

CHAPTER THREE

Nietzsche

The Life

The first book of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* begins with the story of three metamorphoses: "How the spirit becomes camel, the camel becomes lion, and how finally the lion becomes child." The camel is the animal who carries: he carries the weight of established values, the burdens of education, morality, and culture. He carries them into the desert, where he turns into a lion; the lion destroys statues, tramples burdens, and leads the critique of all established values. Finally, the lion must become child, that is, he who represents play and a new beginning — creator of new values and new principles of evaluation.

According to Nietzsche, these three metamorphoses designate, among other things, the different moments of his work, as well as the stages of his life and health. These divisions are no doubt arbitrary: the lion is pre-

sent in the camel; the child is in the lion; and in the child, there is already the tragic outcome.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was born in 1844, in the presbytery of Röcken, in a region of Thuringia that was annexed by Prussia. Both sides of his family came from Lutheran priests. His father, delicate and well educated, himself also a priest, died in 1849 of a softening of the brain (encephalitis or apoplexy). Nietzsche was brought up in Naumburg, surrounded by women, with his younger sister, Elisabeth. He was a child prodigy; his essays were saved, as well as his attempts at musical composition. He studied in Pforta, then in Bonn and Leipzig. He chose philology over theology. But he was already haunted by philosophy and by the image of Arthur Schopenhauer, the solitary thinker, the "private thinker." As early as 1869, Nietzsche's philological works (on Theognis, Simonides, Diogenes Laertius) secured him a professorship in philology at the University of Basel.

It was then that his close friendship with Richard Wagner began. They met in Leipzig. Wagner lived in Tribschen, near Lucerne. Nietzsche said those days were among the best of his life. Wagner was almost sixty; his wife, Cosima, just past thirty. Cosima was Liszt's daughter. She left the musician Hans von Bülow for Wagner. Her friends sometimes called her Ari-

adme and suggested the parallelisms: Bülow-Theseus, Wagner-Dionysus. Nietzsche encountered here an affective structure that he had already sensed was his and that he would make more and more his own. But these glorious days were not trouble-free: sometimes he had the unpleasant feeling that Wagner was using him and borrowing his own concept of the tragic; sometimes he had the delightful feeling that with Cosima's help he would carry Wagner to truths that he, Wagner, couldn't discover on his own.

Nietzsche's professorship made him a Swiss citizen. He worked as an ambulance driver during the war of 1870. At Basel, he shed his last "burdens": a certain nationalism and a certain sympathy for Bismarck and Prussia. He could no longer stand the identification of culture with the state, nor could he accept the idea that victory through arms be taken as a sign of culture. His disdain for Germany was already apparent, as well as his incapacity for living among the Germans. But with Nietzsche, the abandonment of old beliefs did not assume the form of crisis (what occasioned a crisis was rather the inspiration or the revelation of a new idea). Abandonment was not his problem. We have no reason to suspect his declarations in *Ecce Homo* when he says that in religious matters, despite his ancestry, atheism came to him naturally, instinctively.

Nietzsche retreated further into solitude. In 1871, he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*, where the real Nietzsche breaks through from behind the masks of Wagner and Schopenhauer. The book was poorly received by philologists. Nietzsche felt himself to be untimely and discovered the incompatibility between the private thinker and the public professor. In the fourth volume of *Untimely Meditations*, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" (1875), his reservations about Wagner become explicit. The Bayreuth inauguration, with its circus-like atmosphere, its processions, its speeches, the presence of the old emperor, made him sick. The apparent changes in Nietzsche astonished his friends. He was more and more interested in the sciences: in physics, biology, medicine. His health was poor; he had constant headaches, stomachaches, eye trouble, speech difficulties. He gave up teaching. "My illness slowly liberated me: it spared me separations, violent or ugly actions. . . . It entitled me to radically change my ways." And since Wagner was a compensation for Nietzsche-the-Professor, when the professorship went, so did Wagner.

Thanks to Franz Overbeck, the most loyal and intelligent of his friends, Nietzsche obtained a pension from Basel in 1878. It was then that his itinerant life began: like a shadow, renting simple furnished rooms, seeking favorable climates, he went from resort to

resort, in Switzerland, in Italy, in the south of France, sometimes alone, sometimes with friends (Malwida von Meysenbug, an old Wagnerian; his former student Peter Gast, a musician he hoped would replace Wagner; Paul Rée, with whom he shared a taste for the natural sciences and the dissection of morality). He sometimes returned to Naumburg. In Sorrento, he saw Wagner for the last time, a Wagner who had become pious and nationalistic. In 1878, with *Human, All Too Human*, he began his great critique of values, the age of the lion. His friends misunderstood him; Wagner attacked him. But above all, he was increasingly ill. "Not to be able to read! To write only very infrequently! To see no one! Not to hear any music!" In 1880, he described his state as follows: "Continual suffering, for hours every day a feeling of seasickness, a semi-paralysis that makes speaking difficult and, as a diversion, terrible attacks (during the last one I vomited for three days and three nights, and hungered for death. . .). If I could only describe the relentlessness of it all, the continuous gnawing pain in my head, my eyes, and this general feeling of paralysis, from head to toe."

In what sense is illness — or even madness — present in Nietzsche's work? It is never a source of inspiration. Never did Nietzsche think of philosophy as

proceeding from suffering or anguish, even if the philosopher, according to him, suffers in excess. Nor did he think of illness as an event that affects a body-object or a brain-object from the outside. Rather, he saw in illness a *point of view* on health; and in health, a *point of view* on illness. "To observe, as a sick person, healthier concepts, healthier values, then, conversely, from the height of a rich, abundant, and confident life, to delve into the secret work of decadent instincts — such is the practice in which I most frequently engaged. . . ." Illness is not a motive for a thinking subject, nor is it an object for thought: it constitutes, rather, a secret intersubjectivity at the heart of a single individual. Illness as an evaluation of health, health as an evaluation of illness: such is the "reversal," the "*shift in perspective*" that Nietzsche saw as the crux of his method and his calling for a transmutation of values.¹ Despite appearances, however, there is no reciprocity between the two points of view, the two evaluations. Thus movement from health to sickness, from sickness to health, if only as an idea, this very mobility is the sign of superior health; this mobility, this lightness in movement, is the sign of "great health." That is why Nietzsche could say until the end (that is, in 1888): "I am the opposite of a sick person; I am basically well." And yet one must say that it would all end badly,

for the mad Nietzsche is precisely the Nietzsche who lost this mobility, this art of displacement, when he could no longer *in his health* make of sickness a point of view on health.

With Nietzsche, everything is mask. His health was a first mask for his genius; his suffering, a second mask, both for his genius and for his health. Nietzsche didn't believe in the unity of a self and didn't experience it. Subtle relations of power and of evaluation between different "selves" that conceal but also express other kinds of forces — forces of life, forces of thought — such is Nietzsche's conception, his way of living. Wagner, Schopenhauer, and even Paul Rée were experienced as his own masks. After 1890, his friends (Overbeck, Gast) sometimes thought his madness was his final mask. He had written: "And sometimes madness itself is the mask that hides a knowledge that is fatal and too sure." In fact, it is not. Rather, it marks the moment when the masks, no longer shifting and communicating, merge into a death-like rigidity. Among the strongest moments of Nietzsche's philosophy are the pages where he speaks of the need to be masked, of the virtue and the positivity of masks, of their ultimate importance. Nietzsche's own beauty resided in his hands, his ears, his eyes (he compliments himself on his ears; he sees small ears as being a labyrinthine

secret that leads to Dionysus). But on this first mask there comes another, represented by the enormous mustache: "Give me, please give me... — What? — another mask, a second mask."

After *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche continued his project of total criticism: *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (1879), *Daybreak* (1880). He worked on *The Gay Science*. But something new emerged: an exaltation, an overabundance, as if Nietzsche had been pushed to the point where evaluation changes meaning and where illness is judged from the height of a strange well-being. His suffering continued, but it was often dominated by an "enthusiasm" that affected his very body. Nietzsche then experienced his most exalted states of being, though they were interlaced with menacing feelings. In August 1881, in Sils-Maria, as he walked along the lake of Silvaplana, he had the overwhelming revelation of the eternal return, then the inspiration for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Between 1883 and 1885, he wrote the four books of *Zarathustra* and gathered notes for a book that was to follow. He carried criticism to a higher level than ever before; he made of it the weapon of a "transmutation" of values, the No that is at the service of a higher affirmation (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 1886; *The Genealogy of Morals*, 1887). This is the third metamorphosis, or the becoming-child.

But he was often very anxious and experienced many frustrations. In 1882, there was the affair with Lou von Salomé, a young Russian woman who lived with Paul Rée and seemed to Nietzsche an ideal disciple and worthy of his love. Following an affective structure he had already had occasion to enact, Nietzsche soon proposed to her through a friend. He was pursuing a dream: with himself as Dionysus, he would receive Ariadne, with Theseus's approval. Theseus is the higher man, the image of the father — what Wagner had already been for Nietzsche. But Nietzsche had not dared to aspire openly to Cosima-Ariadne. In Paul Rée, and in other friends before him, Nietzsche found other Theseuses, fathers that were younger, less imposing.² Dionysus is superior to the higher man, as Nietzsche was to Wagner and all the more so to Paul Rée. Obviously and inevitably, this sort of fantasy had to fail. Ariadne always still prefers Theseus. With Malwida von Meysenbug acting as chaperon, Lou von Salomé, Paul Rée, and Nietzsche formed a peculiar quartet. Their life together was made of quarrels and reconciliations. Nietzsche's sister Elisabeth, who was possessive and jealous, did her best to break it up. She succeeded, because Nietzsche could neither detach himself from her nor dampen the harsh judgment he had of her ("people like my sister are irreconcilable

adversaries of my way of thinking and my philosophy, this is due to the eternal nature of things..."; "souls such as yours, my poor sister, I do not like them"; "I am profoundly tired of your indecent moralizing chatter..."). Lou von Salomé's fondness for Nietzsche was not truly love; but many years later, she did write a beautiful book about him.³

Nietzsche felt more and more isolated. He learned of Wagner's death, which revived in him the Ariadne-Cosima idea. In 1885, Elisabeth married Bernhard Förster, a Wagnerian and an anti-Semite who was also a Prussian nationalist. Förster went to Paraguay with Elisabeth to found a colony of pure Aryans. Nietzsche didn't attend their wedding and found his cumbersome brother-in-law hard to put up with. To another racist he wrote: "Please stop sending me your publications; I fear for my patience." Nietzsche's bouts of euphoria and depression followed more closely on each other. At times, everything seemed excellent to him: his clothes, what he ate, the people who received him, the fascination he believed he caused in stores. At other times, despair won over: a lack of readers, a feeling of death, of deceit.

Then came the great year 1888: *Twilight of the Idols*, *The Wagner Case*, *The Antichrist*, *Ecce Homo*. It is as if his creative faculties were becoming exacerbated

in a last momentum before the final collapse. Even his tone changes in these masterful works: a new violence, a new humor, as with the comedy of the Overman. Nietzsche paints a picture of himself that is global, provoking ("one day the memory of something extraordinary will be linked to my name"; "it is only thanks to me that there are great politics on earth"); but at the same time, he focused on the present and was concerned with immediate success. By the end of 1888, he had started to write strange letters. To August Strindberg: "I convened in Rome an assembly of princes, I want to have the young Kaiser shot. Good-bye for now! For we will meet again. On one condition: Let's divorce. . . Nietzsche-Caesar." On January 3, 1889, he had a crisis in Turin. He again wrote letters, signed them Dionysus, or the Crucified one, or both. To Cosima Wagner: "Ariadne, I love you. Dionysius." Overbeck rushed to Turin, where he found Nietzsche overwrought and lost. He managed to take him to Basel, where Nietzsche calmly allowed himself to be committed. The diagnosis was "progressive paralysis." His mother had him transferred to Jena. The doctors in Jena suspected a syphilitic infection dating back to 1866. (Was this based on some declaration of Nietzsche's? As a young man, he told his friend Paul Deussen of a strange adventure in which he was saved by a piano. A text of

Zarathustra, “Among the Girls of the Desert,” must be read in this light.) Sometimes calm, sometimes in crisis, he seemed to have forgotten everything about his work, though he still played music. His mother took him back to her home; Elisabeth returned from Paraguay at the end of 1890. His illness slowly progressed toward total apathy and agony. He died in Weimar in 1900.⁴

Though we cannot know for certain, the diagnosis of an overall paralysis seems accurate. But the question is: Did the symptoms of 1875, 1881, 1888 constitute one and the same clinical picture? Was it the same illness? It seems likely. Whether it was dementia rather than psychosis isn’t significant. We have seen in what way illness, and even madness, figured in Nietzsche’s work. The overall paralysis marks the moment when illness exits from the work, interrupts it, and makes its continuation impossible. Nietzsche’s last letters testify to this extreme moment, thus they still belong to his work; they are a part of it. As long as Nietzsche could practice the art of shifting perspectives, from health to illness and back, he enjoyed, sick as he may have been, the “great health” that made his work possible. But when this art failed him, when the masks were conflated into that of a dunce and a buffoon under the effect of some organic process, the illness

itself became inseparable from the end of his oeuvre (Nietzsche had spoken of madness as a "comic solution," as a final farce).

Elisabeth helped her mother take care of Nietzsche. She gave pious interpretations to the illness. She made acid remarks to Overbeck, who responded with much dignity. She had great merits: she did everything to ensure the diffusion of her brother's ideas; she organized the Nietzsche-Archiv in Weimar.⁵ But these merits pale before the highest treason: she tried to place Nietzsche in the service of national socialism. This was the last stroke of Nietzsche's fate: the abusive family member who figures in the procession of every "*cursed thinker*."

The Philosophy

Nietzsche introduced two forms of expression into philosophy: aphorism and poetry. They imply a new conception of philosophy, a new image of the thinker and of thought. Nietzsche replaced the ideal of knowledge, the discovery of the truth, with *interpretation* and *evaluation*. Interpretation establishes the "meaning" of a phenomenon, which is always fragmentary and incomplete; evaluation determines the hierarchical "value" of the meanings and totalizes the fragments without diminishing or eliminating their plurality.

Indeed, aphorism is both the art of interpreting and what must be interpreted; poetry, both the art of evaluating and what must be evaluated. The interpreter is the physiologist or doctor, the one who sees phenomena as symptoms and speaks through aphorisms. The evaluator is the artist who considers and creates "perspectives" and speaks through poetry. The philosopher of the future is both artist and doctor — in one word, legislator.

This image of the philosopher is also the oldest, the most ancient one. It is that of the pre-Socratic thinker, "physiologist" and artist, interpreter and evaluator of the world. How are we to understand this closeness between the future and the past? The philosopher of the future is the explorer of ancient worlds, of peaks and caves, who creates only inasmuch as he recalls something that has been essentially forgotten. That something, according to Nietzsche, is the unity of life and thought. It is a complex unity: one step for life, one step for thought. Modes of life inspire ways of thinking; modes of thinking create ways of living. Life *activates* thought, and thought in turn *affirms* life. Of this pre-Socratic unity we no longer have even the slightest idea. We now have only instances where thought bridles and mutilates life, making it sensible, and where life takes revenge and drives thought mad,

losing itself along the way. Now we only have the choice between mediocre lives and mad thinkers. Lives that are too docile for thinkers, and thoughts too mad for the living: Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Hölderlin. But the fine unity in which madness would cease to be such is yet to be rediscovered — a unity that turns an anecdote of life into an aphorism of thought, and an evaluation of thought into a new perspective on life.

In a way, this secret of the pre-Socratics was already lost at the start. We must think of philosophy as a force. But the law of forces is such that they can only appear when concealed by the mask of preexisting forces. Life must first imitate matter. It was for this reason that to survive at the time of its birth in Greece, philosophical force had to disguise itself. The philosopher had to assume the air of the preceding forces; he had to take on the mask of the *priest*. The young Greek philosopher has something of the old Oriental priest. We still confuse them today: Zoroaster and Heraclitus, the Hindus and the Eleatics, the Egyptians and Empedocles, Pythagoras and the Chinese. We speak of the virtue of the ideal philosopher, of his asceticism, of his love of wisdom. We cannot guess the peculiar solitude and the sensuality, the very unwise ends of the perilous existence that lie beneath

this mask. The secret of philosophy, because it was lost at the start, remains to be discovered in the future.

It was therefore fated that philosophy degenerate as it developed through history, that it turn against itself and be taken in by its own mask. Instead of linking an active life and an affirmative thinking, thought gives itself the task of judging life, opposing to it supposedly higher values, measuring it against these values, restricting and condemning it. And at the same time that thought thus becomes negative, life depreciates, ceases to be active, is reduced to its weakest forms, to sickly forms that are alone compatible with the so-called higher values. *It is the triumph of "reaction" over active life and of negation over affirmative thought.* The consequences for philosophy are dire, for the virtues of the philosopher as legislator were first the critique of all established values — that is, of values superior to life and of the principles on which they depend — and then the creation of new values, of values of life that call for another principle. Hammer and transmutation. While philosophy thus degenerates, the philosopher as legislator is replaced by the submissive philosopher. Instead of the critic of established values, instead of the creator of new values and new evaluations, there emerges the preserver of accepted values. The philosopher ceases to be a phys-

iologist or doctor and becomes a metaphysician. He ceases to be a poet and becomes a "public professor." He claims to be beholden to the requirements of truth and reason; but beneath these requirements of reason are forces that aren't so reasonable at all: the state, religion, all the current values. Philosophy becomes nothing more than taking the census of all the reasons man gives himself to obey. The philosopher invokes love of the truth, but it is a truth that harms no one ("it appears as a self-contented and happy creature which is continually assuring all the powers that be that no one needs to be the least concerned on its account; for it is, after all, only "pure science").⁶ The philosopher evaluates life in accordance with his ability to uphold weights and carry burdens. These burdens, these weights, are precisely the higher values. Such is the spirit of heaviness that brings together, in the same desert, the carrier with the carried, the reactive and depreciated life with negative and depreciating thinking. All that remains then is an illusion of critique and a phantom of creation, for nothing is more opposed to the creator than the carrier. To create is to lighten, to unburden life, to invent new possibilities of life. The creator is legislator — dancer.

The degeneration of philosophy appears clearly with Socrates. If we define metaphysics by the dis-

inction between two worlds, by the opposition between essence and appearance, between the true and the false, the intelligible and the sensible, we have to say that it is Socrates who invented metaphysics. He made of life something that must be judged, measured, restricted, and of thought, a measure, a limit, that is exercised in the name of higher values: the Divine, the True, the Beautiful, the Good.... With Socrates emerges the figure of a philosopher who is voluntarily and subtly submissive. But let's move on and skip through the centuries. Who can really think that Kant reinstated critique or rediscovered the idea of the philosopher as legislator? Kant denounces false claims to knowledge, but he doesn't question the ideal of knowing; he denounces false morality, but he doesn't question the claims of morality or the nature and the origin of its value. He blames us for having confused domains and interests; but the domains remain intact, and the interests of reason, sacred (true knowledge, true morals, true religion).

Dialectics itself perpetrates this prestigiditation. Dialectics is the art that invites us to recuperate alienated properties. Everything returns to the Spirit as the motor and product of the dialectic, or to self-consciousness, or even to man, as generic being. But if our properties in themselves express a diminished life

and a mutilating thought, what is the use of recuperating them or becoming their true subject? Did we do away with religion when we interiorized the priest, placing him into the faithful, in the style of the Reformation? Did we kill God when we put man in his place and kept the most important thing, which is the place? The only change is this: instead of being burdened from the outside, man takes the weights and places them on his own back. The philosopher of the future, the doctor-philosopher, will diagnose the perpetuation of the same ailment beneath different symptoms; values can change, man can put himself in the place of God, progress, happiness; utility can replace the truth, the good, or the divine — what is essential hasn't changed: the perspectives or the evaluations on which these values, whether old or new, depend. We are always asked to submit ourselves, to burden ourselves, to recognize only the reactive forms of life, the accusatory forms of thought. When we no longer want, when we can no longer bear higher values, we are still asked to accept "the real as it is" — but *this "real as it is" is precisely what the higher values have made of reality!* (Even existentialism retained a frightening taste for carrying, for bearing, a properly dialectical taste that separates it from Nietzsche.)

Nietzsche is the first to tell us that killing God is

not enough to bring about the transmutation of values. In his work, there are at least fifteen versions of the death of God, all of them very beautiful.⁷ But indeed, in one of the most beautiful, the murderer of God is “the ugliest of men.” What Nietzsche means is that man makes himself even more ugly when, no longer in need of an external authority, he denies himself what was denied him and spontaneously takes on the policing and the burdens that he no longer thinks come from the outside. Thus the history of philosophy, from the Socratics to the Hegelians, remains the long history of man’s submissions and the reasons he gives himself for legitimizing them. This process of degeneration concerns not only philosophy but also becoming in general, or the most basic category of history — not a fact in history, but the very principle from which derive most of the events that have determined our thinking and our life, the symptoms of a decomposition. And so true philosophy, as philosophy of the future, is no more historical than it is eternal: it must be untimely, always untimely.

All interpretations determine the meaning of a phenomenon. Meaning consists of a relation of forces in which some *act* and others *react* in a complex and hierarchized whole. Whatever the complexity of a phenomenon, we can distinguish primary forces, of

conquest and subjugation, from reactive, secondary forces, of adaptation and regulation. This distinction is not only quantitative but also qualitative and typological, for it is in the nature of forces to be in relation to other forces and it is in this relation that they acquire their essence or quality. The relation of force to force is called "will." That is why we must avoid at all costs the misinterpretations of the Nietzschean principle of the will to power. This principle doesn't mean (or at least doesn't primarily mean) that the will *wants* power or *wishes* to dominate. As long as the will to power is interpreted in terms of a "desire to dominate," we inevitably make it depend on established values, the only ones able to determine, in any given case or conflict, who must be "recognized" as the most powerful. We then cannot recognize the nature of the will to power as an elastic principle of all of our evaluations, as a hidden principle for the creation of new values not yet recognized. The will to power, says Nietzsche, consists not in coveting or even in *taking* but in *creating* and *giving*. Power, as a will to power, is not that which the will wants, but *that which* wants in the will (Dionysus himself). The will to power is the differential element from which derive the forces at work, as well as their respective quality in a complex whole. Thus it is always given

as a mobile, aerial, pluralist element. It is by the will to power that a force commands, but it is also by the will to power that a force obeys. To these two types or qualities of forces there correspond two faces, two qualia, of the will to power, which are ultimate and fluent, deeper than the forces that derive from them, for the will to power makes it that active forces *affirm*, and affirm their difference: in them affirmation is first, and negation is never but a consequence, a sort of surplus of pleasure. What characterizes reactive forces, on the other hand, is their opposition to what they are not, their tendency to limit the other: in them, *negation* comes first; through negation, they arrive at a semblance of affirmation. Affirmation and negation are thus the qualia of the will to power, just as action and reaction are the qualities of forces. And just as interpretation finds the principles of meaning in forces, evaluation finds the principles of values in the will to power. Given the preceding terminological precisions, we can avoid reducing Nietzsche's thought to a simple dualism, for, as we shall see, affirmation is itself essentially multiple and pluralist, whereas negation is always one, or heavily monist.

Yet history presents us with a most peculiar phenomenon: the reactive forces triumph; negation wins in the will to power! This is the case not only in the

history of man, but in the history of life and the earth, at least on the face of it inhabited by man. Everywhere we see the victory of No over Yes, of reaction over action. Life becomes adaptive and regulative, reduced to its secondary forms; we no longer understand what it means to act. Even the forces of the earth become exhausted on this desolate face. Nietzsche calls this joint victory of reactive forces and the will to negate "nihilism" — or the triumph of the slaves. According to him, the analysis of nihilism is the object of *psychology*, understood also as a psychology of the cosmos.

It seems difficult for a philosophy of force or of the will to explain how the reactive forces, how the slaves, or the weak, can win. If all that happens is that together they form a force greater than that of the strong, it is hard to see what has changed and what a qualitative evaluation is based on. But in fact, the weak, the slaves, triumph not by adding up their forces but by subtracting those of the other: they separate the strong from what they can do. They triumph not because of the composition of their power but because of the power of their contagion. They bring about a becoming-reactive of all forces. That is what "degeneration" means. Nietzsche shows early on that the criteria of the struggle for life, of natural selection,

necessarily favor the weak and the sick, the "secondary ones" (by sick is meant a life reduced to its reactive processes). This is all the more true in the case of man, where the criteria of history favor the slaves as such. It is a becoming-sick of all life, a becoming-slave of all men, that constitutes the victory of nihilism. We must again avoid misconceptions about the Nietzschean terms "strong" and "weak," "master" and "slave": it is clear that the slave doesn't stop being a slave when he gets power, nor do the weak cease to be weak. Even when they win, reactive forces are still reactive. In everything, according to Nietzsche, what is at stake is a qualitative typology: a question of baseness and nobility. Our masters are slaves that have triumphed in a universal becoming-slave: European man, domesticated man, the buffoon. Nietzsche describes modern states as ant colonies, where the leaders and the powerful win through their baseness, through the contagion of this baseness and this buffoonery. Whatever the complexity of Nietzsche's work, the reader can easily guess in which category (that is, in which type) he would have placed the race of "masters" conceived by the Nazis. When nihilism triumphs, then and only then does the will to power stop meaning "to create" and start to signify instead "to want power," "to want to dominate" (thus to attribute to oneself or

have others attribute to one established values: money, honors, power, and so on). Yet that kind of will to power is precisely that of the slave; it is the way in which the slave or the impotent conceives of power, the idea he has of it and that *he applies when he triumphs*. It can happen that a sick person says, Oh! if I were well, I would do this or that — and maybe he will, but his plans and his thoughts are still those of a sick person, only a sick person. The same goes for the slave and for his conception of mastery or power. The same also goes for the reactive man and his conception of action. Values and evaluations are always being reversed, things are always seen from a petty angle, images are reversed as in a bull's-eye. One of Nietzsche's greatest sayings is: "We must always protect the strong from the weak."

Let us now specify, for the case of man, the stages of the triumph of nihilism. These stages constitute the great discoveries of Nietzschean psychology, the categories of a typology of depths.

1. *Resentment*: It's your fault... It's your fault... Projective accusation and recrimination. It's your fault if I'm weak and unhappy. Reactive life gets away from active forces; reaction stops being "acted." It becomes something sensed, a "resentment" that is exerted against everything that is active. Action becomes

shameful: life itself is accused, separated from its power, separated from what it can do. The lamb says: I could do everything that the eagle does; I'm admirable for not doing so. Let the eagle do as I do...

2. *Bad conscience*: It's my fault... The moment of introjection. Having captured life like a fish on a hook, the reactive forces can turn in on themselves. They interiorize the fault, say they are guilty, turn against themselves. But in this way they set an example, they invite all of life to come and join them, they acquire a maximum of contagious power — they form reactive communities.

3. *The ascetic ideal*: The moment of sublimation. What the weak or reactive life ultimately wants is the negation of life. *Its* will to power is a will to nothingness, as a condition of its triumph. Conversely, the will to nothingness can only tolerate a life that is weak, mutilated, reactive — states close to nothing. Then is formed the disturbing alliance. Life is judged according to values that are said to be superior to life: these pious values are opposed to life, condemn it, lead it to nothingness; they promise salvation only to the most reactive, the weakest, the sickest forms of life. Such is the alliance between God-Nothingness and Reactive-Man. Everything is reversed: slaves are called masters; the weak are called strong; baseness is

called nobility. We say that someone is noble and strong because he carries; he carries the weight of higher values; he feels responsible. Even life, especially life, seems hard for him to carry. Evaluations are so distorted that we can no longer see that the carrier is a slave, that what he carries is a slavery, that the carrier is a carrier of the weak — the opposite of a creator or a dancer. In fact, one only carries out of weakness; one only wishes to be carried out of a will to nothingness (see the buffoon of *Zarathustra* and the figure of the donkey).

These stages of nihilism correspond, according to Nietzsche, to Judaic religion, then to Christianity, but the latter was certainly well prepared by Greek philosophy, that is, by the degeneration of philosophy in Greece. More generally, Nietzsche shows how these stages are also the genesis of the great categories of our thought: the Self, the World, God, causality, finality, and so on. But nihilism doesn't stop there and follows a path that makes up our entire history.

4. *The death of God*: The moment of recuperation. For a long time, the death of God was thought to be an inter-religious drama, a problem between the Jewish God and the Christian God, to the point where we are no longer quite sure whether it is the Son who dies out of resentment against the Father or the

Father who dies so that the Son can be independent (and become "cosmopolitan"). But Saint Paul already founded Christianity on the principle that Christ dies for *our* sins. With the Reformation, the death of God becomes increasingly a problem between God and man, until the day man discovers himself to be the murderer of God, wishes to see himself as such and to carry this new weight. He wants the logical outcome of this death: to become God himself, to replace God.

Nietzsche's idea is that the death of God is a grand event, glamorous yet insufficient, for nihilism continues, barely changing its form. Earlier, nihilism had meant depreciation, the negation of life in the name of higher values. But now the negation of these higher values is replaced by human values — all too human values (morals replace religion; utility, progress, even history replace divine values). Nothing has changed, for the same reactive life, the same slavery that had triumphed in the shadow of divine values now triumphs through human ones. The same carrier, the same donkey, who used to bear the weight of divine relics, for which he answered before God, now burdens himself on his own, as an auto-responsibility. We have even taken a further step in the desert of nihilism: we claim to embrace all of reality, but we embrace only what the higher values have left of it, the

residue of reactive forces and the will to nothingness. That is why Nietzsche, in book IV of *Zarathustra*, traces the great misery of those he calls "the higher men." These men want to replace God; they carry human values; they even believe they are rediscovering reality, recuperating the meaning of affirmation. But the only affirmation of which they are capable is the Yes of the donkey, Y-A, the reactive force that burdens itself with the products of nihilism and that thinks it says Yes each time it *carries* a no. (Two modern works are profound meditations on the Yes and the No, on their authenticity or their mystification: those of Nietzsche and James Joyce.)

5. *The last man and the man who wants to die*: The moment of the end. The death of God is thus an event that still awaits its meaning and its value. As long as our principle of evaluation remains unchanged, as long as we replace old values with new ones that only amount to new combinations between reactive forces and the will to nothingness, nothing has changed; we are still under the aegis of *established* values. We know full well that some values are born old and from the time of their birth exhibit their conformity, their conformism, their inability to upset any established order. And yet with each step, nihilism advances further, inanity further reveals itself. What appears in the death

of God is that the alliance between reactive forces and the will to nothingness, between reactive man and nihilist God, is in the process of dissolving: man claimed he could do without God, be the same as God. Nietzsche's concepts are categories of the unconscious. What counts is how this drama is played out in the unconscious: when reactive forces claim to do without a "will," they fall further and further into the abyss of nothingness, into a world more and more devoid of values, divine or even human. Following the higher men there arises *the last man*, the one who says: all is vain, better to fade away passively! Better a nothingness of the will than a will of nothingness! But thanks to this rupture, the will to nothingness turns against the reactive forces, becomes the will to deny reactive life itself, and inspires in man the wish to actively destroy himself. Beyond the last man, then, there is still *the man who wants to die*. And at this moment of the completion of nihilism (midnight), everything is ready — ready for a transmutation.⁸

The transmutation of all values is defined in the following way: an active becoming of forces, *a triumph of affirmation in the will to power*. Under the rule of nihilism, negation is the form and the content of the will to power; affirmation is only secondary, subordinated to negation, gathering and carrying its fruit.

Hence the Yes of the donkey, Y-A, becomes a false yes, a sort of caricature of affirmation. Now everything changes: affirmation becomes the essence or the will to power itself; as for the negative, it subsists, but as the mode of being of one who affirms, as the aggressivity that belongs to affirmation, like the lightning that announces and the thunder that follows, what is affirmed — like the total critique that accompanies creation. Thus Zarathustra is pure affirmation but also he who carries negation to its highest point, making of it an action, an agency that services he who affirms and creates. The Yes of Zarathustra is opposed to the Yes of the donkey, as creating is opposed to carrying. The No of Zarathustra is opposed to the No of nihilism, as aggressivity is opposed to resentment. Transmutation signifies this reversal in the relation of affirmation-negation. But we can see that a transmutation is possible only at the close of nihilism. We had to get to the last man, then to the man who wants to die, for negation *finally to turn against the reactive forces* and become an action that serves a higher affirmation (hence Nietzsche's saying: nihilism conquered, but conquered by itself. . .).

Affirmation is the highest power of the will. But what is affirmed? The earth, life. . . But what form do the earth and life assume when they are the objects of

affirmation? A form unbeknownst to we who inhabit only the desolate surface of the earth and who live in states close to zero. What nihilism condemns and tries to deny is not so much Being, for we have known for some time that Being resembles Nothingness like a brother. It is, rather, multiplicity; it is, rather, becoming. Nihilism considers becoming as something that *must* atone and must be reabsorbed into Being, and the multiple as something unjust that must be judged and reabsorbed into the One. Becoming and multiplicity are guilty — such is the first and the last word of nihilism. That is why under its aegis, philosophy is motivated by dark sentiments: a “discontent,” a certain anguish, an uneasiness about living, an obscure sense of guilt. By contrast, the first figure of the transmutation elevates multiplicity and becoming to their highest power and makes of them objects of an affirmation. In the affirmation of the multiple lies the practical joy of the diverse. Joy emerges as the sole motive for philosophizing. To valorize negative sentiments or sad passions — that is the mystification on which nihilism bases its power. (Lucretius, then Spinoza, already wrote decisive passages on this subject. Before Nietzsche, they conceived philosophy as the power to affirm, as the practical struggle against mystifications, as the expulsion of the negative.)

Multiplicity is affirmed as multiplicity; becoming is affirmed as becoming. That is to say at once that affirmation is itself multiple, that it becomes itself, and that becoming and multiplicity are themselves affirmations. There is something like a play of mirrors in affirmation properly understood: "Eternal affirmation . . . eternally I am your affirmation!" The second figure of the transmutation is the affirmation of the affirmation, the doubling, the divine couple Dionysus and Ariadne.

Dionysus can be recognized in all the preceding characteristics. We are far from the first Dionysus, the one that Nietzsche had conceived under the influence of Schopenhauer, who had reabsorbed life into a primal ground and, forming an alliance with Apollo, had created tragedy. It is true that starting with *The Birth of Tragedy*, Dionysus was defined through his opposition to Socrates even more than through his alliance with Apollo; Socrates judged and condemned life in the name of higher values, but Dionysus had the sense that life is not to be judged, that it is just enough, holy enough, in itself. And as Nietzsche progresses further in his work, the real opposition appears to him: no longer Dionysus versus Socrates, but Dionysus versus the Crucified. Their martyrdom seems the same, but the interpretation, the evaluation of it

are different: on one side, a testimony against life, a vengeance that consists in denying life; on the other, the affirmation of life, the affirmation of becoming and multiplicity that extends even in the very laceration and scattered limbs of Dionysus. Dance, lightness, laughter are the properties of Dionysus. As power of affirmation, Dionysus evokes a mirror within his mirror, a ring within his ring: a second affirmation is needed for affirmation to be itself affirmed. Dionysus has a fiancée, Ariadne ("You have small ears, you have my ears: put a clever word in them"). The only clever word is Yes. Ariadne completes the set of relations that define Dionysus and the Dionysian philosopher.

Multiplicity is no longer answerable to the One, nor is becoming answerable to Being. But Being and the One do more than lose their meaning: they take on a new meaning. Now the One is said of the multiple as the multiple (splinters or fragments); Being is said of becoming as becoming. That is the Nietzschean reversal, or the third figure of the transmutation. Becoming is no longer opposed to Being, nor is the multiple opposed to the One (these oppositions being the categories of nihilism). On the contrary, what is affirmed is the One of multiplicity, the Being of becoming. Or, as Nietzsche puts it, one affirms the necessity of chance. Dionysus is a player. The real

player makes of chance an object of affirmation: he affirms the fragments, the elements of chance; from this affirmation is born the necessary number, which brings back the throw of the dice. We now see what this third figure is: the play of the eternal return. This return is precisely the Being of becoming, the one of multiplicity, the necessity of chance. Thus we must not make of the eternal return a *return of the same*. To do this would be to misunderstand the form of the transmutation and the change in the fundamental relationship, for the same does not preexist the diverse (except in the category of nihilism). *It is not the same that comes back*, since the coming back is the original form of the same, which is said only of the diverse, the multiple, becoming. The same doesn't come back; only coming back is the same in what becomes.

The very essence of the eternal return is at issue. We must get rid of all sorts of useless themes in this question of the eternal return. It is sometimes asked how Nietzsche could have believed this thought to be new or extraordinary, because it was quite common among the ancients. But, precisely, Nietzsche knew full well that *it was not to be found* in ancient philosophy, either in Greece or in the Orient, except in a piecemeal or hesitant manner and in a very different sense from his own. Nietzsche already had the most

explicit reservations about Heraclitus. And in putting the eternal return in the mouth of Zarathustra, like a serpent in the gullet, Nietzsche meant only to impute to the ancient figure of Zoroaster what Zoroaster himself was the least able to conceive. Nietzsche explains that he takes Zarathustra as a euphemism, or rather as an antithesis and a metonymy, purposely giving him new concepts that he himself could not create.⁹

It is also asked why the eternal return is so surprising if it consists of a cycle, that is, of a return of the whole, a return of the same, a return to the same. But in fact it is not that at all. Nietzsche's secret is that *the eternal return is selective*. And doubly so. First as a thought, for it gives us a law for the autonomy of the will freed from any morality: whatever I want (my laziness, my gluttony, my cowardice, my vice as well as my virtue), I "must" want it in such a way that I also want its eternal return. The world of "semi-wants" is thus eliminated: everything we want when we say "once, only once." Even a cowardice, a laziness, that would wish for its eternal return would become something other than a laziness, a cowardice; it would become an active power of affirmation.

The eternal return is not only selective thinking but also selective Being. Only affirmation comes back,

only what can be affirmed comes back, only joy returns. All that can be negated, all that is negation, is expelled by the very movement of the eternal return. We may fear that the combination of nihilism and reaction will eternally come back. The eternal return should be compared to a wheel whose movement is endowed with a centrifugal force that drives out everything negative. Because Being is affirmed of becoming, it expels all that contradicts affirmation, all the forms of nihilism and of reaction: bad conscience, resentment . . . we will see them only once.

Yet in many texts, Nietzsche conceives of the eternal return as a cycle where everything comes back, or the same comes back, which amounts to the same. But what do these texts mean? Nietzsche is a thinker who "dramatizes" ideas, that is, who presents them as successive events, with different levels of tension. We have already seen this with the death of God. Similarly, the eternal return is the object of two accounts (and there would have been more had his work not been interrupted by madness, which prevented a progression that Nietzsche had explicitly planned). Of the two accounts, one concerns a *sick* Zarathustra, the other, a Zarathustra who is *convalescent and nearly cured*. What makes Zarathustra sick is precisely the idea of the cycle: the idea that everything comes back,

that the same returns, that everything comes back to the same. In this case, the eternal return is only a hypothesis, a hypothesis that is both banal and terrifying: banal because it corresponds to a natural, animal, immediate, certitude (that is why, when the eagle and the serpent try to console him, Zarathustra answers: you have made of the eternal return a tired refrain, you have reduced the eternal return to a formula that is common, all too common);¹⁰ terrifying because, if it is true that everything comes back, and comes back to the same, then small and petty man, nihilism and reaction, will come back as well (that is why Zarathustra cries out his great disgust, his great contempt, and declares that he can not, will not, dares not, say the eternal return).

What happened when Zarathustra was convalescent? Did he simply decide to bear what he couldn't bear before? He accepts the eternal return; he grasps its joy. Is this simply a psychological change? Of course not. It is a change in the understanding and the meaning of the eternal return itself. Zarathustra recognizes that while he was sick, he had understood nothing of the eternal: that it is not a cycle, that it is not the return of the same, nor a return to the same; that it is not a simple, natural assumption for the use of animals or a sad moral punishment for the use of men.

Zarathustra understands the equation "eternal return = selective Being." How can reaction and nihilism, how can negation come back, since the eternal return is the Being that is only said of affirmation, and becoming in action? A centrifugal wheel, "supreme constellation of Being, that no wish can attain, that no negation can soil." The eternal return is repetition; but it is the repetition that selects, the repetition that saves. The prodigious secret of a repetition that is liberating and selecting.

The transmutation thus has a fourth, and final, dimension: it implies and produces the Overman. In his human essence, man is a reactive being who combines his forces with nihilism. The eternal return repels and expels him. The transmutation involves an essential, radical conversion that is produced in man but that produces the Overman. The Overman refers specifically to the gathering of all that can be affirmed, the superior form of what is, the figure that represents selective Being, its offspring and subjectivity. He is thus at the intersection of two genealogies. On the one hand, he is produced in man, through the intermediary of the last man and the man who wants to die, but beyond them, through a sort of wrenching apart and transformation of human essence. Yet on the other hand, although he is produced in man, he is

not produced by man: he is the fruit of Dionysus and Ariadne. Zarathustra himself follows the first genealogical line; he remains thus inferior to Dionysus, whose prophet or herald he becomes. Zarathustra calls the Overman his child, but he has been surpassed by his child, whose real father is Dionysus. Thus the figures of the transmutation are complete: Dionysus or affirmation; Dionysus-Ariadne, or affirmation doubled; the eternal return, or affirmation redoubled; the Overman, or the figure and the product of the affirmation.

We readers of Nietzsche must avoid four potential misinterpretations: (1) about the will to power (believing that the will to power means "wanting to dominate" or "wanting power"); (2) about the strong and the weak (believing that the most powerful in a social regime are thereby the strong); (3) about the eternal return (believing that it is an old idea, borrowed from the Greeks, the Hindus, the Babylonians. . . ; believing that it is a cycle, or a return of the same, a return to the same); (4) about the last works (believing that they are excessive or disqualified by madness).

*Dictionary of the Main Characters in
Nietzsche's Work*

Eagle and Serpent: They are Zarathustra's animals. The serpent is coiled around the eagle's neck. Both thus

represent the eternal return as a ring, a ring within the ring, the engagement of the divine couple Dionysus and Ariadne. But they represent it in an animal way, as an immediate certitude or a natural assumption. (What escapes them is the essence of the eternal return, that is, the fact that it is selective, both as thought and as Being.) Thus they make of the eternal return a "babbling," a "refrain." What's more: the *uncoiled* serpent represents what is intolerable and impossible in the eternal return when it is seen as a natural certitude according to which "everything comes back."

Donkey and Camel: They are beasts of the desert (nihilism). They carry loads to the heart of the desert. The donkey has two flaws: his No is a false no, a no of resentment. And moreover, his Yes (Y-A, Y-A) is a false yes. He thinks that to affirm means *to carry, to burden*. The donkey is primarily a Christian animal: he carries the weight of values said to be "superior to life." After the death of God, he burdens himself, he carries the weight of human values, he purports to deal with "the real as it is": he is thus the new god of the higher men. From beginning to end, the donkey is the caricature of the betrayal of Dionysus's Yes; he affirms, but only the products of nihilism. His long

ears are also the opposite of the small, round labyrinthine ears of Dionysus and Ariadne.

Spider (or Tarantula): It is the spirit of revenge or resentment. Its power of contagion is its venom. Its will is a will to punish and to judge. Its weapon is the thread, the thread of morality. It preaches equality (that everyone become like it!).

Ariadne and Theseus: She is the anima. She was loved by Theseus and loved him. But that was just when she held the thread and was a bit of a spider, a cold creature of resentment. Theseus is the hero, a picture of the higher man. He has all the inferiorities of the higher man: to carry, to bear, not to know to unharness, to know nothing of lightness. As long as Ariadne loves Theseus and is loved by him, her femininity remains imprisoned, tied up by the thread. But when Dionysus-the-Bull approaches, she discovers true affirmation and lightness. She becomes an affirmative anima who says Yes to Dionysus. Together they are the couple of the eternal return and give birth to the Overman, for "it is only when the hero abandons his soul that the Overman approaches as in a dream."

The Buffoon (Monkey, Dwarf, or Demon): He is the caricature of Zarathustra. He imitates him, but as heaviness imitates lightness. Thus he represents the worst danger for Zarathustra: the betrayal of the doctrine. The buffoon is contemptuous, but out of resentment. He is the spirit of heaviness. Like Zarathustra, he claims to go beyond, to overcome. But to overcome means for him either to be carried (to climb on man's shoulders, or even on Zarathustra's) or to jump over him. These represent the two possible misreadings of the "Overman."

Christ (Saint Paul and Buddha): (1) He represents an essential moment of nihilism: that of bad conscience, after Judaic resentment. But it is still the same enterprise of vengeance and animosity toward life, for Christian love valorizes only the sick and desolate aspects of life. Through his death, Christ seems to become independent of the Jewish God: He becomes universal and "cosmopolitan." But he has only found a new way of judging life, of universalizing the condemnation of life, by internalizing sin (bad conscience). Christ died for us, for our sins! Such at least is the interpretation of Saint Paul, and it is the one that has prevailed in the Church and in our history. Christ's martyrdom is thus opposed to that of Dionysus: in

the first case, life is judged and must atone; in the second, it is sufficiently just in itself to justify everything. "Dionysus against the Crucified."

(2) But if beneath Paul's interpretation we seek the personal type that is Christ, we can surmise that Christ belongs to nihilism in a very different way. He is kind and joyful, doesn't condemn, is indifferent to guilt of any kind; he wants only to die; he seeks his own death. He is thus well ahead of Saint Paul, for he represents the ultimate stage of nihilism: that of the last man or the man who wants to die — the stage closest to Dionysian transmutation. Christ is "the most interesting of decadents," a sort of Buddha. He enables a transmutation; the synthesis of Dionysus and Christ is now possible: "Dionysus-Crucified."

Dionysus: There are many different aspects of Dionysus — in relation to Apollo, in opposition to Socrates, in contrast with Christ, in complementarity with Ariadne.

The Higher Men: They are multiple but exemplify the same endeavor: after the death of God, to replace divine values with human values. They thus represent the becoming of culture, or the attempt to put man in the place of God. As the principle of evaluation re-

mains the same, as the transmutation has not been effected, they belong fully to nihilism and are closer to Zarathustra's buffoon than to Zarathustra himself. They are "failed," "wasted," and know not how to laugh, to play, to dance. In logical sequence, their parade goes as follows:

1. *The Last Pope*: He knows that God is dead but believes that God suffocated himself, out of pity, because he could no longer stand his love for men. The last pope has become master-less, yet he is not free; he lives on his memories.

2. *The Two Kings*: They represent the movement of the "morality of mores," which seeks to train and form men, to create free men through the most violent and restrictive means. Thus there are two kings: one on the left for the means, one on the right for the ends. But before, as well as after, the death of God, for the means as for the ends, the morality of mores itself degenerates, trains and selects the wrong way, falls in favor of the rabble (triumph of the slaves). The two kings are the ones who bring in the donkey so that the higher men will turn into their new god.

3. *The Ugliest of Men*: He is the one who killed God, for he could no longer tolerate his pity. But he is still the old man, uglier yet: instead of the bad conscience of a god who died for him, he experiences the

bad conscience of a god who died because of him; instead of feeling God's pity, he feels man's pity, the pity of the rabble, which is even more unbearable. He is the one who leads the litany of the donkey and encourages the false Yes.

4. *The Man with the Leech*: He wants to replace divine values, religion, and even morality with knowledge. Knowledge must be scientific, exact, incisive, whether its object be big or small; the exact knowledge of the smallest thing will replace our belief in "grand," vague values. That is why this man gives his arm to the leech and gives himself the task and the ideal of knowing a very small thing: the brain of the leech (without going back to first causes). But the man with the leech doesn't know that knowledge is the leech itself and that it acts as a relay for morality and religion by pursuing the very same goals: cutting up life, mutilating and judging life.

5. *The Voluntary Beggar*: He has given up on knowledge. He believes only in human happiness; he seeks happiness on earth. But human happiness, dull as it may be, cannot be found among the rabble, motivated as it is by resentment and bad conscience. Human happiness can only be found among cows.

6. *The Sorcerer*: He is the man of bad conscience, who persists under the reign of God as well as after

his death. Bad conscience is fundamentally a comedian, an exhibitionist. It plays every role, even that of the atheist, even that of the poet, even that of Ariadne. But it always lies and recriminates. When it says "it's my fault," it wants to incite pity, inspire guilt, even in those who are strong; it wants to shame everything that is alive, to propagate its venom. "Your complaint is a decoy!"

7. *The Wandering Shadow*: It is the enterprise of culture that has sought everywhere to accomplish the same goal (to free men, select and train them): under the reign of God, after his death, in knowledge, in happiness, and so on. Everywhere it has failed, for this goal is itself a shadow. This goal, higher man, is also a failure. It is the shadow of Zarathustra, nothing but his shadow, who follows him everywhere but disappears at the two important moments of the transmutation: noon and midnight.

8. *The Soothsayer*: He says "all is vain." He announces the last stage of nihilism: the moment when man, having measured the vanity of his effort to replace God, preferred not to wish at all rather than to wish for nothing. The soothsayer thus announces *the last man*. Prefiguring the end of nihilism, he goes further than the higher men. But what escapes him is what is beyond even the last man: *the man who wants*

to die, the man who wants his own end. It is with him that nihilism truly comes to an end, defeats itself: transmutation and the Overman are near.

Zarathustra and the Lion: Zarathustra is not Dionysus, but only his prophet. There are two ways of expressing this subordination. One could first say that Zarathustra remains at No, though this No is no longer that of nihilism: it is the sacred No of the Lion. It is the destruction of all established values, divine and human, that constituted nihilism. It is the trans-nihilist No inherent to the transmutation. Thus Zarathustra seems to have completed his task when he sinks his hands into the mane of the Lion. But in truth, Zarathustra doesn't remain at No, even the sacred and transmutative No. He fully participates in Dionysian affirmation; he is already the idea of this affirmation, the idea of Dionysus. Just as Dionysus is engaged to Ariadne in the eternal return, Zarathustra finds his fiancée in the eternal return. Just as Dionysus is the father of the Overman, Zarathustra calls the Overman his child. Nonetheless, Zarathustra is overtaken by his own children and is only the pretender to, not the constitutive element of, the ring of the eternal return. He doesn't so much produce the Overman as ensure this production within man, by creating all the

conditions in which man overcomes himself and is overcome and in which the Lion becomes Child.

NOTES

1. "Why I Am So Wise," I, in *Ecce Homo*.
2. In 1876, Nietzsche had proposed to a younger woman through his friend Hugo von Senger, who eventually married her.
3. Lou Andreas-Salomé, *Friedrich Nietzsche* (Vienna: C. Koenigen, 1894).
4. About Nietzsche's illness, see Erich Friedrich Podach's *The Madness of Nietzsche* (New York: Putnam, 1931).
5. After 1950, the manuscripts were taken to the former building of the Goethe-Schiller Archiv in Weimar.
6. "Schopenhauer as Educator," vol. 3 of *Untimely Meditations*.
7. "The Madman," *Gay Science*, book III, 125, is sometimes quoted as the first major version of the death of God. This is not the case: in *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, there is a wonderful tale called "The Prisoners." This text resonates mysteriously with Franz Kafka.
8. This distinction between the last man and the man who wants to die is fundamental in Nietzsche's philosophy: in *Zarathustra*, for example, compare the prediction of the soothsayer ("The Soothsayer," book II) with the call of Zarathustra (Prologue, 4 and 5).