is rooted in the world of nature and thereby lacks the 'purity' demanded by the ascetic ideal. And we can surmise that he considered Darwinian naturalism dangerous because he saw that it deprives human life of value - if one accepts the ascetic ideal (see Darwin, C.R.). Indeed, when he embraced the truth of naturalism in *Human* (to the extent of accepting philosophy itself as an empirical discipline), he drew the conclusion that follows from the combination of naturalism and the ascetic ideal: that human life is without value. From the viewpoint of Nietzsche's later philosophy, it is hardly surprising that his early philosophy turns out to be another expression of the ascetic ideal. According to his *Genealogy*, the ascetic ideal is the only ideal of any widespread cultural importance human beings have had so far; it has dominated the interpretation and valuation of human life for millennia. To have escaped the ascetic ideal without having to work through its influence on him would have been impossible.

On the other hand, Nietzsche was also fighting the ascetic ideal. Naturalism works against the supernatural interpretation of human life that has been promoted by the ascetic ideal, and as modern science increasingly shows how much of the world can be understood in naturalistic terms, the influence of the ascetic ideal wanes. Or, rather, it goes underground. Nietzsche denies that science and the naturalism it promotes are themselves opposed to the ascetic ideal. The commitment to science is actually the latest and most noble form of the ascetic ideal, based as it is on the Platonic/Christian belief that God is truth, that truth is divine. This amounts to the assumption that truth is more important than anything else (for instance, life, happiness, love, power) an assumption Nietzsche traces to the ascetic ideal's devaluation of our natural impulses. Thus the development of science and naturalism has been promoted by inculcating the discipline of the scientific spirit - the willingness to give up what one would like to believe for the sake of what there is reason to believe - as the heir to the Christian conscience cultivated through confession. This has thereby worked against the exterior of the ascetic ideal, against the satisfaction it has provided - in particular, the sense that this life, and especially its suffering, has

a meaning, that it shall be redeemed by another life. But to work against such satisfaction is not to oppose the ascetic ideal; it is simply to require more self-denial.

Nietzsche believes that we need a new ideal, a real alternative to the ascetic ideal. If philosophers are to remain true to the calling of philosophy and not squander their inheritance, they must create new values and not continue merely to codify and structure the value legislations of ascetic priests. To create new values, however, it will be necessary for philosophers to overcome the ascetic faith that truth is more important than anything else, for truth is not sufficient support for any ideal. Although they must therefore overcome the ascetic ideal to create a new one, undertaking this task responsibly requires the training in truthfulness promoted by the ascetic ideal. The overcoming of the ascetic ideal that Nietzsche promotes is thus a self-overcoming.

7. The 'death of God' and nihilism

Nietzsche is perhaps best known for having proclaimed the death of God. He does in fact mention that God is dead, but his fullest and most forceful statement to this effect actually belongs to one of his fictional characters, the madman of *Gay Science* 125 (*Werke* V.2: 158–60). Nietzsche's madman declares not only that God is dead and that churches are now 'tombs and sepulchres of God', but also that we are all God's 'murderers'. Although the madman may accept these statements as literally true, they clearly function as metaphors for Nietzsche. The 'death of God' is a metaphor for a cultural event that he believes has already taken place but which, like the death of a distant star, is not yet visible to normal sight: belief in God has become unbelievable, the Christian idea of God is no longer a living force in Western culture.

Nietzsche views all gods as human creations, reflections of what human beings value. However, pagan gods were constructed from the qualities human beings saw and valued in themselves, whereas the Christian God was given qualities that were the opposite of what humans perceived in themselves, the opposite of our inescapable animal instincts. Our natural being could then be reinterpreted as 'guilt before God' and taken to indicate our unworthiness. Constructed to devalue our natural being, the Christian God is a projection of value from the viewpoint of the ascetic ideal (see §6 of this entry). That this God is dead amounts to a prediction that Christian theism, along with the ascetic ideal that forms its basis, is nearing its end as a major cultural force and that its demise will be brought about by forces that are already and irreversibly at work.

One such force, to which Nietzsche himself contributed, is the development of atheism in the West, a development that stems from Christian morality itself and the will to truth it promotes. The will to truth, a commitment to truth 'at any price', is the latest expression of the ascetic ideal, but it also undermines the whole Christian worldview (heaven, hell, free will, immortality) of which 'God' is the symbol. Inspired by the will to truth, philosophy since Descartes has progressively undermined the arguments that supported Christian doctrines, and science has given us reason to believe that we can explain all the explicable features of empirical reality without appealing to God or any other transcendent reality. Theism has thus become cognitively superfluous. In this situation we can justify atheism without demonstrating the falsity of theism, Nietzsche claims, if we also have a convincing account of how theism could have arisen and

acquired its importance without being true. Even if there is no cognitive basis for belief in God, however, might not one still accept something on the order of William James' will to believe? (see James, W. §4). Nietzsche nowhere treats this option as irrational, but he does deny that it is now a serious option for those who have taken most strictly and seriously Christianity's ascetic morality. It may not be irrational, but it is psychologically impossible, Nietzsche thinks, to accept theism if the commitment to truthfulness has become fully ingrained, if hardness against oneself in matters of belief has become a matter of conscience. Atheism is 'the awe-inspiring *catastrophe* of a two-thousand year discipline in truth that finally forbids itself the *lie involved in belief in God*' (*Genealogy* III §27 [*Werke* VI.2: 427]).

Although atheism, especially among the most spiritual and intellectual human beings, undoubtedly weakens Christianity, depriving it of both creative energy and prestige, it does not bring about the death of God by itself. The modern world, as Kierkegaard had seen already, contains many other factors that weaken the influence of Christianity and its ideal; among these Nietzsche includes the development of money-making and industriousness as ends in themselves, democracy, and the greater availability to more people of the fruits of materialistic pursuits. Zarathustra's statement that 'when gods die, they always die several kinds of death' suggests that just as the ascetic ideal has been accepted by different kinds of people for different reasons, the death of God and the ascetic ideal is also brought about by a multiplicity of causes that operate differently on different kinds of people. What matters, says Zarathustra, is that 'he is gone' (*Zarathustra* IV §6 [*Werke* VI.1: 320]).

According to Nietzsche, the loss of belief in God will initiate a 'monstrous logic of terror' as we experience the collapse of all that was 'built upon this faith, propped up by it, grown into it; for example, the whole of our European morality' (*Gay Science* §343 [*Werke* V.2: 255]). In notes made late in his career (published in *The Will to Power*), Nietzsche calls this collapse of values 'nihilism', the 'radical repudiation of value, meaning, and desirability'. He predicts '*the advent of nihilism*' as 'the history of the next two centuries', and calls himself 'the first perfect nihilist of Europe'. However, he adds that he has 'lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind' (*Will to Power* Preface [*Werke* VIII.2: 431–2]). Nihilism is therefore not his own doctrine, but one he diagnoses in others (including his own earlier self). He *does not* believe that nothing is of value (or that 'everything is permitted') if God does not exist, but that this form of judgment is the necessary outcome of the ascetic ideal. Having come to believe that the things of the highest value - knowledge, truth, virtue, philosophy, art - must have a source in a reality that transcends the natural world, we necessarily experience these things as devoid of value once the ascetic ideal itself leads to the death of God, to the denial that any transcendent reality exists.

8. Morality

Nietzsche's criticism of morality is perhaps the most important and difficult aspect of his later philosophy. Calling himself an 'immoralist' - one who opposes all morality - he repeatedly insists that morality 'negates life'. He turned against it, he claims, inspired by an 'instinct that aligned itself with life' (*Birth of Tragedy* Preface 5 [*Werke* III.1: 13]). Whatever Nietzsche might mean by suggesting that morality is 'against life,' his point is *not* that morality is 'unnatural' because it restricts the satisfaction of natural impulses. He finds what is natural and

‘inestimable’ in any morality in the hatred it teaches of simply following one’s impulses, of any ‘all-too-great freedom’: it teaches ‘obedience over a long period of time and in a single direction’ (*Beyond Good and Evil* §188 [*Werke* VI.2: 110–11]). Nietzsche analyses the directive to ‘follow nature’ as commanding something that is either impossible (if it means ‘be like the nonhuman part of nature’) or inevitable (if it means ‘be as you are and must be’).

His objection to morality sometimes seems to be not that it is ‘against life’, but that it promotes and celebrates a kind of person in which he finds nothing to esteem: a ‘herd animal’ who has little idea of greatness and seeks above all else security, absence of fear, absence of suffering. To complicate matters still further, he sometimes uses ‘morality’ to refer to what he approves of, for instance, ‘noble morality’ and ‘higher moralities’.

The last of these interpretive problems can be resolved by recognizing that Nietzsche uses ‘morality’ in both a wider and a narrower sense. Every ethical code or system for evaluating conduct is ‘a morality’ in the wider, but not in the narrower sense. A system that determines the value of conduct solely in terms of ‘the retroactive force of success or failure’, for instance, is an instance of ‘morality’ in the wider sense, but Nietzsche counts it as ‘pre-moral’ in the narrower sense (*Beyond Good and Evil* §32 [*Werke* VI.2: 46–7]). And it is the narrower sense Nietzsche is using when he commits himself to ‘the overcoming of morality’ and claims that it ‘negates life’. His immoralism does not oppose all forms of ethical life. Although he opposes morality in the narrower sense, Nietzsche accepts another ethical system in terms of which he considers himself ‘bound’ or ‘pledged’. Indeed, he claims that, contrary to appearances, ‘we immoralists’ are human beings ‘of duty’, having ‘been spun into a severe yarn and shirt of duties [which we] cannot get out of’ (*Beyond Good and Evil* §226 [*Werke* VI.2: 168]).

Why didn’t Nietzsche just say that he opposed *some* moralities and call his own ethical system his ‘morality’? He undoubtedly thought that would be more misleading than his use of the term in a dual sense because it would trivialize the radical nature of his position. He called himself an ‘immoralist’ as a ‘provocation’ that would indicate what distinguishes him from ‘the whole rest of humanity’ (*Ecce Homo* IV: §7 [*Werke* VI.3: 369]). And it could so function, he thought, even though he actually opposes morality only in the narrower sense, precisely because this is the sense ‘morality’ has had until now. That word has been monopolized, he thinks, for a particular kind of ethical system on which all our currently available choices for an ethics are mere variations.

Genealogy provides a genealogy of morality in the narrower sense (the sense ‘morality’ will have hereafter in this entry) and a complex and sophisticated analysis of that concept of morality. Although there is no agreed-upon definition, we all have a feeling for what ‘morality’ in this sense means. But both the feeling and the ‘meaning’ are actually products of a complicated historical development that synthesized meanings of diverse origins into a unity, one that is difficult to dissolve or analyse and impossible to define. If conceptual analysis were a matter of formulating necessary and sufficient conditions for the use of a term, we might analyse the concept of morality by specifying the characteristics that are both necessary and sufficient to qualify a code of conduct as ‘a morality’. But this approach has never delivered great clarification, and Nietzsche’s understanding of concepts explains why: our concepts need

clarification precisely because they are products of a complicated historical development. Different strands have been tied together into such a tight unity that they seem inseparable and are no longer visible as strands. To analyse or clarify such a concept is to disentangle these strands so that we can see what is actually involved in the concept. History can play a role in analysing a concept because at earlier stages the 'meanings' that constitute it are not as tightly woven together and we can still perceive their shifts and rearrangements. Looking at the history of the corresponding phenomenon can therefore make it easier for us to pick out the various strands that make up the concept and better able to recognize other possible ways of tying them together. Nietzsche's genealogy of morality aims to show that there are distinct aspects of morality, each with a separate pre-moral source, which makes the synthesis we call 'morality' something that can be undone, so that its strands might be rewoven into a different form of ethical life.

The three essays of Genealogy separate out for examination three main strands of morality: the good (in the sense of virtue), the right (or duty), and a general understanding of value. Each essay focuses on the development of one strand without paying much attention to the other two, even though any developed form of ethical life will actually involve all three aspects in some form and interconnection. The overall account of morality constitutes a 'genealogy' precisely because it traces the *moral* version of each strand back to pre-moral sources - thus to *ancestors of morality*. Its upshot is that what we call 'morality' emerged from these pre-moral ancestors when the right and the good become tied together under the interpretation of value provided by the ascetic ideal. This explains why Nietzsche claims that morality 'negates life': morality is an ascetic interpretation of ethical life.

The first essay in Genealogy finds the central pre-moral ancestor of morality's idea of goodness among politically superior classes in the ancient world whose members called themselves 'the good' and used 'good' and 'virtue' as their marks of distinction, the qualities that distinguished them from commoners or slaves. 'Good' and 'virtuous' were the same as 'noble' in the sense of 'belonging to the ruling class'; their contrasting term was 'low-born' or 'bad' (the German, *schlecht*, originally meant 'simple' or 'common').

As Nietzsche uses 'bad' (he does not claim to reflect contemporary usage), it involves no connotation of blame, whether applied to the poor person or the liar. 'Bad' certainly expresses a value judgment: that the person so described is inferior. The nobles regard themselves as superior and look down on the bad (sometimes with contempt, sometimes with pity). But they do not blame them for being inferior, or think that the inferior ought to be good (much less that inferiority deserves punishment or goodness a reward). Such judgments make sense only if one is judging inferiority in moral terms - that is, if 'bad' has become 'morally bad' or 'evil'.

To explain the origin of the good/evil (the specifically moral) mode of valuation, Nietzsche postulates a 'slave revolt in morality', a revaluation inspired by *ressentiment* (grudge-laden resentment) against the nobles. Nietzsche does not claim that the nobles' actions were considered wrong because they were resented. He is dealing only with ideas of goodness or virtue in this essay; he seeks to explain how goodness became connected to praise and blame, reward and punishment. His postulated 'slave revolt' was led not by slaves but by priests, the 'great haters'

in human history precisely because their spirituality is incompatible with the direct discharge of resentment and revenge. They hated the nobles not because they were oppressed by them but because the nobles considered themselves superior and had been victorious over them for the respect and admiration of the people. Because this hatred could not be expressed directly, it grew to monstrous proportions until it finally found an outlet in revaluing the nobles and their qualities as inferior. As a result, certain qualities - useful to those in a slavish or dependent position - were called 'good', not because anyone found them particularly admirable, but from a desire to 'bring down' people with the opposite qualities. Simply 'looking down' at the nobles and their qualities would not have done the trick, especially since the majority envied and admired them. Only through the transformation of bad into evil, of inferiority into something for which one could be blamed, could the revaluation succeed. Pent-up *ressentiment* could then be vented in acts of blaming and moral condemnation, which Nietzsche sees as acts of 'imaginary revenge' that 'bring down' hated opponents 'in effigy' and elevate those who do the blaming, at least in their own imagination. Blaming, for Nietzsche, evidently involves the judgment that the person blamed is deserving of punishment, in this case for their inferiority. Therefore, once 'bad' is transformed into 'evil', God and his judgment along with heaven and hell can be used to support the revaluation by winning over to it those who would not feel sufficiently elevated by mere moral condemnation of the nobles. Nietzsche suggests that this is how the issue of free will became connected to morality. Blaming or holding people responsible for their actions does not raise the issue; it is raised by holding them responsible for what they are. And that is precisely what was required for the revaluation of noble values.

9. Morality (cont.)

Priests did not invent the idea of 'evil' on the spot, however. The notion of blame required for the revaluation emerged in a quite different sphere, that of right conduct or duty, the development of which Nietzsche sketches in the second essay of *Genealogy*. The pre-moral ancestor to which this essay traces moral versions of right and wrong, duty or obligation, is the ethics of custom (*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*), an early system of community practices that gained the status of rules through the threat of punishment. These rules were perceived as imperatives, but not as moral imperatives: violation was punished, but not considered to be a matter of conscience or thought to incur guilt.

Nietzsche finds an ancestor of guilt in the realm of trade, in the creditor-debtor relation. Guilt arises, Nietzsche claims, when the idea of debt is put to the uses of the 'bad conscience', the sense of oneself as unworthy, which develops when the external expression of aggressive impulses becomes restricted to such an extent that they can be expressed only by being turned back against the self. This internalization does not take place automatically, however; human beings must learn techniques that promote it, and Nietzsche views priests as the great teachers in this field. One such technique exploits the idea that a debt is owed to ancestors (who eventually come to be perceived as gods) for the benefits they continue to bestow and for violations of community laws which represent their will. Priests use this idea to teach the people that they must make difficult sacrifices to the gods - for example, to sacrifice one's first-born - and that

certain instances of apparent bad luck and suffering constitute the extraction of payment for violations of divine law, hence are deserved punishments.

So conceived, the debts are still mere debts, material rather than moral 'owings'. The moralization of debt (and thereby of duty) removes the idea that it can simply be paid off and connects it to one's worth or goodness. This moralization takes place by means of the third strand of morality analysed in *Genealogy*, the understanding of value, which in the case of morality is guided by the ascetic ideal. We enter what Nietzsche calls the 'moral epoch' only when the divine being to whom the debt is owed is considered the highest being and is conceived in non-naturalistic or ascetic terms, as a purely spiritual being and thus as a repudiation of the value of natural human existence (see §§6–7 of this entry). What must now be sacrificed to the divine is 'one's own strongest instincts, one's "nature"' (*Beyond Good and Evil* §55[*Werke* VI.2: 72]). The affirmation of these instincts is conceived as rebellion against God, and the normal sufferings of human life as punishments for this rebellion. The debt is now owed precisely for what one is and continues to be, for being part of the natural world. This debt can no longer be considered material, a mere debt, for while it is owed and payment must be made, it can never be paid off. And the punishment one deserves is now completely bound up with one's (lack of) goodness or virtue, which is interpreted in ascetic terms as self-denial, the denial of one's natural impulses, or at least as selflessness.

The priest now has the notion of 'evil' required for the revaluation of the noble values: the moralized notion of virtue as self-denial provides the standard against which the nobles could be judged inferior, whereas the moralized notion of debt provides the basis for blaming the nobles for that inferiority. Both notions (of virtue and duty) were moralized by being tied together under the understanding of value provided by the ascetic ideal. Morality connects duty and virtue in such a way that blameable violations of duty are taken to show lack of virtue and lack of virtue is blameable (luck has nothing to do with it). Because he sees this connection as having been brought about by means of the ascetic ideal, Nietzsche regards that ideal as a major element of morality.

His own ideal is a very different one. Named after the Greek god Dionysus, Nietzsche's ideal celebrates the affirmation of life even in the face of its greatest difficulties, and thus gives rise to a doctrine and valuation of life that is fundamentally opposed to the one he finds behind morality. Committed to finding the sources of value in life, he rejects all non-naturalistic interpretations of ethical life, those that make reference to a transcendent or metaphysical world. It therefore seems likely that what he opposes in morality is not the idea of virtue, or standards of right and wrong, but the moralization of virtue and duty brought about by the ascetic ideal. Morality 'negates life' because it is an ascetic interpretation of ethical life. By interpreting virtue and duty in non-natural terms, it reveals the assumption of the ascetic ideal: that things of the highest value must have their source 'elsewhere' than in the natural world. This is why Nietzsche says that what 'horridifies' him in morality is 'the lack of nature, the utterly gruesome fact that *antinature* itself received the highest honours as morality and was fixed over humanity as law and categorical imperative' (*Ecce Homo* IV: §7[*Werke* VI.3: 370]).

But how is this connected to Nietzsche's complaints against 'herd morality'? 'Herd' is his deliberately insulting term for those who congregate together in questions of value and perceive as dangerous anyone with a will to stand alone in such matters. He calls the morality of contemporary Europe 'herd animal morality' because of the almost complete agreement 'in all major moral judgments'. Danger, suffering, and distress are to be minimized, the 'modest, submissive, conforming mentality' is honoured, and one is disturbed by 'every severity, even in justice'. Good-naturedness and benevolence are valued, whereas the 'highest and strongest drives, if they break out passionately and drive the individual far above the average and the flats of the herd conscience,' are slandered and considered evil (*Beyond Good and Evil* §§201–2[*Werke* VI.2: 123–7]).

This morality does not seem to involve the ascetic ideal. In fact, it is more likely to be packaged as utilitarianism, which offers a naturalistic, and therefore presumably unascetic, interpretation of duty and virtue, in terms of happiness (see Utilitarianism). We might, in fact, formulate Nietzsche's main objection to herd morality as a complaint that there is nothing in it to play the role of the ascetic ideal: to hold out an ideal of the human person that encourages individuals to take up the task of self-transformation, self-creation, and to funnel into it the aggressive impulses, will to power and resentment that would otherwise be expressed externally. Although it horrifies him, Nietzsche recognizes the greatness of the ascetic ideal. It is the only ideal of widespread cultural importance human beings have had so far, and it achieved its tremendous power, even though it is the 'harmful ideal *par excellence*', because it was necessary, because there was nothing else to play its role. 'Above all, a counterideal was lacking - until Zarathustra' (*Ecce Homo* III GM [*Werke* VI.3: 352]).

The problem is that the ascetic ideal is now largely dead (as part of the 'death of God'). Nietzsche thinks we need something to replace it: a great ideal that will inspire the striving, internalization, virtue, self-creation that the ascetic ideal inspired. 'Herd animal morality' is what we are left with in the absence of any such ideal. It is what morality degenerates into once the ascetic ideal largely withdraws from the synthesis it brought about. The virtuous human being no longer is anything that can stir our imagination or move us. For Nietzsche, this is the 'great danger' to which morality has led: the sight of human beings makes us weary.

10. The overhuman (*Übermensch*)

Nietzsche's apparent alternative to 'herd-animal morality' is his most notorious idea, the *Übermensch*. (There is no really suitable English translation for this term: 'overhuman' has been chosen instead of 'superman' or 'overman' because it seems best able to bring out the idea of a being who overcomes in itself what has defined us as human.) The idea actually belongs to the protagonist of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche's work of philosophical fiction, and it can never be assumed that Zarathustra's ideas are the same as those of Nietzsche. As the story opens, Zarathustra is returning from ten years of solitude in the wilderness, bringing human beings a gift: his teaching that humanity is not an end or goal, but only a stage and bridge to a higher type of being, the overhuman. He teaches that now that God is dead, it is time for humanity to establish this higher type as the goal and meaning of human life, a goal that can be reached only if human beings overcome what they now are, overcome the merely human.

The idea of becoming a higher kind of being by overcoming one's humanity can seem frightening. For some, it calls up images of Nazi stormtroopers seeking out 'inferior' human beings to annihilate. However, Zarathustra suggests that Nietzsche has something very different in mind. 'Zarathustra' is another name for Zoroaster, the founder of Zoroastrianism (see Zoroastrianism). Nietzsche claims that the historical Zarathustra 'created the most calamitous error, morality', because his doctrine first projected ethical distinctions into the metaphysical realm (as a cosmic fight between good and evil forces). Nietzsche bases his character on Zarathustra because the creator of the error 'must also be the first to recognize it' (*Ecce Homo* IV §3 [*Werke* VI.3: 365]).

Zarathustra is thus the story of a religious leader, the inventor of one of the world's oldest religions, who comes to recognize the 'error' of traditional (moralized) religions. Far from turning against every aspect of traditional religion, however, Zarathustra commits himself to its central task: urging human beings to raise their sights above their usual immersion in materialistic pursuits to recognize the outlines of a higher form of being that calls them to go beyond themselves, to become something more than they are. Zarathustra's overhuman can thus be seen as a successor to the images of 'higher humanity' offered by traditional religions. His teaching is not intended to encourage human beings to throw off the constraints and shackles of morality (something Nietzsche sees as well underway without his help). Its point is, rather, to combat the forces of barbarism by encouraging us to take on a more demanding ethical task than modern morality requires: that of becoming what Nietzsche had earlier called a 'true human being'. When he used that phrase, however, Nietzsche believed it applied only to 'those no-longer animals, the philosophers, artists, and saints'. Animal (purely natural) existence was a senseless cycle of becoming and desire, and only those who escape it by extinguishing egoistic desire counted as truly human. The saint in particular counted as 'that ultimate and supreme becoming human', in which 'life no longer appears senseless but appears, rather, in its metaphysical meaningfulness' (*Unfashionable Observations* III §5 [*Werke* III.1: 371–9]). From the viewpoint of his later philosophy, early Nietzsche's conception of true humanity is an obvious expression of the ascetic ideal; it devalues natural existence relative to something that is its opposite. Once one recognizes this opposite as unattainable (as Nietzsche did in *Human*), the conception can be seen for what it really is: a devaluation and condemnation of human life.

Nietzsche never abandoned his early belief that the modern world is threatened by forces of both conformism and barbarism and that our great need is therefore for educators who will inspire human self-overcoming by the force of a lofty ideal. But since he rejects the ascetic ideal, he must abandon his earlier image of a true human being. At the end of *Genealogy's* second essay, Nietzsche suggests that what the overhuman overcomes is not the 'natural' inclinations against which the ascetic ideal has been directed, those that make apparent our connection to other animals, but rather the 'unnatural' inclinations, the aspirations to a form of existence that transcends nature and animality. In other words, the overhuman must overcome all the impulses that led human beings to accept the ascetic ideal, an ideal that has so far defined what counts as 'human'. As we will see in §2, however, Zarathustra's call for the overcoming of the human is still too bound up with the old ideal.

11. The will to power

Zarathustra teaches that life itself is will to power, and this is often thought to be Nietzsche's central teaching as well. However, will to power first appears in Nietzsche's work in *Daybreak* (1881), and there it is one human drive among others, the striving for competence or mastery. It is usefully thought of as a second-order drive or will: a need or desire for the effectiveness of one's first-order will. In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche finds this drive at work in large areas of human life: in asceticism, revenge, the lust for money, the striving for distinction, cruelty, blaming others, blaming oneself. He explains the drive's apparent omnipresence in human life by saying not that life is will to power (or that power is the only thing humans want), but that power has a special relation to human happiness. He calls love of power a 'demon' because human beings remain unhappy and low-spirited if it is not satisfied even if all their material needs are satisfied, whereas power can make them as happy as human beings can be, even if everything else is taken away (*Daybreak* §262 [*Werke* V.1: 211]). In *Genealogy* (1887) he expresses a similar idea in more positive terms when he calls the will to power 'the most life-affirming drive', that is, the one whose satisfaction contributes most to finding life worth living (*Genealogy* III §18 [*Werke* VI.2: 383]).

Zarathustra claims that this 'will to be master' is found in all that lives, and that this explains why life is 'struggle and becoming', always overcoming itself, always opposing what it has created and loved: 'Verily, where there is perishing and a falling of leaves, behold, there life sacrifices itself - for power' (*Zarathustra* II §12 [*Werke* VI.1: 144–5]). But this seems a clearly anthropomorphic conception of life, the projection of the human will to power onto nonhuman nature. Nietzsche rejects anthropomorphic conceptions of nature, insists that will is to be found only in beings with intellects, and complains that Schopenhauer's idea of will 'has been turned into a metaphor when it is asserted that all things in nature possess will' (*Human II* §5 [*Werke* IV.3: 18]).

Yet Nietzsche does say that life, and even reality itself, is will to power. The idea seems to be that reality consists of fields of force or dynamic quanta, each of which is essentially a drive to expand and thus to increase its power relative to all other such quanta. However, almost all the passages to this effect are found in Nietzsche's notebooks. He actually argues that reality is will to power in only one passage he chose to publish, and this passage gives us good reason to doubt that Nietzsche actually accepted the argument. He neither says nor implies that he accepts its conclusion, and he argues against its premises in earlier passages of the same book (*Beyond Good and Evil* §36 [*Werke* VI.2: 50–1]).

Why would Nietzsche construct a rather elaborate argument from premises he clearly rejects? Perhaps it was to illustrate the view of philosophy presented earlier in the same book. Philosophers' ultimate aim, he claims, is not to obtain knowledge or truth, but to interpret the world in terms of their own values (see §6 of this entry) - to 'create [in thought] a world before which [they] can kneel' (*Zarathustra* II §12 [*Werke* VI.1: 143]). Yet they present their interpretations as true, and argue for them on the basis of amazingly 'little': 'any old popular superstition from time immemorial', a play on words, a seduction by grammar, or 'an audacious generalization of very narrow, very personal, very human, all too human facts' (*Beyond Good*

and Evil Preface [*Werke* VI.2: 3–4]). This seems an apt diagnosis of Nietzsche's own argument, since he elsewhere identifies its first premise as 'Schopenhauer's superstition' and the exaggeration of a popular prejudice, and its second and third premises as part of the 'primeval mythology' Schopenhauer 'enthroned' (*Beyond Good and Evil* §§16–19 [*Werke* VI.2: 22–6]; *Gay Science* §127 [*Werke* V.2: 160]). Furthermore, the effect of the argument is an 'audacious generalization' to the whole universe of the will to power, which Nietzsche originally understands as one human drive among others. In generalizing this drive, Nietzsche can be seen as generalizing and glorifying what he values, just as he claims philosophers have always done and must do. For Nietzsche's own answer to 'what is good?' is 'everything that heightens the feeling of power in human beings, the will to power, power itself' (*Antichrist* §2 [*Werke* VI.3: 168]).

Why does Nietzsche value the will to power? He certainly came to recognize it as responsible for the violence and cruelty of human life and as the prime ingredient in what he had earlier called the 'cauldron full of witches' brew' that threatens the modern world with 'horrible apparitions' (*Unfashionable Observations* III §4 [*Werke* III.1: 363]). But he also saw it as 'the most life-affirming drive' and as responsible for the great human accomplishments - political institutions, religion, art, morality and philosophy. His basic psychological claim is that human beings are subjected to intense experiences of powerlessness and that such experience leads to depression unless some means is found for restoring a feeling of power. What we call 'barbarism' is largely a set of direct and crude strategies for restoring the feeling of power by demonstrating the power to hurt others. What we call 'culture' is a set of institutions and strategies for achieving the same feeling in a sublimated or less direct fashion. The most important strategies have all involved directing the will to power back against the self. Such internalization is responsible for all the ethical achievements of human life, all the ways in which human beings have changed and perfected their original nature by taking on a new and improved nature. But the internalization of the will to power has been promoted by the ascetic ideal's condemnation of our original nature, especially of the will to power. This is what Zarathustra attempts to overcome with his overhuman teaching, which directs the will to power back against the self to overcome the inclinations that led to the old ideal. He therefore does not condemn the will to power, but celebrates it.

12. Eternal recurrence

Nietzsche identifies himself above all else as the teacher of eternal recurrence, which is often interpreted as a cosmological theory to the effect that the exact history of the cosmos endlessly repeats itself. Although he did sketch arguments for such a theory in his notebooks, he actually does not argue for or commit himself to a recurrence cosmology in any work he published. And, although he presents eternal recurrence as the 'basic conception' of Zarathustra, he does not commit its protagonist to a cosmology. He identifies this 'basic conception' not as a cosmology, but as 'the highest formula for affirmation that is at all attainable' (*Ecce Homo* III §1 [*Werke* VI.3: 335]).

As first articulated in *Gay Science*, eternal recurrence is a heuristic device used to formulate Nietzsche's Dionysian ideal (see §9 of this entry). How well disposed we are to life is to be

measured by how we would react upon being told by a demon (in a manner designed to induce uncritical acceptance) that we will have to live again and again the exact course of life we are now living. Would we experience despair or joy, curse the demon or greet him as a god? Nietzsche's ideal is the *affirmation of eternal recurrence*, to be a person who would respond to the demon with joy. This is *not* equivalent to having no regrets, since it has no implication concerning how to respond if given the choice of variations on history. Nietzsche's ideal is to love life enough to be joyfully willing to have the whole process repeated eternally, including all the parts that one did not love and even fought against. Eternal recurrence gives him a formula for what it is to value the process of life as an end and not merely as a means.

Nietzsche's special self-identification with eternal recurrence can be explained in terms of his view regarding the importance of the ascetic ideal and his explanation of its power: 'a *counterideal* was lacking - until Zarathustra'. There are only two plausible candidates for the counterideal Zarathustra offers, the overhuman and the affirmation of eternal recurrence. The overhuman is one who overcomes the ascetic ideal. But, as Zarathustra first preaches it, the overhuman ideal can be seen as another variation on the ascetic ideal. Like the ascetic priest, Zarathustra treats our lives as valuable only as a means to a form of life that is actually their negation. Like the ascetic priest, he turns his will to power against human life and takes revenge against it (for the powerlessness it induces) by excluding it from what he recognizes as intrinsically valuable. The ideal of affirming eternal recurrence, in contrast, values the whole process of living, and thereby overcomes the ascetic ideal's devaluation of human life, even while pushing us to go beyond its present form. It provides us with the image of a higher form of human life, but does not take revenge against the latter by refusing to call its higher form 'human'. It therefore appears to be Zarathustra's true alternative to the ascetic ideal.

It may seem, however, that happy pre-moral barbarians should be able to affirm eternal recurrence. How then can it provide an image of a higher form of human life towards which to strive, one that could inspire internalization, virtue and self-creation comparable to that inspired by the ascetic ideal? One relevant factor is Nietzsche's hope for new philosophers who will create new values. Perhaps he did not expect his counterideal to provide the full content of new values, just as the ascetic ideal did not provide the full content of the old values. The ascetic priests did not create their values from scratch. They took over virtues, duties, forms of life that were already there and gave them a new interpretation, one that denied the value of natural human existence. Nietzsche seems to hope that new philosophers will do something comparable - that they will provide a new life-affirming interpretation of virtues, duties and forms of life that are already there. Eternal recurrence would function as the form of new values, a test that they must pass to count as non-ascetic or life-affirming. The test for teachers of new values would be: can you endorse and teach these values while affirming eternal recurrence?

If this suggestion is correct, Nietzsche's relation to the modern world is not quite as revolutionary as it sometimes appears. The role of his new philosophers is not to overturn everything, but to take what is in pieces due to the dissolution of the old interpretation of value and to provide a new interpretation. This kind of philosophizing is not just for the future, but is found in Nietzsche's own writings. He praises old virtues - justice and generosity, for instance -

but gives us a new interpretation of them, a different way of seeing them as valuable. Generosity is valuable not because it is selfless, but because it exhibits the soul's richness and power. And justice is perhaps the greatest virtue not because it is disinterested or obeys a higher law, but because it is the rarest and highest mastery that is possible on earth. And Nietzsche does not merely talk about these matters. His writings show us a new kind of person and a new kind of philosopher in the virtues he exhibits in them, not least of all in the interpretations he gives of his virtues. Truthfulness or honesty, justice, generosity are all exhibited in his writings, but are given life-affirming interpretations that bring to our attention the role of the will to power in them.

This is not to say that Nietzsche's new values are simply repackaged old ones. Nietzsche's ideal leads him to value qualities that he claims have never before been considered part of greatness, such as malice, exuberance and laughter. But even in their new interpretations of old values, the aim of Nietzsche's new philosophers is to push culture in new directions, for instance, towards giving explicit expression at the higher levels of culture to what the old ideal excluded from the highest forms of life. This is what Nietzsche exhibits, for instance, in the positive and negative emotion, the exuberance and malice, the aggression and eros, that permeates his writings. At this level, his philosophy is art, but it is an art that completes and is no longer used to devalue knowledge, which can now be recognized as its sometimes contentious partner in Nietzsche's soul and writings.

List of works

Nietzsche, F. (1967–84) *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Complete critical works), ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari, Berlin: de Gruyter.

(Now the standard German edition of Nietzsche's works. Volumes of the critical apparatus are still appearing, but the books and *Nachlaß* were completed by 1984. A paperback edition of the essentials appeared in 1980 as *Sämtliche Werke*.)

Nietzsche, F. (1872) *Die Geburt der Tragödie*; trans. W. Kaufmann and R. Hollindale as *The Birth of Tragedy*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, New York: Modern Library, 1968.

(Nietzsche's first book, written under the influence of Wagner and Schopenhauer, with 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism', a preface written for the second edition of 1886. Important source for Nietzsche's early views of art and of the Dionysian, but too bound up with the thesis that art is more truthful than science to represent Nietzsche's later view.)

Nietzsche, F. (1873–6) *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*; trans. R. Gray as *Unfashionable Observations*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995.

(Four essays of cultural criticism from Nietzsche's early period, in which he is still trying to elevate art over science. These essays exhibit Nietzsche's early philosophy as a critique of modern culture, and the essays on history and Schopenhauer point forward to his later ideas of eternal recurrence and the overhuman. This work has also been translated as 'Untimely Meditations' and 'Unmodern Observations'.)

Nietzsche, F. (1878–80) *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*; trans. R. Hollingdale as *Human, All Too Human*, intro. R. Schacht, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

(Represents the beginning of Nietzsche's middle period, his turn away from Wagner, art and metaphysics, and his embrace of science and a thoroughgoing naturalism. Contains his first, relatively crude, attempts at a naturalistic understanding of moral values.)

Nietzsche, F. (1881) *Morgenröte*; trans. R. Hollingdale as *Daybreak*, ed. M. Clark and B. Leiter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

(The second work of Nietzsche's middle period, it represents the true beginning of Nietzsche's own way in philosophy. He called it the beginning of his 'campaign against morality,' and it contains much of his psychology of the will to power. This work has also been translated as 'Dawn'.)

Nietzsche, F. (1882) *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*; trans. W. Kaufmann as *The Gay Science*, New York: Vintage, 1974.

(The work that inaugurates Nietzsche's final period, it announces the 'death of God' and contains Nietzsche's first formulation of his idea of eternal recurrence. Book Five, added in the second edition of 1887, contains some of Nietzsche's most important reflections on science and its connection to democracy. This work has also been translated as 'Joyful Wisdom'.)

Nietzsche, F. (1883–5) *Also Sprach Zarathustra*; trans. W. Kaufmann as *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, New York: Viking, 1954.

(Nietzsche's work of philosophical fiction and the major source for the cosmological version of the will to power and the ideas of the overhuman and eternal recurrence. Not easily understood without knowledge of Nietzsche's other books.)

Nietzsche, F. (1886) *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*; trans. W. Kaufmann and R. Hollingdale as *Beyond Good and Evil*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, New York: Modern Library, 1968.

(Nietzsche at the height of his powers on philosophy and science, religion, morality, politics, nationality and nobility. A true masterpiece, but difficult.)

Nietzsche, F. (1887) *Zur Genealogie der Moral*; trans. M. Clark and A. Swensen as *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997.

(Nietzsche's most detailed analysis of and most important treatment of morality, considered by him as probably the most accessible introduction to his work and the 'touchstone' of what 'belongs' to him. Contains his most sustained discussion of the ascetic ideal, and was intended to clarify the title and contents of *Beyond Good and Evil*. This work has also been translated as 'On the Genealogy of Morals'.)

Nietzsche, F. (1888a) *Der Fall Wagner*; trans. W. Kaufmann and R. Hollingdale as *The Case of Wagner*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, New York: Modern Library, 1968.

(Finished at the beginning of his final year, this is an often very funny book, and a major source for Nietzsche's views of Wagner and art.)

Nietzsche, F. (1888b) *Die Götzen-Dämmerung*, 1889; trans. W. Kaufmann as *The Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, New York: Viking, 1954.

(Contains Nietzsche's final accounts of truth and knowledge, as well as important sections on morality and art. Fairly straightforward and more accessible than many of his other works.)

Nietzsche, F. (1888c) *Der Antichrist*, 1895; trans. W. Kaufmann as *The Antichrist*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, New York: Viking, 1954.

(Nietzsche's version of 'Why I am not a Christian'. Distinguishes original Christianity from the Pauline version and gives a relatively sympathetic portrait of the former and of the one who lived it. Fairly straightforward and accessible.)

Nietzsche, F. (1888d) *Ecce Homo*, 1908; trans. W. Kaufmann and R. Hollingdale in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, New York: Modern Library, 1968.

(Nietzsche's autobiographical work, written in the middle of his final year, includes his own invaluable accounts of all his earlier works under the title 'Why I write such good books'. An important source for his view of art since the autobiography is clearly intended as a work of art.)

Nietzsche, F. (1888e) *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, 1895; trans. W. Kaufmann in *The Portable Nietzsche*, New York: Viking, 1954.

(Nietzsche's last and shortest book, this is a compilation of passages from earlier works designed to show that Nietzsche and Wagner are 'antipodes'. A source for Nietzsche's final view of art and of the ways in which the art he promotes differs from Wagner's.)

Nietzsche, F. (1906) *Der Wille zur Macht*,; trans. W. Kaufmann as *The Will to Power*, New York: Viking, 1967.

(Although treated by many, including Nietzsche's sister, as his magnum opus, this is not a book by Nietzsche. Rather, it is a collection of outlines, notes and jottings from his notebooks of 1883–8, selected and arranged by his sister and editors appointed by her.)

Nietzsche, F. (1975–84) *Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. C. Colli and M. Montinari, Berlin: de Gruyter.

(An edition of the complete letters to and from Nietzsche (the Nietzsche side of the correspondence was published in 1986 as *Sämtliche Briefe*). A 1969 English edition of selected letters, translated by Christopher Middleton, is reprinted as *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996.)

Nietzsche, F. (1979) *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the early 1870's*, trans. D. Breazeale, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press.

(A valuable collection of material from the *Nachlaß* of the period surrounding the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*. Includes 'Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne', trans. as

‘On Truth and Lies in a non-moral sense’, a widely known essay in which Nietzsche argues that, except for tautologies, all truths are ‘illusions’.)

References and further readings

Ansell-Pearson, K. (1994) *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(A lively introduction to Nietzsche’s political thought.)

Clark, M. (1990) *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(An account of the development of Nietzsche’s thinking about truth which forms the basis of the present entry. Includes chapters on truth and the ascetic ideal, the will to power and eternal recurrence.)

Deleuze, G. (1962) *Nietzsche et la philosophie*; trans. H. Tomlinson as *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

(A reading of Nietzsche as anti-Hegelian; known especially for its influential distinction between active and reactive forces. An often difficult read.)

Derrida, J. (1978) *Éperons: Les Styles de Nietzsche*; trans. B. Harlow as *Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles*, Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

(Responds to Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzsche as a metaphysician by playing with Nietzsche’s texts rather than attempting to establish a truth about them. An example of philosophy as deconstruction. The translation is a French-English edition.)

Heidegger, M. (1961) *Nietzsche*, 2 vols; trans. D. Krell, San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1979–82, 4 vols.

(This interpretation of Nietzsche as a critic of metaphysics who was himself unable to avoid metaphysics has greatly influenced later Continental readings of Nietzsche; for advanced students who are as interested in Heidegger as in Nietzsche.)

Janz, C.P. (1978) *Friedrich Nietzsche Biographie*, Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 3 vols.

(The standard biography; an English translation is in progress.)

Kaufmann, W. (1950) *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 4th edn, 1974.

(A landmark study that went a long way towards destroying the picture of Nietzsche as a Nazi sympathizer and an anti-Socratic irrationalist that once dominated the English-speaking world. Still useful for this purpose.)

Lange, F.A. (1866) *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*; trans. E.C. Thomas as *History of Materialism*, Boston, MA: Osgood, 1977, 3 vols.

(A history of materialism from ancient Greece to 19th century Europe which Nietzsche read during his student days at Leipzig. A major influence on his views of science and knowledge.)

Morgen, G. (1941) *What Nietzsche Means*, New York: Harper & Row.

(Still a valuable and very accessible introduction to all the main themes of Nietzsche's philosophy.)

Mueller-Lauter, W. (1971) *Nietzsche: Seine Philosophie der Gegensätze und die Gegensätze seiner Philosophie* (Nietzsche's philosophy of contradictions and the contradictions of his philosophy), Berlin: de Gruyter.

(Perhaps the most important German work on Nietzsche written after the Second World War; distinguishes the apparent from the real contradictions of Nietzsche's philosophy of the will to power, and argues that Nietzsche's thinking leads him to two very different versions of the overhuman. English translation in progress.)

Nehamas, A. (1985) *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

(Important attempt to relate Nietzsche's philosophical views to his literary styles, and the most important examination of how Nietzsche's books exhibit what this entry calls Nietzsche's 'ideal'. Its accounts of the will to power and eternal recurrence are alternatives to those given above.)

Richardson, J. (1996) *Nietzsche's System*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

(A systematic, challenging account of Nietzsche's thought that provides a more metaphysical alternative to the naturalistic Nietzsche of this entry, especially in its accounts of the will to power and perspectivism. Influenced by Continental readings of Nietzsche, especially those of Heidegger and Deleuze.)

Schacht, R. (1983) *Nietzsche*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

(Careful and detailed survey of all the main themes of Nietzsche's philosophy. Its Nietzsche has a basically naturalistic orientation, but nevertheless accepts the will to power as the basic principle of life.)

Schopenhauer, A. (1818) *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*; trans. E.F.J. Payne as *The World as Will and Representation*, New York: Dover, 2 vols, 1969.

(Perhaps the major philosophical influence on Nietzsche's thought and development.)

Young, J. (1992) *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(Interesting account of Nietzsche's view of art; highly critical of Nietzsche vis-à-vis Schopenhauer.)