

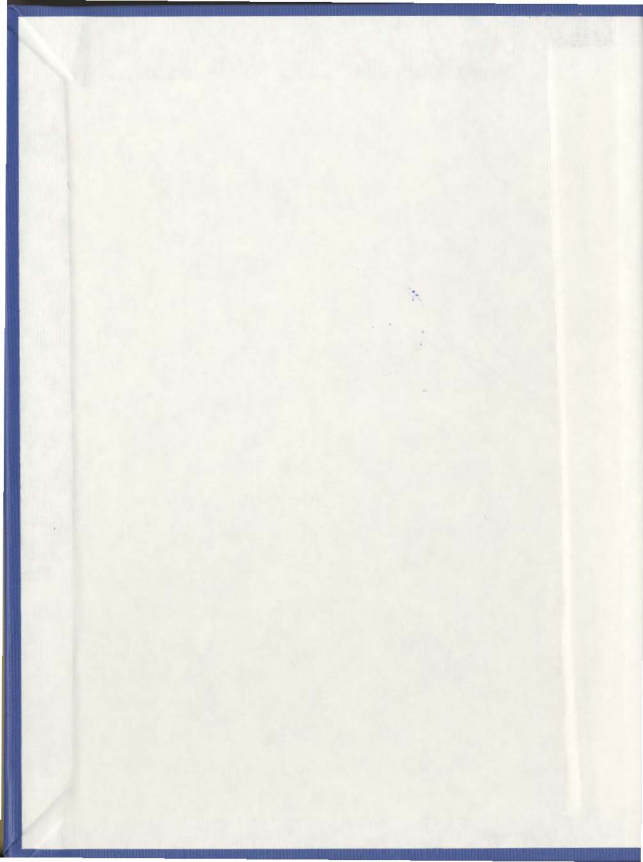
THE GENESIS OF THE CONCEPT OF THE  
UEBERMENSCH IN NIETZCHE

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GARY DAVID BADCOCK



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THE GENESIS OF THE CONCEPT OF THE UEBERMENSCH IN NIETZSCHE



BY

Gary David Badcock, B.A.

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## ABSTRACT

The concept of the *Uebermensch*, while a leading theme of Nietzsche's philosophy, is very difficult to define, and remains largely indeterminate in the commentaries. An attempt is made in the present thesis to render its definition more determinate through an examination of the genesis of the concept in the overall structures of Nietzsche's thought.

The philosophy of Nietzsche is here characterized as essentially a polemic against the Western "moral" tradition, establishing itself purely through its opposition to morality. Since morality, as Nietzsche understands it, is an aberration of the highest order, a negation, then the negation of that original negation yields a positive result. The concept of the *Uebermensch*, which is defined as the positive result of the Nietzschean polemic, therefore has its logical genesis in, and can be seen to reflect the structures of, the critique of morality.

Chapter One sets forth the various sides of the doctrine of the *Uebermensch* as it receives expression in Nietzsche. It is given as a prophetic vision, as a psychological description, and as a moment within a cultural-historical typology.

Chapter Two examines the nature of "morality" in Nietzsche's philosophy. Rather than merely a particular set of ethical imperatives, even those characteristic of the West, morality is fundamentally a form of human existence in which the conscious, or spiritual life and the natural life are posed as mutually contradictory. The chapter concludes with an examination of the negation of morality, and, in particular, of the nature of the positive result.

III

Chapter Three, finally, reveals how the express content of the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch*, given in Chapter One, directly expresses the more abstract limits of the definition generated in Chapter Two. In each of its three phases, the concept of the *Ueberschensch* is defined by a *unity in difference* of the human spiritual and natural life. It is therefore defined as the positive result of Nietzsche's negation of negation.

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## PREFACE

The philosophy of Nietzsche poses a peculiar problem for the reader. He is almost uniquely inviolable as far as being understood from an external standpoint is concerned, so that it is extremely difficult to establish any independent account of his position. One constantly encounters aphorisms in his writings which seem to weaken, or even to contradict, all one's best-reasoned arguments concerning him. It is well, therefore, to point out from the beginning that the present thesis can lay no claim to being the definitive word on Nietzsche; indeed, since Nietzsche's thought is not only incomplete, but incompletionable, no 'final word' can be given. All that can be done is to assume a finite perspective, and work it through.

It is maintained, however, that the account here given of the philosophy of Nietzsche constitutes a significant advance over certain other commentators in the Anglo-American tradition of Nietzsche criticism. Many analyses, for example, fall short of addressing the question of the significance of Nietzsche's 'saga of the human spirit,' and consequently lapse into mere repetition of what are, to most readers, all-too-familiar stories. It is very easy to be simply drawn into the rhetoric. In an effort to avoid this pitfall, an effort has here been made to treat the Nietzschean philosophy in as abstract, or formal, a manner as possible. To the extent that the specific details of the saga are discussed, the abstract results and procedure are thereby meant to be illuminated and demonstrated.

The approach taken arises out of my early struggles with the role of the 'negative' in Nietzsche's philosophy. By the negative, I refer to that

form of human existence and that set of human values which Nietzsche is engaged in attacking as decadent -- in particular, therefore, reference is made to the question of morality. At one level, it needs to be recognized that, in Nietzsche, "all the best things are bad things overcome." It should also be seen, that Nietzsche's affirmation of the negative is an instance of *amor fati*, as Kaufmann points out.<sup>2</sup> However, as I thought about the problem, it became apparent that the preoccupation with the negative -- the status of the position as a polemic -- determines the character of the positive result in a more fundamental sense. I saw that Nietzsche's positive position is arrived at by a *via negativa*, and is, therefore, the result of a negation of the original negation. The present thesis can be seen to have taken shape from this central insight.

A final point: extensive reference is made to Nietzsche's works themselves, and a large number of quotations are included. This, rather than proceeding from any great delight in hearing him speak for himself, is a methodological necessity. Nietzsche's aphoristic style, first of all, demands that one treat him as a sage -- to do him justice, not ourselves --, so that mainly the aphorism rather than the argument must be supposed to contain the truth. But more importantly, since an attempt is here made to systematize his views, and since the present effort is wholly original, we must allow Nietzsche to speak for himself in order to show that he does indeed say what we maintain.

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<sup>1</sup>R. J. Hollingdale, *Nietzsche* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 118.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche* (4th ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 243.

## Chapter 1

THE DOCTRINE OF THE *UEBERMENSCH*

## 1.1 Introduction

It has been said that the philosophy of Nietzsche culminates in a dual vision of eternal recurrence and *Uebermensch*. These are, certainly, two common themes in the Nietzsche corpus, and occupy central positions in his philosophy. Yet, for most students of Nietzsche, the meaning of these doctrines remains so inarticulate that it cannot be said with any certainty whether or not the position would be inconceivable without them, or merely reduced in content and import. The answer is by no means an easy one to give.

We might note at the outset that the image of Nietzsche's philosophy as "culminating" in the eternal return and *Uebermensch* is somewhat unsatisfactory. If what is meant is that it reaches its climax here, then, perhaps, one can only agree. Logically, however, Nietzsche's thought does not proceed linearly, as beginning with certain presuppositions, and moving from there to certain conclusions. Rather, it is as if what we have in the philosophy of Nietzsche is an ellipse with two foci. The perimeters of the ellipse are, in this paradigm, constituted by the Nietzschean polemic against morality, and that polemic centers itself, in turn, in the dual thesis of the eternal recurrence and *Uebermensch*. Thus, these can be understood to constitute the logical foci of Nietzsche's critique of morality rather than a logical culmination of that critique. It is, however, also important to recognize that Nietzsche's philosophy does not begin with these foci, working around them as it develops, but that it rather locates them as its outside perimeters are increasingly fixed.

The present thesis is an extended attempt to provide an account of the defining limits of one of these logical centers: the concept of the *Ueberschensch*. The basic claim is that the *Ueberschensch* is defined within the context of the Nietzschean critique of morality -- as has been illustrated by the image of the ellipse. If this is so, then it follows that what is said of the *Ueberschensch* in Nietzsche can be seen to derive from the polemic against morality, and more specifically, from the self-overcoming of morality:

-- Am I understood? -- The self-overcoming of morality, out of truthfulness: the self-overcoming of the moralist, into his opposite -- into me -- that is what the name of Zarathustra means in my mouth.

Structurally, the thesis will reflect our original characterization of the *Ueberschensch* as one of the foci of the Nietzschean critique of morality. The intent is to reveal that the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* reflects the structures of, and is thus defined within the context of, that critique. The problem is that because of the deliberately anti-systematic character of Nietzsche's thought, the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* can easily be seen as arising out of the mists of Nietzsche's irrationalism, i.e. out of nowhere. The contention of the present thesis is that, on the contrary, the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* focuses a more elaborate set of arguments concerning morality generally, and that, by abstracting from the specific content of those arguments, we arrive at the defining constraints of the concept of the *Ueberschensch*. We shall therefore begin by setting forth the different 'sides' of the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* itself as it appears in Nietzsche. Next, we shall abstract from Nietzsche's critique of morality and the moral tradition, revealing the formal constraints of the philosophy of Nietzsche generally. Nietzsche's philosophy is essentially

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<sup>2</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), "Why I Am a Destiny," 3. Kaufmann's translations are used throughout, and numbers used in citations, unless otherwise indicated, refer to section rather than to page numbers.



polemical, and is positive only because what it negates is already conceived as a negation. Lastly, we shall reveal how the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* does indeed reflect these formal constraints.

More specifically, the thesis is laid out as follows: the remainder of Chapter One is an account of the various expressions of the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* in Nietzsche. Chapter Two addresses the character of Nietzsche's philosophy generally, and lays bare its logical structure. Chapter Three, finally, demonstrates that the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* has its logical genesis in Nietzsche's negation of the moral tradition, characterized in Chapter Two. Thus, we shall first posit that for which we must account; next, we shall reveal that by which we can do it; and finally, we shall carry it out. The three chapters thus form three stages in the progression of the argument.

## 1.2 The content of the doctrine

Nietzsche's doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* receives its first and most sustained expression in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and, in particular, in "Zarathustra's Prologue." Clearly, the context in which it arises sheds much light on the doctrine. First of all, *Zarathustra* mirrors the magnificent German Luther's Bible. Secondly, the figure of Zarathustra rose to some prominence in nineteenth century Biblical criticism in the context of post-exilic Hebrew (and hence Christian) thought. Roughly speaking, it was argued that it was only after the exile that the war between good and evil took on cosmic significance in Judaism. The war in the heavens between the forces of light and the forces of darkness therefore entered the Western tradition as a direct product of Israel's contact with Zoroastrianism; so that, rather than being an eternal verity, it is an historically and socially relative idea. But more than that, the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* appears amid scenes which directly recall the two main episodes in the Western moral tradition. Zarathustra comes down

from the mountain with new law tablets, just as Moses comes down from Sinai; Zarathustra the godless, humbles himself to live among men, just as the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. There is, however, neither Law nor Saviour in Zarathustra's gospel -- and this is precisely his message.

From its inception, therefore, the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* is set in opposition to the Western moral tradition. It is thus consistent with the whole spirit of Nietzsche:

What if a symptom of regression were inherent in the "good," likewise a danger, a seduction, a poison, a narcotic, through which the present was possibly living at the expense of the future? Perhaps more comfortably, less dangerously, but at the same time in a meaner style, more basely? -- So that precisely morality would be to blame if the highest power and splendor actually possible to the type man was never in fact attained? So that precisely morality was the danger of dangers?

It is in this spirit that Nietzsche writes of his character Zarathustra in *Ecco Homo*:

Zarathustra created this most calamitous error, <sup>5</sup> morality; consequently, he must also be the first to recognize it.

As the first one so to recognize the error of the moral tradition, then, it is significant that Zarathustra's first words to mankind are, "I teach you the *Ueberschensch*."

Nietzsche leaves us with no doubt as to his estimation of morality. He writes:

...this is my insight: the teachers, the leaders of humanity, theologians all of them, were also, all of them, decadents:

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<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), Preface, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecco Homo*, "Why I Am a Destiny," 3.

hence the revaluation of all values into hostility to life, hence morality --

*Definition of morality:* Morality -- the idiosyncrasy of decadents, with the ulterior motive of revenging oneself against life -- successfully. I attach value to this definition.

This is a constant theme in Nietzsche, determining his views on everything from religion to art to science to philosophy. "Concerning life, the wisest men of all ages have judged alike: *It is no good.*"<sup>7</sup> All that is of value and for which it is worthwhile to live -- the True, Good, and Beautiful -- that cannot be seen to pertain to this world; this realm of flux, corruption, and death, but to a different, transcendent order, to the realm of eternity and perfection, of the Forms, or of God. Thus, Nietzsche passes his judgment:

All that philosophers have handled for thousands of years have been concept-mummies: nothing real ever escaped their grasp alive. When these honorable idolators of concepts worship something, they kill and stuff it; they threaten the life of everything they worship. Death, change, old age, as well as procreation and growth, are to their minds objections -- even refutations.

Yet, there is more. For Nietzsche, the "wheel within the wheel" is that the moral thesis has it that this otherworldly realm has a bearing upon human affairs. Indeed, man finds himself encountering an unconditional "ought" in the riddle of existence, and he declares in the end, "I ought so to regulate my practice as to conform it to those principles of Goodness which are available to self-conscious reason." There is no real choice within morality -- either one does so, or else one fails to fulfill the distinctive function of a human being, and rests, with the beast, at the

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, in Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), "The Problem of Socrates," 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, "Reason in Philosophy," 1.

sub-rational level, or, worse again, heaps up one's sin's to one's own damnation.

This, for Nietzsche, is the character of morality. As he puts it, it is expressive of a "mortal hostility towards life," and his condemnation of it is untempered and absolute. Moral values, the values of Western civilization for more than two millennia, are the values of the "bad specimens" of humanity, and, more particularly, of the will to power of the bad specimens. Like all else that is living, the weak, decadent type strives to dominate in its world, but can do so only by imposing its instinctive hatred of reality upon everyone. It achieves this through moral values: the only world the weak can abide is the ideal one where weakness has been lied into something meritorious -- "Blessed are the poor in spirit" -- and moral values impose this uniformly upon all, reducing all to the level of sinners striving for an ethereal purity.

The *Uebersensch*, then, is Nietzsche's response to this moral prejudice, the focal point -- along with the formula of eternal recurrence -- of his "exit out of the labyrinth of thousands of years." It must be in the context of this exit out of morality and moral culture, therefore, that his concept is to be understood. Reflection is required of us here. But first, an account of the doctrine of the *Uebersensch* itself is necessary. If the opposition of his type to morality is to become evident, then an account of the *Uebersensch* himself must be first given.

The content of the concept of the *Uebersensch* can be brought to light most effectively by regarding separately the various expressions, or sides of the doctrine as it appears in Nietzsche. It is true that he makes no such distinction himself, but Nietzsche's very method of philosophizing involves the assumption of a number of points of view on the same

question: thus we justify our method.<sup>9</sup> We shall maintain, then, that there are three main aspects of the doctrine, which, though abstractions in themselves, together cover well the general range of what he says of the *Übermensch*. In Nietzsche, therefore, the *Übermensch* is first, a prophetic vision, second, the subject of psychological description, and third, a cultural-historical type. The opposition to the moral thesis is manifest in each.

### 1.3 A prophetic vision

The marked sense of the prophetic 'burden' in Nietzsche derives from his characterization of the cultural situation of his day as nihilistic -- 'The aim is lacking: 'why?' finds no answer.' In relation to contemporary European civilization, he sees himself as a 'destiny,' characterizing himself as 'the first perfect nihilist of Europe who, however, has even now lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind, outside himself.'<sup>10</sup> But contemporary nihilism, for Nietzsche, is rooted in the Christian-moral interpretation of the world, and in its downfall at the hands of its own sense of truthfulness. Belief in God and in absolute values is no longer intellectually acceptable -- consequently, 'nihilism stands at the door':

Extreme positions are not succeeded by moderate ones but by extreme positions of the opposite kind. Thus the belief in the absolute immorality of nature, in aim- and meaninglessness, is the psychologically necessary affect once the belief in God and an essentially moral order becomes untenable. Nihilism appears at that point, not because the displeasure at existence has become greater than before but because one has come to mistrust any 'meaning' in suffering. Indeed in existence. One interpretation has collapsed; but because it was considered the interpretation it

<sup>9</sup> Cf., for example, Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, III, 12.

<sup>10</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), Preface, 3.

now seems as if there were no meaning at all in existence, as if everything were in vain.

It is in this context that Nietzsche sees himself as a man with a mission. He is concerned, as he writes in the outline to Book One of *The Will to Power*, to strive against "meaninglessness" on the one hand and against "moral value judgments" on the other: both spring from the same soil. For Nietzsche, the decisive issue in nihilism is that it retains the moral prejudice. While denying an absolute value to life, the moralist still searches for one, and it is precisely because he is at once convinced that the absolute value is the only adequate value, and yet that such values are, in principle, impossible, that he remains a nihilist. Nietzsche's central argument is that this moral prejudice plaguing the nihilist must be done away with, for the death of God and of the gods entails that there are only finite individuals in a finite world where it is they who create, and have always created, their own values -- relative values.<sup>12</sup> He writes in *Zarathustra*:

A new pride my ego taught me, and this I teach men: no longer to bury one's head in the sand of heavenly things, but to bear it freely, an earthly head, which creates a meaning for the earth.

A new will I teach men: to will this way which man has walked blindly, and to affirm it, and no longer to sneak away from it like the sick and the decaying.<sup>13</sup>

With his realization, therefore, that, since all values are and always have been human creations, we need not yearn for an absolute at all, Nietzsche is able to turn the supposed meaninglessness of existence

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>12</sup> Thus the "absolute" moral imperative is characterized throughout Nietzsche as relative to the will to power of the lower type.

<sup>13</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, I, "On the Afterworldly."

-- which in nihilism reduces to the view that all truths and values are merely the creations of finite individuals in a capricious world -- into the great liberation of mankind.<sup>14</sup> We are free to legislate for ourselves, Nietzsche boasts, and this is a major thrust of his message.

The whole *ethos* of Nietzsche's doctrine of the *Uebermensch* as a prophetic burden can be seen to have issued from these problems. (In the *Genealogy*, for example, we read:

But some day, in a stronger age than this decaying, self-doubling present, he must yet come to us, the redeeming man of great love and contempt . . . This man of the future, who will redeem us not only from the hitherto reigning ideal but also from that which was bound to grow out of it, the great nausea, the will to nothingness, nihilism: this bell-stroke of noon and of the great decision that liberates the will again and restores its goal to the earth and his hope to man; this Antichrist and antinihilist; this victor over God and nothingness -- he must come one day.

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Here, we see clearly the prophetic motifs of the *Uebermensch* as a messianic redeemer, as one who is to come soon, and as one who will put to an end the nihilistic meaninglessness of existence. As Kaufmann writes at one point:

All the material improvements of his time meant as much to Nietzsche as the luxuries and comforts of their generation had meant to Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah: they disgusted him. Only one thing seemed to matter, and it was incomprehensible that anyone could have eyes or ears for any other fact. What else avails? "God is dead!"<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Nietzsche, therefore, is not a nihilist, the difference between him and the nihilist being that the latter holds to the moral prejudice in favor of absolutes even after their theoretical possibility has been discounted, and Nietzsche does not. With the vanishing of the possibility of absolutes, the moral prejudice also vanishes.

<sup>15</sup>Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, II, 24. Cf. also Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 202 - 203.

<sup>16</sup>Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, p. 96. An interesting aside at this point is that Kaufmann has made a bad choice of prophets. While Isaiah was a nobleman, Amos was of the despised class of shepherds, and Jeremiah a survivor of the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

The doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* appears as Nietzsche's answer to nihilism. In place of nihilistic meaninglessness, the *Ueberschensch* is "the meaning of the earth."

The Nietzschean attitude toward life, embodied by his *Ueberschensch*, is the opposite of the world-weariness expressed in both moralism and nihilism. The moral prejudice has its origins in the fact that the world we live in is one of flux, corruption, and death, and in the fact that the insignificant man cannot bear his insignificance. He posits, consequently, an absolute significance for his every deed and thought, an "otherworldly" significance by which he escapes the realities of his finitude. Even evil is given a part in the play, and is thus no longer a testimony to the natural valuelessness of the little man, and an inspiration to nihilism.

The *Ueberschensch*, by contrast, as the one who has overcome the moral prejudice, and who is a stronger type, affirms even all that is terrible and questionable in reality, seeking it out, indeed, as one of the conditions of fruitfulness and growth in life. Such things are merely occasions for the exercise of his world-affirming will to power, for it is out of them that he generates the truth and value by which he lives.

As the "victor over God and nothingness," the *Ueberschensch* is also to some extent to be understood as assuming the role assigned to God within the Western tradition. In particular, he assumes, not only the immovability and freedom of God, but the role of God as the creator of a meaning for the universe. He is, while admittedly a finite subject, at once the *τελος* and active legislator for the world. Just as does God in the poetry of Genesis, and of Plato, the *Ueberschensch* appears as one ordering the void, setting a goal for human practice, creating, as Nietzsche says, a meaning for the earth. The Western tradition, of course, reserves this role for God alone: the ultimate *ὑπέρ*, in fact, is for a mere man to suppose himself to have the right to legislate good and evil, truth and error. But for Nietzsche, such creativity is the distinctive



function of *Uebermenschen* -- the creation of values known to be perspectival, finite, and relative to individual interest -- in utter innocence and with pristine joy. While even the moral man unconsciously created values to suit himself, he becomes incapable of this when it is raised to self-consciousness. 'Rather nihilism than that,' he says.<sup>17</sup> And so, according to Nietzsche, a new type is needed, one who has the "courage" for such things, one who will be able to redeem us:

But say, my brothers, what can the child do that even the lion could not do? Why must the prying lion still become a child? The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes." For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred "Yes" is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world.<sup>18</sup>

The *Uebermensch* is, from this point of view, the new *cause sui*, knowing no limit that he has not himself imposed.

The prophetic dimension in Nietzsche often makes no literal sense. Nietzsche cannot possibly prophesy that a "redeemer" of any sort must come; historical inevitability, along with overall design, conflict very directly with the basic principles of his philosophy. The context in which the prophet is to be taken seriously has gone the way of God. What remains, however, is the cultural residue clinging to the notion of the prophet and its power to evoke a kind of poetic, emotive mysticism. Thus, Jaspers' concept of the "cipher" is applied to the idea of the *Uebermensch* with some justification. The technique is used by Nietzsche to great effect. A hunger for something more, a conviction and a leap into the spirit of the position is the result. God is dead, nihilism stands at the door, but the *Uebermensch* overcomes. He has assumed the right to create new values.

<sup>17</sup> Nietzsche makes this point in *Beyond Good and Evil*, 10.

<sup>18</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, I, "On the Three Metamorphoses."

#### 1.4 A psychological description

We have seen how, in the case of the *Uebermensch* as a "prophetic vision," the doctrine arises out of Nietzsche's attack upon the moral prejudice. In the psychological side of the account, likewise, the same is seen: It is in the context of Nietzsche's psychology of the will to power and its expression in the *ressentiment* of the decadent type that the psychology of the opposite type appears. Indeed, in this case in particular, the discussion is limited almost exclusively to the psychology of the decadent. Still, we are, in all essentials, in no doubt as to what is the psychology of the *Uebermensch* -- a testimony to the character of Nietzsche's positive doctrines as arrived at by a *via negativa*.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche defines psychology as "morphology and the doctrine of the development of the will to power," adding that, as such, it is "the path to the fundamental problems."<sup>19</sup> His intention is consistently to move beyond the moral prejudice in his psychologizing:

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

Rather than there being a human soul with a moral-metaphysical status, therefore, there is, in Nietzsche's psychology, a will to power, a hierarchy of "physiological" instincts, thwarted passion, and subterranean

<sup>19</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 23.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

vengefulness. These, in turn, are understood to be the root of attitudes towards life -- towards suffering, in particular -- and of the explicit expressions of these attitudes towards life in typical valuations and in philosophical systems.

In all of Nietzsche's psychologizing, then, his eye is upon that piece of *fatum* which the individual as such is, and which determines the more visible structures of his concrete existence: hence the emphatic references to *physiology*. The latter concept is difficult to characterize, for what Nietzsche means by it is more psychological and even vitalistic in the broadest sense than strictly physiological, but his point is, again, to call attention to the fact that the existing individual is basically an instinctive agent, and that he instinctively seeks ... power. Thus we have Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power, but it is, notably, the will to power of a type. The implication is that different specimens of man will power in different ways.

As Nietzsche himself pointed out, the great danger in such a psychology of the will to power lies in interpreting it too "crudely," and this has, of course, often been done. The fact is that, above all else, the will to power is to be understood as the will to growth in the sense of establishing oneself firmly in a concrete, self-determining mode of existence. At no point does Nietzsche return man to the status of a beast, and all his talk about the "instinct" governing men needs to be understood in the light of his many clarifications of the concept. For example, consistent with his doctrines as expressed in the early *Schopenhauer as Educator*, he writes in the *Genealogy of Morals* of his own instinct:

Rather do our ideas, our values, our yea and nays, our ifs and buts, grow out of us with the necessity with which a tree bears fruit -- related and each with an affinity to each, and evidence of one will, one health, one soil, one sun.

<sup>21</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Preface, 2.

The "Instinct" Nietzsche speaks of here is surely as much spiritual as it is natural.

In the Third Essay of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche's psychologizing appears at its best. In the account of the ascetic priest, not only do we see that Nietzsche's concept of "physiology" is not mere flesh and bones, and that will to power is as much a spiritual as it is a natural force, but we see also, as nowhere else, what the ascetic ideal really is for Nietzsche, and why the Western tradition, as the embodiment of that ideal, is declared decadent. Elsewhere, the issue is treated somewhat summarily, as in *Twilight*:

The consensus of the sages -- I comprehended this ever more clearly -- proves least of all that they were right in what they agreed on: it shows rather that they themselves, these wisest men, agreed in some *physiological* respect, and hence adopted the same negative attitude to life -- *had* to adopt it.<sup>22</sup>

But in the *Genealogy*, we are provided with an extended account of this negative attitude, of the *ressentiment* which yields its fruit in the negative valuation that life is no good. 'Why should I suffer so?' asks the decadent. 'To live is to suffer, for you are a sinner,' replies the ascetic priest, supplying a complex metaphysical machinery of unreal causes in explanation of the problem. Man is thus given an answer, he affirms himself, by means of a cultural chimera, he is offered an eidetic reprieve from the suffering he experiences -- and clasps it with both hands. He thus wills nothingness, the ideal, the antinatural -- that which completes his basic *ressentiment* against reality, born of his weakness in suffering.

It is thus that the entire content of the ascetic valuation of life is condemned in Nietzsche, along with the Western moral tradition as the upholder of that ideal. As he puts it, it is not as if it uses such language

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<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight*, "The Problem of Socrates," 2.

itself, but the whole disreputation expressed therein between the realms of purposiveness and of absurdity, of holiness and utter depravity, is precisely the expression of the "frog perspective" of Western civilization, of the weakness of the weak. The response on our part, according to Nietzsche, can only be a "revaluation of all values."

It is at this point, logically, that the psychological description of the type of the *Uebermensch* begins. As Nietzsche writes in *Ecce Homo*:

The third inquiry offers the answer to the question whence the ascetic ideal, the priests' ideal, derives its tremendous power although it is the harmful ideal *par excellence*, a will to the end, an ideal of decadence. Answer: not, as people may believe, because God is at work behind the priests but *laute de mieux* -- because it was the only ideal so far, because it had no rival. "For man would rather will even nothingness than not will."<sup>23</sup> -- Above all, a counterideal was lacking -- until Zarathustra.

While the *Genealogy of Morals* itself does not directly supply the answer, it does provide it indirectly. If it is weakness which produces the antinatural valuation, then what we need is strength. If antinature receives expression in the chasm between purposiveness and nature, and between reason and passion within the individual, then what strength will yield is integrity in the highest sense. If the decadent flees from suffering, finding it a stimulus to nihilism, then the *Uebermensch* will affirm it, finding it a stimulus to his highest fruitfulness. If the idealist denies this world and life as it really is, then the *Uebermensch* will affirm it unreservedly. And, as we know, so he does -- to all eternity, in the formula of eternal recurrence. This is indeed the "counterideal" -- not only of Zarathustra, but of Nietzsche generally.

Elsewhere than in the *Genealogy*, of course, these themes receive fuller expression, and chief among them is the relation between passion

<sup>23</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Genealogy of Morals."

and reason, and the life-affirming attitude of the *Uebermensch*. The *Uebermensch* is, in the first place, one in whom the chasm between the senses and the spirit, central to the Western moral tradition, is overcome. Speaking of Goethe, who represents here the ideal, "Dionysian" man, Nietzsche writes:

What he wanted was *totality*: he fought the mutual extraneousness of reason, senses, feeling, and will (preached with the most abhorrent scholasticism by Kant, the antipode of Goethe); he disciplined himself to wholeness, he created himself.<sup>24</sup>

In him, there is a distinct integration of these hitherto 'separate' realms: If, in Nietzsche, the degenerate will to power expresses itself in a fragmented type at war with itself, then the *Uebermensch* will be an integral whole.

Secondly, Nietzsche's psychology draws attention to the attitude towards life, and particularly towards suffering, expressed in philosophical systems. Plato's system, for example, is "antinatural" -- it follows, therefore, that the *Uebermensch*, as the archetype of strength, will espouse a system which elevates natural existence:

I was the first to see the real opposition: the degenerating instinct that turns against life with subterranean youngfulness (Christianity, the philosophy of Schopenhauer, in a certain sense already the philosophy of Plato, and all of idealism as typical forms) versus a formula for the highest affirmation, born of fullness, of overfullness, a Yes-saying without reservation, even to suffering, even to guilt, even to everything that is questionable and strange in existence.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight*, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," 49. Walter Kaufmann, in his *Nietzsche*, makes much of this passage, supporting with it his thesis concerning the centrality of the "sublimation" of passion in Nietzsche. Given the currency of this view of Nietzsche, it might be expected that an account of sublimated passion would be provided here under the psychology of the *Uebermensch*. However, Nietzsche himself does not speak of the "sublimation" of passion, as such, anywhere in his philosophy as either a central concern or as a peripheral one. Mention is made of the "spiritualization" of passion, but this, as we shall see, is by no means the same thing as Kaufmann's concept of sublimation.

<sup>25</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecc Homo*, "The Birth of Tragedy," 2.

The eternal recurrence is this formula of affirmation, the systematic expression of the life-affirmation of *Uebers Menschen*. The moral tradition seeks a route of salvation in the heavens: "salvation," as such, is precisely that for which the eternal recurrence expresses no desire. Indeed, what makes it Nietzsche's absolute "yes" to life is that, instead of searching for a way out of the conditions of human existence -- sin and death, as we might put it -- it affirms one's life as it is lived -- sin and death included -- to be relived perpetually. *Amor fati* and the theme of salvation stand opposed.

For Nietzsche, the strongest type is the most world-affirming type; the most world-affirming formula is the doctrine of eternal recurrence; hence the *Uebers Mensch*, the strongest type, embraces the eternal recurrence. It is worthy of note that Zarathustra, for his part, cannot. It is reserved for one who is still to come, one who will have overcome morality -- thus we both remember the *Uebers Mensch* as a prophetic vision, and usher in the third feature of Nietzsche's account of him: the *Uebers Mensch* as a cultural-historical type.

#### 1.5 A cultural-historical type

The third expression of the doctrine of the *Uebers Mensch* in Nietzsche is consistent with Nietzsche's status as a cultural historian. The *Uebers Mensch* is not only conceived as a prophetic and a psychological figure, but also as a type within a cultural-historical movement. We can see this not only from the overall thrust of the argument, but also in particular aphorisms in which as much is stated. In *Zarathustra*, for example, the movement is from beast to man to *Uebers Mensch*; in *Beyond Good and Evil*, it is from the pre-moral to the moral to the extra-moral periods of "human history"; and in the *Genealogy*, where the cultural-historical movement receives sustained expression, the semi-animal, the man of bad conscience, and the "sovereign individual" are presented as

distinct cultural objectivities appearing in a temporal series.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the cultural-historical element has appeared already in the account: the fact that the concept of the *Ueberschensch* has its genesis in the nineteenth century critique of the Western tradition and in the problem of nihilism, as the upshot of the tradition, reveals Nietzsche's cultural interests.

Nietzsche's very insistence that the *Ueberschensch* must be "bred," or "cultivated," means strictly that he must arise through the affirmation of cultural values which support his type. "We require, sometime, new values." He writes:

The problem I thus pose is not what shall succeed mankind in the sequence of living beings (man is an end), but what type of man shall be bred, shall be willed, for being higher in value, worthier of life, more certain of a future.

Even in the past this higher type has appeared often -- but as a fortunate accident, as an exception, never as something willed. In fact, this has been the type most dreaded and from dread the opposite type was willed, bred, and attained: the domestic animal, the herd animal, the sick human animal -- the Christian.<sup>27</sup>

The "breeding" of the Christian was certainly a cultural development -- of that we can be sure -- grounded in the dominant cultural valuation. Indeed, the acceptance and affirmation of that valuation was the breeding and willing of that type. Any discipline, including Western morality, "fixes and hardens a type."<sup>28</sup> The higher type, the *Ueberschensch*, is also to be "bred" in the same way; consequently, the movement from the moral to the extra-moral period of mankind is essential to his concept.

<sup>26</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, Prologue, 3 - 5; *Beyond Good and Evil*, 32; *Genealogy*, II, 2, 16 - 18. Note that, while the concept remains the same in the later works, the name *Ueberschensch* disappears.

<sup>27</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, in Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 262. Cf. also *Ibid.*, 186.



The failure of contemporary commentators, and of Kaufmann in particular, to make enough of this aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy derives from their zeal to absolve Nietzsche totally from any responsibility for the rise of fascism, and to place him instead squarely within the existentialist tradition. Nietzsche's contemporaries, for their part, made no such mistake: his friend, the historian Burckhardt, for example, did not, writing playfully in a letter to Nietzsche that he ought to lecture *ex professo* on world history, since he was teaching it all the time anyway in his books.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the suggestion that Nietzsche would limit his typology of man merely to the structures of inwardness is directly contrary to his desire to overcome that earlier revaluation which resulted in the development and exaltation of subjective inwardness as the 'true' man -- the ascetic flight from reality. Nietzsche conceives of human beings, not simply as isolated individuals, and certainly not as isolated individuals engaged in battle against unruly passion, as Kaufmann maintains, but as actual human types, as cultural phenomena. In Nietzsche, the individual existent's reality is constituted by what he wills himself to be as a being in the world, so that, while the concept of each human type is given a marked psychological content, it is also decidedly cultural.<sup>30</sup>

The status of the concept of the *Ueberschensch* as that of a cultural-historical type is clear. It is manifest in Nietzsche's reaction against European nihilism, and in his general view of human history -- for he indeed has a view of human history. Moreover, the fact that the will to power must be raised to self-consciousness in the *Ueberschensch* (for example, he knows both that, and how, he creates values) means that the

<sup>29</sup> Peter Heller, *Studies on Nietzsche* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1960), p. 106.

<sup>30</sup> I owe a debt in the latter half of this paragraph to an unpublished paper, "Nietzsche's 'Existentialism,'" by Prof. F. L. Jackson, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

cultural fact of Nietzsche's philosophy itself in nineteenth century Europe is absolutely central to his concept. Nietzsche's philosophy is, in a certain sense, the self-consciousness of the will to power, and those who previously approximated this consciousness did so by a "lucky hit."<sup>31</sup> Now, the type is to be explicitly willed.

As a cultural type, however, the *Uebermensch* cannot be identified with post-moral man in general. Not everyone can be a supreme type in relation to the rest of mankind, either historically, or in the present. The reality is that there are, and always have been, superior and inferior types; this will also be the case in the extra-moral period of mankind. In all ages there have been those "fortunate accidents" of men who have given direction to the rest -- men like Julius Caesar and Napoleon. The *Uebermensch*, too, is an aristocrat in the realm of culture: the rest exist for his sake, and he, in turn, sets a *τέλος* upon human action, determining the course of that culture through his value-creation. Nietzsche writes in *The Will to Power*:

Fundamental thought: the new values must first be created -- we shall now be spared this task. For us the philosopher must be a legislator. New types. (How the highest types hitherto [e.g., Greeks] were reared: to will this type of "chance" consciously.)<sup>32</sup>

And again:

I teach: that there are higher and lower men, and that a single individual can under certain circumstances justify the existence of whole millennia -- that is, a full, rich, great, whole human being in relation to countless incomplete fragmentary men.<sup>33</sup>

The *Uebermensch* is to be the ruling principle of post-moral culture. In

<sup>31</sup> Nietzsche, *Antichrist*, 4.

<sup>32</sup> Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 979.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 987.

the sense that it wills him as the one who transcends all that induces world-weary morality. He is also to be its legislator:

*Order of rank:* He who determines values and directs the will of millennia by giving direction to the highest natures is the highest man.<sup>34</sup>

The rule of the value-creator over the rest of humanity was even in effect in traditional Western culture. According to Nietzsche, "It was the ascetic priest who directed the will of the past two millennia. In fact, the problem is not so much that "man," as such, is decadent, as it is that the moral type, the anti-natural individual has been cultivated:

What? Is humanity itself decadent? Was it always? -- What is certain is that it has been taught only decadence values as supreme values. The morality that would un-self man is the morality of decline *par excellence* . . .

This would still leave open the possibility that not humanity itself is degenerating but only that parasitical type of man -- that of the priest -- which has used morality to raise itself mendaciously to the position of determining human values -- finding in Christian morality the means to come to power. -- Indeed, this is, *my insight*: the teachers, the leaders of humanity, theologians all of them, were also, all of them, decadents: hence the revaluation of all values into hostility to life, hence morality.<sup>35</sup>

The cultivation of the moral man, then, has been the work of the priestly leaders of mankind. The power of his desire to be different, the extremity of his ruling instinct -- the instinct to retreat from reality into 'pure' spirituality -- fascinated the herd, and seems to offer it a way . . . to its own power. Thus, the ascetic ideal, according to Nietzsche, is adopted.

In the extra-moral age, when the episode of nihilistic moralism has run its course, and human culture strives to be liberated from the

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 999.

<sup>35</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Why I Am a Destiny," 7.

impulse to nihilism, from world-weariness and nay-saying, to whom will it look? Clearly, not to the ascetic priest, but to one who embodies in the highest sense its new ideal, to one who is the embodiment *par excellence* of morality and world-weariness overcome, the embodiment of "*Mensch*" overcome. While not all are *Uebersmenschen* in the extra-moral period, the culture is nevertheless the culture of the *Uebersmensch*, just as, in the moral period, when not all were decadent ascetics in their dominant instinct, the culture was nevertheless that of the ascetic priest.

### 1.6 Summary

It is important to recognize that the three aspects of the Nietzschean doctrine of the *Uebersmensch* isolated here, the prophetic, psychological, and cultural-historical, are closely intertwined. As was pointed out at the beginning, Nietzsche's method of philosophizing, of assuming various perspectives on the same problem and of delving into its various shades and "nuances," makes this approach the one most adequate to his thought. He writes:

There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective "knowing"; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the *more* complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity," be.<sup>36</sup>

It still remains, however, that there is presupposed in all such perspectivism that upon which one has a perspective. There is one *Uebersmensch*, and not three, and, in reflection of this, all sides of the doctrine are generally present even when one appears to be dominant. Thus, for example, although the passage in the *Genealogy* on the sovereign individual occurs in the context of cultural-historical development, so that this aspect of the doctrine is dominant, the others are also clearly present:

<sup>36</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, III, 12.

This emancipated individual, with the actual right to make promises, this master of a free will, this sovereign man -- how should he not be aware of his superiority over all those who lack the right to make promises, and stand as their own guarantors ... and of how this mastery over himself also necessarily gives him mastery over circumstances, over nature, and over all the more short-willed and unreliable creatures?

In fact, no side of the account of the *Uebersensch* is intelligible apart from the others, so that the 'phases' of the doctrine we have isolated here are to be understood as abstractions. Clearly, the doctrine of the *Uebersensch* is all of them taken together.

We have seen that the unifying theme in each expression of the doctrine, and that which, indeed, makes the doctrine of the *Uebersensch* a doctrine, is the Nietzschean polemic against morality and the moral tradition. The *Uebersensch*, it has been argued, provides a point of focus for this critique. In order to understand his concept, therefore, it is necessary to examine in some detail Nietzsche's view of morality. By coming to see the essential problems in the moral thesis, what it really is for Nietzsche and what its effect has been, we shall be able to see how the doctrine of the *Uebersensch*, as it has been set forth here, does indeed reflect Nietzsche's view of, and response to, morality.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., II, 2. It is necessary to read this passage in full to see in it the predominance of the cultural-historical side of the doctrine, for it does not appear in the segment here quoted.

## Chapter 2

## THE PROBLEM OF MORALITY

It has been argued in the preceding chapter that Nietzsche's philosophy establishes itself as a polemic against morality, and that its positive doctrines -- in this case that of the *Ueberschensch* -- are to be understood as arising out of, and as providing a focus for, that negative moment. This is consistent with Nietzsche's mature understanding of himself. In the closing sections of *Ecce Homo*, the work intended to be his apology as well as his spiritual autobiography, he asks four times, "Am I understood?" and responds each time with the same claim: he is the one who "uncovered" morality. He writes:

Have I been understood? -- I have not said one word here that I did not say five years ago through the mouth of Zarathustra.

The uncovering of Christian morality is an event without parallel, a real catastrophe. He that is enlightened about that, is a *force majeure*, a destiny -- he breaks the history of mankind in two. One lives before him, or one lives after him.

*Ecce Homo* also points out that the positive doctrines in Nietzsche are indeed essentially tied to the negative moment. We read:

The psychological problem in the type of Zarathustra is how he that says No and does No to an unheard-of degree, to everything to which one has so far said Yes, can nevertheless be the opposite of a No-saying spirit ....

And again:

<sup>36</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Why I Am a Destiny," 5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 5.

Zarathustra once defines, quite strictly, his task -- it is mine, too -- and there is no mistaking his meaning: he says Yes to the point of justifying, of redeeming even all of the past.<sup>40</sup>

In Nietzsche, therefore, a Dionysian 'yea' and 'nay' is spoken simultaneously concerning the moral tradition, and although how this is possible is never explained, it is pointed to as a key problem.

We shall argue in this chapter that the idea that Nietzsche's positive doctrines are established negatively, through Nietzsche's polemic against morality, not only provides the solution to this Dionysian paradox, but that it also enables us to determine with some precision the defining constraints of the concept of the *Ueberschensch*. Because Nietzsche holds morality to be an utter perversion, it is for him a negation and not something positive. The negation of that negation which is effected in his polemic against morality, therefore yields a positive result. More importantly, since what is negated is neither an indeterminate nothing, nor simply an ethical code, but a determinate form of human existence, then by the logic of the negation of negation, the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch*, as the positive result, will be also thereby made determinate. Through an adequate understanding of Nietzsche's view of morality, therefore, and through this abstract understanding of his philosophy as essentially a negation of negation, the concept of the *Ueberschensch* will be given a strict definition.

## 2.1 Contemporary Interpretation: Walter Kaufmann

The past three decades have seen academic discourse on Nietzsche in the English language largely dominated by the work of Walter Kaufmann, whose book, *Nietzsche*, is still the most scholarly and thoroughgoing interpretation available in the language. Kaufmann's account

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

is of importance here first of all because of its influence on Anglo-American philosophers, but more importantly, because, despite his reputation, he fails to comprehend both the centrality and the very meaning of the problem of morality in Nietzsche. The result is that his concept of the *Ueberschensch* is very misleading. His concluding remark on Nietzsche's *Ueberschensch* is particularly instructive:

The [*Ueberschensch*] ... is the "Dionysian" man who is depicted under the name of Goethe at the end of the *Götzen-Dämmerung* (IX, 49). He has overcome his animal nature, organized the chaos of his passions, sublimated his impulses, and given style to his character ....

Not only do Kaufmann's conclusions here leave out much that is essential to the concept of the *Ueberschensch*, as is clear from Chapter One, but, more seriously, the *Ueberschensch* for Kaufmann differs little from the typical moralist -- excepting only the specifically "otherworldly" accoutrements. Kaufmann ultimately fails to overcome the moral prejudice in his account of Nietzsche.

The strength of Kaufmann's position, however, is its grounding in an historical survey of Nietzsche's works, where particular attention is given to the early Nietzsche. Here, as Kaufmann maintains, the basic questions addressed by Nietzsche in later years are outlined, though no resolution is found. The central concern throughout his works is thus basically the same: the problem of meaninglessness after the death of God. With the collapse of the divine *Geist*, the possibility of the human spiritual life -- the life of the artist, saint, and philosopher -- seemed also to have collapsed, so that the problem of nihilism arose as the central one of the age. That Nietzsche could not abide a world without *Geist* certainly should come as no surprise: he engaged in philosophical activity constantly, so that, put in his own terms, his own instinct and

<sup>41</sup> Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 316.



existence were at stake. Nietzsche's goal, then, as stated in the early works, was to demonstrate that a spiritual life was still possible for man as a potential of nature itself. As he writes in the early fragment, *Homer's Contest*:

When one speaks of *humanity*, the idea is fundamental that this is something which separates and distinguishes man from nature. In reality, however, there is no such separation: "natural" qualities and those called truly "human" are inseparably grown together. Man, in his highest and noblest capacities, is wholly nature and embodies its uncanny dual character.<sup>42</sup>

Since he failed to demonstrate his thesis in the early works, however, being able only to assert it, Nietzsche temporarily abandoned his project and entered upon his nihilistic period with his *Human, All-Too-Human*, a period which lasted about five years and was brought to a close with *Zarathustra* in 1883.

In sum, Kaufmann's argument proceeds in three phases.<sup>43</sup> First, a version of the problem of spirit and nature, as outlined above, is established as Nietzsche's central concern. Second, the doctrine of the will to power, which emerges in *Zarathustra*, is set forth as the resolution of this problem in that will to power is conceived as the underlying principle of both mind and body. A subtle shift of focus from the general question of reconciling spirit and nature to the more limited one of mind and body within individual existence and practice thus marks the second stage of Kaufmann's account.<sup>44</sup> Third, the doctrine of the will to power is argued at length to achieve this reconciliation inasmuch as will to power is strictly conceived in Nietzsche as "a striving to transcend and perfect

<sup>42</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *Homer's Contest*, in, *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 32.

<sup>43</sup>This account is basically an overview of Parts I - III of Kaufmann's *Nietzsche*.

<sup>44</sup>Kaufmann does not recognize that this change occurs.

oneself.<sup>45</sup> Specifically, it is in Kaufmann's account a striving on the part of reason, as will to power, to "sublimate" another expression of will to power, passion; hence the importance of self-overcoming in Kaufmann's account, and its restriction to the question of the relation between passion and reason. As is expressed in his view of the *Ueberschensch*, it is thus that the ideal man of culture again becomes possible: according to Kaufmann, he is "the man who has overcome himself."<sup>46</sup> Nietzsche's early goal is thus achieved in Kaufmann's view, for the rational life is indeed still possible within the confines of nature itself, while it is yet sanctioned as having greater value than the life controlled by passion (these are the terms Kaufmann uses constantly) because it is the highest expression of power: power over the self and over nature.<sup>47</sup>

For Kaufmann, therefore, the problem of morality, so central in Nietzsche's later philosophy, is limited to the inner dynamic between reason and passion, as such, within the existing individual. Morality as it has existed thus far in the Western tradition is in conflict with the fundamental existential law of life: the law of self-overcoming. Whereas life, in demanding self-overcoming, demands the sublimation of passion by reason, Western morality has advocated the *extirpation* of passion in favour of reason. Like Hegel, Kaufmann argues, Nietzsche was a "dialectical monist," and, like Hegel, spoke of one manifestation of his monistic principle. In this case the will to power, being at once "cancelled", "preserved", and "lifted up" into a higher manifestation of itself through

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 308-310.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

sublimation.<sup>48</sup> Since morality has stood in the way of such self-overcoming, with the result that passion has been extirpated by reason rather than sublimated, the point now becomes to set morality aside and to conform human practice consciously to life's own inner principle. The *Ueberschensch*, for Kaufmann, is simply the one who achieves this:

The [*Ueberschensch*] ... cannot be dissociated from the conception of *Überwindung*, of overcoming. "Man is something that should be overcome" -- and the man who has overcome himself has become an overman.<sup>49</sup>

Kaufmann's great error, however, is to have failed to understand properly the significance of the problem of morality in Nietzsche. Whereas Nietzsche, as we have seen, defines himself in terms of his opposition to morality, in Kaufmann's account morality is no longer itself the central question. Rather, it finds its place within the context of a more fundamental issue, that of the essential structures of the will to power -- which reduces to the question of the relation between reason and passion. It thus becomes external to the central argument. It is in the notion of the will to power, Kaufmann argues, that the problems of dualism and nihilism were overcome: in Nietzsche himself, however, there is no such suggestion. Rather, Nietzsche resolves his earlier dualism, and his nihilism, not in the idea of will to power and in a complicated quasi-Hegelian theory of self-overcoming, but in the simple insight that the essential problem is morality itself. What defines morality, for Nietzsche, is precisely the war of spirit against nature: to overcome this hostility, therefore, to escape nihilism and become a life-affirming spirit, it is only

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 235-240.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

required that we overcome the moral prejudice.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, the great significance of the doctrine of will to power is that it enables Nietzsche to explain that the opposition between spirit and nature within morality is merely a *prejudice* by which the decadent type comes to power. It is in the overcoming of morality, and not in the more peripheral doctrine of the will to power, that the key lies to a proper interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy.

It is for this reason that Kaufmann's view of the *Ueberschensch* in Nietzsche is inadequate and confused. Whereas, for Nietzsche, the *Ueberschensch* is the one who embodies *par excellence* this overcoming of morality, in Kaufmann he is still locked in battle with unruly passion. The two, reason and passion, are still conceived as mutually hostile principles. One must either extirpate passion in the moral sense, or sublimate it and become an *Ueberschensch*: uncontrolled lust wreaks havoc. The decisive objection to Kaufmann's account enters in at this point: Nietzsche's *Ueberschensch*, because he is conceived as the embodiment of morality overcome, has overcome the hostility between spirit and nature characterizing morality. As a consequence, he cannot be engaged any longer in a struggle against passion, for to have to struggle with one's natural instincts is, according to Nietzsche, the formula for decadence.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, since in Nietzsche's account the *Ueberschensch* acts in complete spontaneity, without struggle, then in Kaufmann his concept must be still directly limited by the moral prejudice.

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<sup>50</sup>Of the "self-overcoming of morality" and of the "moralist" which Nietzsche speaks of in *Ecc Homo* should be recalled here: cf. above, p. 4. The implications for Kaufmann's account of the concepts of self-overcoming and sublimation actually referring to the self-overcoming and to the sublimation of morality, rather than to the self-overcoming and sublimation of passion by reason, are obvious. Cf. also, Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, II, 10, and III, 27.

<sup>51</sup>Nietzsche, *Twilight*, "The Four Great Errors," 2. Cf. also *ibid.*, "The Problem of Socrates."

## 2.2 The moral tradition and dualism

The preceding account reveals how important a proper understanding of the nature of morality is to any interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy generally, and of his doctrine of the *Uebersensch* in particular. It is Nietzsche himself who characterizes his philosophy in terms of his opposition to the moral tradition, and who holds that morality is the "danger of dangers" and the "Circe of humanity." But his method is not such that a concentrated philosophical account of the problem of morality, as such, is generated -- which is why, perhaps, the centrality to Nietzsche's philosophy of the problem of morality is so often overlooked. His treatment, rather, involves the assumption of a number of perspectives on the problem, as was the case with the doctrine of the *Uebersensch*, so that in many cases it is not even altogether apparent that it is morality which Nietzsche is attempting to expose. To begin with, Nietzsche does not condemn all morality -- for morality as a discipline which fixes and hardens a type, he has a certain amount of praise, and surely it is slave morality, and not master morality, which he condemns. More than this, however, Nietzsche characterizes even anarchism as infected with the Christian moral prejudice, and the same could be said not only of socialism, democracy, and the politics of Bismark, but also of nineteenth century *Wissenschaft* and of Schopenhauer's morality of pity. His views, therefore, are not to be discovered in any single, systematic statement, but in the midst of the particular questions he addresses.

To understand Nietzsche, then, it is necessary to examine the particular instances in which he is seen to "uncover" the moral prejudice. In this regard, the *Genealogy of Morals* is particularly instructive, first, because it is, obviously, a book about Western morality, and second, although it was written in only two weeks,<sup>52</sup> it is the most systematic of all

<sup>52</sup>Frederick Copleston, *Friedrich Nietzsche* (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1942), p. 23.

Nietzsche's later efforts in philosophy. This does not mean that it addresses the concept of morality as such: as has just been stated, one searches in vain for such an account in Nietzsche. The approach of the *Genealogy*, rather, is that various sides of the problem of morality for Nietzsche are addressed. We read in the First Essay "how the early 'noble' values of 'good' and 'bad' got turned into the 'decadent' values of 'good' and 'evil,' while the second is a discussion of the bad conscience, or of moral guilt, and the third a treatment of the ascetic ideal.

The key to understanding Nietzsche's views here is that, for him, all values serve a definite function, and in the case of moral values, the function served is the fulfillment of the will to power of the weak. In *Ecce Homo*, which is the only place where Nietzsche approaches an actual formulation of his definition of the concept of morality, he writes:

*Definition of morality:* Morality -- the idiosyncrasy of decadents, with the ulterior motive of revenging oneself against life -- successfully. I attach value to this definition.

Morality thus has a certain practical value for a certain type of man -- the declining type.<sup>54</sup>

When reduced to its essentials, Nietzsche's central argument concerning morality is that the decadent man, who is essentially a will to power unable to achieve power and perfection in a natural manner, rejects his natural self as worthless, creating for himself instead a life of pure spirituality as the sole one of value. In this inner world he can excel and

<sup>53</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Why I Am a Destiny," 7.

<sup>54</sup> It is useful to distinguish between what might be termed the "final" and the "formal" causes of morality in Nietzsche. In the first place, morality serves a purpose: it raises the weak to a position of power, to that of "holiness." Secondly, the formal determination of the concept of morality, that which corresponds to its practical purpose and which makes it what it is as an outlook, is the creation of an ideal realm in subjective inwardness by which the natural realm of objectivity and objective achievement is judged inferior and sinful.

attain power, and do so, in particular, over the naturally "well-constituted" type. While the instinct of the strong turns against such a mode of existence, the flight from reality into subjectivity is really the dominant instinct of the weak individual. He rejects natural existence as a matter of course, sustaining his sanctuary of inwardness precisely to the extent that he does reject his natural self. The moral type, therefore, is one who opposes an inward, eidetic life to the natural, objective world, such that his mode of life issues, as Nietzsche is wont to put it, in a "mortal hostility" towards this-worldly existence. According to Nietzsche, the best illustration of this devaluation of the natural world within morality, the prime instrument of this devaluation, is the concept of God, the greatest "torture concept" ever invented:

The concept of "God" invented as a counter-concept of life -- everything harmful, poisonous, slanderous, the whole hostility unto death against life synthesized in this concept into a gruesome unity! The concept of the "beyond," the "true world" invented in order to devalue the only world there is -- in order to retain no goal, no reason, no task for our earthly reality! The concept of the "soul," the "spirit," finally even "immortal soul," invented in order to despise the body, to make it sick, "holy": to oppose with a ghastly levity everything which deserves to be taken seriously in life ....

Nietzsche's use of the term "morality," therefore, cannot be reduced to a simple set of moral imperatives. In fact, he does not condemn a set of moral imperatives at all. Rather, what he means by morality is a specific type of human existence, one which has been cultivated in the Western tradition as "good," where natural existence is abjured in favour of the "spiritual" life. Here, what 'ought' to be is held in opposition to that which 'is,' so that the setting up of the 'ought' denies the 'is,' and so that an ineluctable chasm is posed here between the realms of moral spirituality and nature. Morality is thus, for Nietzsche, a

separation of man from his natural existence, the introduction of a cleft within the individual between his spiritual and his natural life, and thus a radical "No" to life.

It has been stated above that Nietzsche's view of morality emerges most clearly in the three essays of the *Genealogy of Morals*. In the First Essay of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche argues that the moral values of "good" and "evil" have their origin in *ressentiment*. They are the means by which the decadent type avenges itself against life. For Nietzsche, the clue to their origin lies in contrasting the "noble," classical ideas of "good" and "bad" with these moral values. He suggests, for example, that the question of a genealogy of morals might be advanced through a series of academic prize-essays on the question: "What light does linguistics, and especially the study of etymology, throw on the history of the evolution of moral concepts?"<sup>56</sup> Whether this is a serious proposition or not, it does express the fact that, for Nietzsche, the key question is that of the transformation of noble values into the "slave" values of good and evil. The classical values refer solely to one's rank along the continuum from "better" to "worse" in natural qualities such as courage, intelligence, and strength; the values of good and evil, by contrast, are "subterranean" -- they shift the focus of virtue away from the natural constitution of the individual to the *inward* responsibility and *merit* of the individual. One becomes morally "good," for example, only if one *wills* to be unegoistic, unselfish, to avoid every semblance of evil -- it even matters little if one fails to attain one's ideals in the concrete, so long as one wills to. The conceptual transformation, therefore, is revealed to be an inversion of the source of virtue from one's natural, objective constitution to one's *inward* life. For Nietzsche, the Judaic tradition is the prime example of such a value-inversion:

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<sup>56</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, I, 17, emphasis deleted.



It was the Jews who, with awe-inspiring consistency, dared to invert the aristocratic value-equation (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = beloved of God) and to hang on to this inversion with their teeth, the teeth of the most abysmal hatred (the hatred of impotence), saying "the wretched alone are the good; the poor, impotent, lowly alone are the good; the suffering, deprived, sick, ugly alone are pious, alone are blessed by God, blessedness is for them alone -- and you, the powerful and noble, are on the contrary the evil, the cruel, the lustful, the insatiable, the godless to all eternity; and you shall be in all eternity the unblessed, accursed, and damned!"<sup>57</sup>

According to Nietzsche, therefore, in the moral values of good and evil what is exalted as meritorious is precisely the rejection of the value of natural existence. The virtuous man "abstains from fleshly lusts which war against the soul," and seeks instead and above all else the attainment of the kingdom of God within. Here, according to Nietzsche, the qualities of decadence are, in reality, asserted to be voluntary, willed achievements. But, as is pointed out, this rejection of natural immediacy is only what the decadent does by nature: weakness is hence, as Nietzsche says, lied here into something of merit. It is interesting too that, whereas in noble values there are gradations along the line from good to bad, in slave morality good and evil are conceived as absolute opposites. The "good" is explicitly antinatural; the "evil" is explicitly antispiritual; the two, within morality, are mutually contradictory.

The argument of the Second Essay of the *Genealogy*, likewise, is that the moral consciousness of guilt has its origins in man's turning against the life of natural immediacy in order to develop a new mode of existence. In this case, the account appears in the form of pseudo-history, so that Nietzsche writes of the "bad conscience" as the result of a "forcible sundering" of man from his "animal past."<sup>58</sup> He writes:

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 16.

All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly turn inward -- this is what I call the internalization of man: thus it was that man first developed what was later called his "soul." The entire inner world, originally as thin as if it were stretched between two membranes, expanded and extended itself, acquired depth, breadth, and height, in the same measure as outward discharge was inhibited. Those fearful bulwarks with which the political organization protected itself against the old instincts of freedom ... brought about that all those instincts of wild, free, prowling man turned backward against man himself. ... that is the origin of the 'bad conscience.'<sup>59</sup>

While the account of morality here given differs markedly from the others in that no *ressentiment* brings it about, but rather the action of the "blond beasts of prey." It remains that the structures of the problem, thus expressed, are precisely the same. The consciousness of moral guilt is the result of a turning against the natural side of human nature, the development of a split within man himself.

As Nietzsche's argument develops, then, it again becomes clear that the issue raised in morality is one of the hostility between consciousness and natural immediacy. The problem is that the will to power turns against itself, "declaring war" upon the old instincts, thus creating "negative ideals" such as selflessness and, with it, guilt.<sup>60</sup> Now it is clear that, for Nietzsche, the "animal past" can never really be left behind in the literal sense; it remains, as it must, a permanent fact about human nature. What happens to it, rather, is that in the consciousness of guilt that animal side of man which has posed such problems in Western morality comes to be seen as foreign to man's 'true' nature, weighing him down, so that the life of spirit becomes unattainable. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Paul writes, and when Nietzsche emerges from the mists of pre-history to a more concrete account of his meaning, it is precisely this that the "sundering" from the natural life yields:

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 18.

Guilt before God: this thought becomes an instrument of torture to him. He apprehends in "God" the ultimate antithesis of his own ineluctable animal instincts; he reinterprets these animal instincts themselves as a form of guilt before God (as hostility, rebellion, insurrection against the "Lord," . . . ); he stretches himself upon the contradiction "God" and "Devil"; he ejects from himself all his denial of himself, of his nature, naturalness, and actuality, in the form of an affirmation, as something existent, corporeal, real, as God, as the holiness of God, as God the Judge, as God the Hangman, as the beyond, as eternity, as torment without end, as hell, as the immeasurability of punishment and guilt.<sup>81</sup>

Moral guilt, then, is again a matter of the diremption of the spiritual and the natural life, a turning of life against itself so that the natural is emptied of all that is spiritual, and the spiritual of all that is natural. In the concrete, the consciousness of guilt is a matter of the creation and the sustaining of a spiritual life -- one, for example, in which one's goal becomes to know and love God -- by which the natural comes to be regarded as inferior, and by whose standards man, since he is and must always be a natural individual, is always declared guilty.

In the Third Essay of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche's stated aim is to discover why man would rather will "nothingness" than not will at all, or put in other terms, why the ascetic ideal has been so commonly exalted among men. It is, perhaps, the clearest of the three essays, and one of the better of Nietzsche's efforts generally. Here, the ascetic ideal, the will to self-abnegation and to the development of spiritual perfection, is set forth, not as a simple "extirpation" of passion, as Kaufmann would have it, but specifically as the active will to escape the fundamental conditions of natural existence. Nietzsche accounts for it within the context of natural existence itself: the ascetic suffers from life, and is unable to achieve power in the natural mode. He consequently resorts to a radical annihilation of nature, thus establishing, within that system of values which

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 22

achieve this negation, his own *right* to exist. As Nietzsche says, only if nature can be made utterly worthless can the instinctively "life-inimical" species attain value.<sup>62</sup>

The ascetic willing of nothingness is thus understood by Nietzsche to be the willing of a mode of existence which is in principle opposed to the 'this-world' of life and nature. Obviously, "nothingness" is not the word the ascetic himself would use to characterize the object of his desire. For him, it is Reality, the reality of Spirit, which occupies his attention and devotion, and which lies behind his attempts to purge himself of its contrary, the sinful flesh. Nietzsche writes in an important passage:

The idea at issue here is the *valuation* the ascetic priest places on our life: he juxtaposes it (along with what pertains to it: "nature," "world," the whole sphere of becoming and transitoriness) with a quite different mode of existence which it opposes and excludes, *unless* it turn against itself, *deny itself*: in that case, the case of the ascetic life, life counts as a bridge to that other mode of existence. The ascetic treats life as a wrong road on which one must finally walk back to the point where it begins, or as a mistake that is put right by deeds -- that we ought to put right: for he *demand*s that one go along with him; where he can he compels acceptance of *his* evaluation of existence.<sup>63</sup>

Even the sense of "truthfulness" pervading nineteenth century European culture is, for Nietzsche, simply another expression of this same ideal. In its essence it is the search for an absolute, "truth," which will remove us from the realities of life and from our own right to creativity:

"The truthful man, in the audacious and ultimate sense presupposed by the faith in science, *thereby affirms another world* than that of life, nature, and history; and insofar as he affirms this 'other world,' does not this mean that he has to deny its antithesis, this world, *our world*? ... It is still a *metaphysical faith* that underlies our faith in science -- and we men of

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 11.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

knowledge of today. we godless men and anti-metaphysicians, we, too, still derive our flame from the fire ignited by a faith millennia old, the Christian faith, which was also Plato's, that God is truth, that truth is *divine*. -- But what if this belief is becoming more and more unbelievable, if nothing turns out to be divine any, longer unless it be error, blindness, lies -- if God himself turns out to be our *longest lie*?

The devaluation of natural life within moral asceticism is, on Nietzsche's account, therefore, the means by which the naturally ill-constituted rises to power and establishes his own value. He becomes the man, not of natural impotence, but of true worth, the man who abides not in temporal things, "evil" things, but in eternal realities known only "to them that are spiritual." He becomes "holy," and, by virtue of his rejection of natural life and natural values, inherits an incorruptible kingdom kept unfading for him in the heavens. By his active denial of natural life, therefore, the ascetic establishes an inward life of spirituality: the result is moral asceticism, which in its function is a means to power for the impotent, and which is in the more formal sense a mode of existence in which natural existence and the spiritual dimension of life come to be defined as mutually contradictory.

Nietzsche's view of the Western moral tradition, therefore, may be regarded as follows. Basically, it is founded upon a turning against life, an ultimate self-abnegation on the part of humanity, a kind of suicide. It is achieved through the radical devaluation of natural existence, a devaluation which is itself attained through the setting up of an ideal realm of the True, Good, and Beautiful -- in some form or another -- on the basis of which one judges the natural realm of flux and death to be devoid of truth, goodness, and beauty. As such, it is a prejudice which lies not only within intellectual traditions governing moral practice, but also in epistemological, logical, political, religious, scientific, artistic,

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 24. Nietzsche here quotes from his, *The Gay Science*.

educational, and metaphysical system -- within the entire domain of Western culture.<sup>65</sup> It has left nothing unaffected, and, as the very soul and driving force of Western civilization, has actually altered human nature. For Nietzsche, the only acceptable response is the revaluation of all values. "Have I been understood? -- *Dionysus versus the crucified*.  
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It is at this point that Nietzsche's early struggle with the problem of nihilism needs to be recalled as the context for the later philosophy. The problem, as has been stated, was to allow that the life of spirit -- of the artist, saint, and philosopher (and therefore of Nietzsche himself) -- was still possible without the metaphysical presuppositions of the Christian world. The goal, then, as is stated in *Homer's Contest*, was to reconcile the spiritual life and the natural life, or, to put it another way, to allow that man could still be truly man without an Absolute. Now since Nietzsche was in principle unable to approach this problem from the standpoint of metaphysics, the mode in which it had always been posed, it was necessary for him to resolve it, if he would do so, in a purely 'this-worldly' manner. It was in the critique of morality, clearly, that Nietzsche found his resolution.

For Nietzsche, the 'this-worldly,' or 'human,' expression of the problem posed in his youth, the problem of reconciling man's natural and spiritual life after the death of God, is purely one of man's experience of the spiritual and the natural life. The question is whether, the consciousness of truth and value, for example, is of an order of experience different in kind from the life of natural immediacy. In this

<sup>65</sup>Virtually the whole of *Beyond Good and Evil* is a demonstration of how morality is the "prejudice" of European science, philosophy, art, and culture generally.

<sup>66</sup>Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Why I Am a Destiny," 9.

context, it is significant that Nietzsche never defines the moral view of nature or of spirit positively; rather, each subsists as the opposite, or as the negation, of the other. And for the moralist, the spiritual and the natural life are, indeed, absolute opposites:

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.<sup>67</sup>

For Nietzsche, however, they are clearly not, and herein lies the essence of the development of his view of morality. The question of the struggle within the human breast and in human action between the spiritual life and the natural life provided Nietzsche with a way into the questions he had posed earlier but had been unable to resolve. For Nietzsche, it was evidently almost as if "the end of the ages" had come upon him: in this context he was able to recognize that morality was the key to his problems, and to the problems of the whole of the Western tradition, for morality is precisely the struggle of the spiritual against the natural life within human experience.

The Nietzschean negation of morality, therefore, is properly conceived as a negation of this war of the spirit against the flesh, and, likewise, of the flesh against the spirit. The moral mode of existence, he argues, is not a permanent metaphysical fact about human nature, but merely a valuation -- the idiosyncrasy of decadents. He writes:

... the "true world" has been constructed out of contradiction to the actual world: indeed an apparent world, insofar as it is merely a moral-optical illusion.

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<sup>67</sup> Romans 7: 22-23. A reference to Paul is most appropriate at this point, since the idea of a radical "hostility" between the spirit and the body, as such, is a fundamental tenet of Nietzsche's Augustinian-Lutheran religious background, from which he undoubtedly takes his views. Were he an Arminian, for example, the reference would be less appropriate, since here the "flesh" tends to be regarded along Hebraic lines as a *principle* rather than in the literal sense, and the root of sin not as nature itself, but as pride. It is interesting that Luther, who sought to purge the Church from pagan ideas, should have made so much of what is essentially a pagan doctrine.

*Third proposition.* To invent fables about a world "other" than this one has no meaning at all, unless an instinct of slander, detraction, and suspicion against life has gained the upper hand in us: in that case, we avenge ourselves against life with a phantasmagoria of "another," a "better" life.

*Fourth proposition.* Any distinction between a "true" and an "apparent" world -- whether in the Christian manner or in the manner of Kant (in the end, an underhanded Christian) -- is only a symptom of decadence, a symptom of the decline of life.<sup>68</sup>

It was men who gave themselves the moral life -- not God, and not nature. In overcoming the moral prejudice, therefore, Nietzsche resolves his earlier dualism, for when morality is overcome, spirit and nature are no longer to be defined as mutually contradictory.

It is thus that Nietzsche's polemic against morality can yield, as we have said, the positive result of the *Uebermensch*. If the concept were to be taken in Nietzsche to mean "morality" in the ordinary sense, then this would clearly be inconceivable: what its overcoming would yield in that case would be something more akin to lawlessness, and this -- even if it were what Nietzsche wanted -- would not "break the history of mankind in two." But in negating morality as the mode of existence, and the cultivation of a mode of existence, in which spirit and nature are contradictory principles, Nietzsche has done something more significant. By it he enters upon a critique of Western philosophy and civilization, and by it he is able to judge the philosophy of his own day.

Nietzsche's express view is that nineteenth century Europe, while to some extent awakened to the absurdities of the intellectual tradition lying behind it, still retains the distilled core of the antinatural tendencies of that tradition. In humanism, liberalism, socialism, anarchism, utilitarianism, nihilism, and existentialism, the moral prejudice is at the

<sup>68</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight*, "Reason" in Philosophy, 6.



center. Nietzsche, for his part, consequently sets himself the task of preparing for a revaluation of all values which will do away with the Western moral prejudice once and for all. Amid the rhetoric, we read:

To translate man back into nature; to become master over the many vain and overly enthusiastic interpretations that have so far been scrawled over that eternal basic text of *homo natura*; to see to it that man henceforth stands before man as even today, hardened in the discipline of science, he stands before the rest of nature, with intrepid Oedipus eyes and sealed Oedipus ears, deaf to the siren songs of old metaphysical bird catchers who have been piping at him all day long. "you are more, you are higher, you are of a different origin!" — that may be a strange and insane task, but it is a task — who would deny that?<sup>69</sup>

Such a return, for Nietzsche, is not a going back to the status of the brute, but an ascent into a form of existence where nature is no longer devaluated, and spirit no longer exalted to a level beyond the conditions of space and time. It is a return of man from otherworldliness, from the cultivation of the life of moral inwardness, and a recognition that nature is of itself spiritual, and spirit, likewise, natural.<sup>70</sup>

### 2.3 The negation of negation

The logical principle of the negation of negation, fundamental to the logical structure of Nietzsche's philosophy, has long been known and employed within the Western tradition — in mathematics, for example, and in the *via negativa* of medieval theology. In the concept of God as the Infinite in the latter case, for example, the finite realm is evidently conceived already as a negation in the determination of God's infinitude, since God must of necessity have ontological priority in relation to the

<sup>69</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 230.

<sup>70</sup> Nietzsche writes, for example, in *Twilight*, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," 48: "Progress in my sense, I too speak of a 'return to nature,' although it is not really a going back but an ascent — up into the high, free, even terrible nature and naturalness where great tasks are something one plays with, one may play with. To put it metaphorically: Napoleon was a piece of 'return to nature,' as I understand it . . ." Cf. also, for example, *Ibid.*, 48, beginning:

world, and not be a mere "other." The negation of the negation here yields a positive result: God is, for the theologian, the ultimate positive, the *causa sui*.

As an explicit logical principle, however, the negation of negation appears in its most developed and complex form in the philosophy of Hegel, where, indeed, for the first time it receives explicit analysis and expression. In Hegel, the negation of negation is that step by which the movement from the dialectical to the speculative stage of reason is effected, and is, more importantly, the logical principle by which the speculative category is made determinate. He writes:

The result of dialectic is positive, because it has a definite content, or because its result is not empty and abstract nothing, but the negation of certain specific propositions which are contained in the result. -- for the very reason that it is a resultant and not a mere nothing.<sup>71</sup>

That which is negated, in other words, is not merely left behind, but conditions in certain fundamental ways the character of the positive result. According to Hegel, the status of that which is negated in this movement of thought is that of being contained as "ideal" or "*aufgehoben*" in the result.

In the movement in the logic from the abstract categories of "Being" and "Nothing" to the first concrete category, "*Das Sein*," Hegel clearly gives expression to this logical progression. The logic of the understanding, being finite and one-sided, necessarily provides itself with abstract and finite determinations of the Absolute. Being finite and one-sided, then, it carries its first determination of the Absolute, the concept of Being, over into its opposite, Nothing, holding that insofar as Being is

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<sup>71</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *The Logic of Hegel*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), section 82.

here utterly indeterminate, without form and so without content. It is really the concept of Nothing, so that the first determination of the Absolute as Being was false. The logic of the understanding, therefore, maintains the categories of Being and Nothing in absolute difference.

From the higher, speculative standpoint, however, it becomes clear that since here the categories of Being and Nothing each subsist only insofar as do their opposites, then the difference between them posited by the understanding cannot be an absolute one, since neither category is logically self-subsistent. From Hegel's speculative standpoint, therefore, the absolute distinction made within the logic of the understanding is seen to be an *intended* one only, one having no logical justification. Both categories are *in themselves* utterly indeterminate, being inconceivable apart from their opposites, and since they are thus equally indeterminate in themselves, they are, for Hegel, logically identical. The difference between them is thus superseded in the speculative stage of reason, and taken up through the dialectical movement of thought, expressed in the category of "Becoming," into a higher reconciliation in the category of *Dasein*. He writes in the *Logic*:

Such a style of dialectic looks only at the negative aspect of its result, and fails to notice, what is at the same time really present, the definite result, in the present case a pure nothing, but a Nothing which includes Being, and, in like manner, a Being which includes Nothing. Hence [*Dasein*] is (1) the unity of Being and Nothing, in which we get rid of the immediacy in these determinations, and their contradiction vanishes in their mutual connexion, -- the unity in which they are only constituent elements. And (2) since the result is the abolition of the contradiction, it comes in the shape of a simple unity with itself: that is, to say, it also is Being, but Being with negation or determinateness . . . .

In the concrete category of *Dasein*, therefore, Being and Nothing are contained as Ideal: they are preserved in their distinction, on the one

hand, or the category of *Daseln* would not be possible, while yet, in the category of *Daseln* itself, their difference is overcome. Hegel characterizes this new unity attained in speculative logic, the positive result of the negation of the negation, as *unity in difference*.

The philosophy of Nietzsche, of course, cannot be asserted to make explicit appeal to the Hegelian system, either at this point or elsewhere.<sup>73</sup> Certainly there is in Nietzsche no appeal to a necessary logical or historical dialectic which inevitably issues in a speculative resolution of the dialectical contradiction. It is rather that *implicitly*, his overall argument proceeds by way of a negation of a negation which is essentially analogous to Hegel's, so that the Hegelian analysis of this logical principle can be applied with justification to Nietzsche. Morality is, for Nietzsche, a negation of a perverse contradiction within human existence; the negation of that negation therefore yields a positive result, one in which the contradiction has been overcome.

In reality, the argument here is little more than that Nietzsche is not to be understood as a nihilist himself. Quite often, of course, this is precisely how he is seen: as one who engages in an attack upon all that man has heretofore held to be of true value; he can be none other than a nihilist. But Nietzsche allows no such claim. Rather, it is clear that what he attacks in his philosophy is something already conceived as a negation: the Western moral tradition is, for him, decadent. He writes:

<sup>73</sup> The importance of the Hegelian position in the present thesis does not extend beyond its relevance to the central argument that Nietzsche's positive position is the result of a negation of a negation, and that it can be understood accordingly, in particular, given the frequent appearance in this thesis of terms such as "spirit" and "nature" in conjunction with "unity in difference," there is some danger that all our terminology might be understood in an Hegelian manner. This is not intended; rather, the terms "spirit" and "nature" here mean only what they tend to mean within the "moral" view of life. In other words, "the unity in difference of the spiritual and the natural life" here means only that the contradiction between the spiritual life, as regarded in typical religious discourse or the like, and the natural life, likewise seen, is now overcome. Indeed, were the terms to be regarded in an Hegelian sense, the present argument would be unintelligible, since in Hegel, *Geist* is already, in a sense, the *unity-in-difference* of the pure idea and the idea alienated from itself, or of Logic and Nature, so that Nature is already a moment within the realm of Spirit.

It is a painful spectacle that has dawned upon me: I have drawn back the curtain from the corruption of man. In my mouth, this word is at least free from one suspicion: that it might involve a moral accusation of man. It is meant -- let me emphasize this once more -- *moraline-free*. So much so that I experience this corruption most strongly precisely where men have so far aspired most deliberately to "virtue" and "godliness." I understand corruption, as you will guess, in the sense of decadence: it is my contention that all the values in which mankind now gums up its supreme desiderata are *decadence-values*.

For Nietzsche, the Christian is the nihilist: he himself is the teacher of eternal recurrence, of *amor fati*.

The problem of morality offered Nietzsche a way into what was, for him, the burden of the age: that man can no longer, or will soon be no longer able to, find a purpose in existence, and justify to himself his own humanity. Man, Aristotle says, is *ὁ ζῷον λόγικον*; how then, in the absence of a Chain of Being, or of a creative God, can the merely natural order sanction the spiritual life? The consciousness of truth, it appeared, was no longer absolute, and the life of the artist, saint, and philosopher merely an illusion. The life of spirit *had* to be of an order of experience different from that of the temporal world; to deny a higher order was *ipso facto* to deny the spiritual life, and thus the humanity of man. In Nietzsche's negation of morality, however, what is negated is precisely this opposition of the spirit to nature; the life of pure moral inwardness is a decadent ascetic ideal. / It is therefore, in Nietzsche's philosophy, no longer necessary to deny, with the realm of absolute *Geist*, a human *Geist*. It only becomes necessary to negate morality and to cultivate the philosopher of the future, a type different from those heretofore known.

Toward new philosophers: there is no choice; toward spirits strong and original enough to provide the stimuli for opposite

valuations and to invert "eternal values": toward forerunners, toward men of the future who in the present life the knot and constraint that forces the will of millennia upon new tracks.

The philosopher of the future, in Nietzsche, does not seek eternal truths, but his own: he has earned, as Nietzsche says, the right to egotism.

Nietzsche's negation of the negation is therefore the negation of a form of human existence in which the spiritual life and the natural life are given as mutually contradictory. The positive result, clearly, is therefore one in which the spiritual life and the natural life are brought into unity. However, by the logical structures of the form of argument employed, the positive result must contain within itself the original negation, as so negated. In other words, since the new unity is arrived at through the negation of the opposition of spirit to nature -- 'spiritual life and natural life are not mutually contradictory, that is merely the idiosyncrasy of decadents' -- it is and must be expressed in terms of this opposition. Like the unity of Being and Nothing in *Dasein*, the integrity of the spiritual and the natural in the positive result of Nietzsche's negation of negation is a unity in difference.

This logical progression is obviously of great consequence for our understanding of the doctrine of the *Uebermensch*. As the one who brings to a focus the overcoming of morality and moral culture, it is clear that he must embody, as the positive result of the negation of the negation, precisely this unity in difference. In his concept, therefore, the spiritual and the natural life of the individual, while retained in their distinction, are no longer given as contradictory and "hostile," but each is recognized as an essential moment in concrete individual existence, and each as essential to the other. In Nietzsche's concept of the *Uebermensch*, the

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<sup>75</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 203.

spiritual life must be also the natural, and the natural life also must be the spiritual.

This reconciliation of spiritual and natural existence through the Nietzschean negation of negativity is particularly manifest in the movement from the blond beast to the moral man to the *Uebermensch*. It is well known, for example, and often pointed out in the commentaries, that while Nietzsche understands the moral type to be an aberration from the noble, classical ideal, and while he negates morality, he still makes no appeal for a return to that earlier mode of existence. Indeed, he states at one point that there is much to fear and to guard against in the notion of the blond beast of antiquity.<sup>76</sup> While all commentators generally recognize this, the reason for it is never explicitly stated. It is, of course, true that such a return would carry with it a decrease, and not a possible increase, in 'the quantity of power accumulated,' but this is merely the surface of the problem. The truth, rather, is that the very logic of Nietzsche's position, as essentially a negation of a negation, precludes in principle the possibility of a return to that type.

In Nietzsche's account, what the blond beast of antiquity represents is an 'original' unity of the natural and the spiritual life of the individual, a type in whom consciousness and instinctive, immediate activity as a "semi-animal" are not 'yet' distinguished. Nietzsche writes:

Their work is an instinctive creation and imposition of forms: they are the most involuntary, unconscious artists there are -- wherever they appear something new soon arises, a ruling structure that lives, in which parts and functions are delimited and co-ordinated, in which nothing whatever finds a place that has not first been assigned a "meaning" in relation to the whole.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, I, 11.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 17.

Once the cleft between the spirit and nature has been established within the individual through morality, therefore, it becomes impossible in principle to return to an undifferentiated unity of the two. Any which is achieved, furthermore, will be self-conscious and not immediate.

Nietzsche's blond beast of antiquity is therefore not to be taken primarily as denoting actual historical figures, but rather as serving a necessary function in the Nietzschean logic of cultural types. It is clear, for example, that the concept of the blond beast is formulated as a counterfoil to Nietzsche's view of morality and of the moral man.<sup>78</sup> What he thus represents is a kind of primeval harmony of the spiritual life and the natural life, a kind of 'Eden' in which the spiritual man is the natural man and the natural man the spiritual man, one in whom the distinction between the two is not even recognized. Thus conceived, he serves to highlight the chasm between the spirit and nature as definitive of morality, and, more importantly, as something "decadent" or "sick," as itself a negation. That this diremption should appear as an aberration is clearly of the utmost importance in Nietzsche's argument. By it comes the sense that we must strive to regain something which has been lost, namely, that primeval harmony. And since what has been lost can only be regained through a negation of the original negation, then the attained unity can only be one containing that original negation within itself as overcome in a higher reconciliation.

The type of the *Uebermensch*, therefore, as the positive result of the Nietzschean negation of morality, cannot be conceived as embodying a

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<sup>78</sup>In other words, the concept of the blond beast is constructed in order to reveal morality to be a negation or a perversion. It therefore follows that what is primary in Nietzsche's philosophy is the attack upon morality — i.e., the negation of the negation — so that the latter does not merely proceed out of some sort of neo-Hegelian dialectical account of history, but rather the 'dialectical' pseudo-history out of the implicit philosophical methodology of the negation of the negation.



return to an undifferentiated unity of the spiritual and the natural life, to the type of the blond beast. Neither can he be conceived as a moral type, a type in whom the spirit still wars against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit. The unity attained can only be one containing the original cleft within itself, as so *negated*. In the concept of the *Uebersensch*, therefore, there is a new sense of the unity in difference of the spiritual and the natural, a spiritual-natural identity.

#### 2.4 Conclusions

The Nietzschean ideal is exceedingly difficult to characterize. Attempts have been made, as we have seen in the case of Kaufmann, to reconcile the different strands of the position in the doctrine of the will to power. This, however, has proved impossible. Alternatively, one can argue that it is Nietzsche's aim to do away with the life of spirit altogether, that what is "Dionysian" in the later philosophy is precisely the affirmation of a natural order emptied of all spiritual content. The world thus becomes utterly absurd. Or again, the argument is commonly raised that Nietzsche's point is to reduce mind to body, or spirit to nature.<sup>79</sup> Copieston, for example, is a leading proponent of the latter position, repeatedly objecting that since mind is just as 'natural' to man as is body, Nietzsche has forgotten what it is to be human. In all of these, however, the unity in difference of the spiritual and the natural life is neglected. Nietzsche neither remains within the moral prejudice, nor does he annihilate spirit altogether or reduce it to a function of the body. Rather, what he is speaking of can only be grasped as a spiritual-natural identity.

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<sup>79</sup> Insofar as one attempts to reduce spirit to nature in Nietzsche, one falls into two errors. First, one has made him out to be a materialist, an assertion which Nietzsche explicitly denies, since materialism is merely another thinly disguised attempt to interpret the world once again as having an unchanging substratum. Secondly, the attempt to make nature prior to spirit is formally no different than the attempt to exalt spirit over nature. Once again, a "mortal hostility" between the two is postulated, for they are here again cut off from one another, for their unity in difference is denied.

It is, of course, true that such an abstract characterization of Nietzsche violates his express desire to go beyond the demands and strictures of logic. His philosophy abounds in condemnations of such procedures as bound still by the moral prejudice; this prejudice removed, all thought will be recognized to be radically perspectival and finite. Our procedure, in other words, has not been consistent with certain of the internal demands of Nietzsche's philosophy itself.

On the other hand, it has become clear in the course of our investigations that the very fact that Nietzsche's position is centered in the attack upon morality does provide a way into a purely formal or logical characterization of his philosophy. This procedure is one, perhaps, that Nietzsche would not wish to admit; the central argument of the present thesis, therefore, rests on the fact that, whether Nietzsche would want to accept it or not, it is in fact perfectly adequate to his philosophy. The negation of morality, as the root of the positive doctrines of *Uebersensch*, eternal recurrence, perspectival truth, etc., can be thus logically analyzed as a means of comprehending these most ambiguous positive doctrines. Since morality is revealed in Nietzsche to be a determinate form of human existence -- one in which the spiritual and the natural life are posed as mutually contradictory -- and since the logical principle of the negation of negation as expressed in Hegel is so clearly applicable to this implicit logical progression in Nietzsche, the positive result, abstractly expressed, is indeed a unity in difference of the spiritual and the natural life of man.

In the end, the only way to prove our thesis is by explicit reference to the content of the doctrine of the *Uebersensch* itself. If we are correct, then what Nietzsche sees in the *Uebersensch* is a type in whom the spiritual-natural identity is fully realized. In him, natural activity will be recognized as spiritual, and spiritual activity as natural. The moral diremption of the two will have been overcome.

## Chapter 3

THE LOGICAL GENESIS OF THE *UEBERMENSCH*

The end of all the previous arguments has been to establish the basis upon which a strict definition of Nietzsche's concept of the *Uebermensch* can be formulated. Such a definition is something that neither Nietzsche, himself, nor his commentators, have succeeded in providing. Our argument, however, has been that a strict definition of the *Uebermensch* is indeed possible because Nietzsche's philosophy, regarded abstractly, is essentially a negation of a negation, namely morality, with the concept of the *Uebermensch* as its positive result. Clearly, the content of the doctrine must be conditioned in certain fundamental ways by Nietzsche's polemic. Through an adequate understanding of Nietzsche's view of morality, therefore, and of its role in his philosophy, the concept of the *Uebermensch* can be strictly defined. Within the context of its logical genesis in the overall structures of Nietzsche's thought, the *Uebermensch* is the positive result of Nietzsche's negation of negation.

The analysis in the last chapter of the specific content of Nietzsche's polemic against morality has revealed the problem of morality to be essentially the ancient question of the struggle within man between the spiritual life and the natural life. It thus involves far more than the question of a revision of moral codes, and can with some justification be characterized as the central question of the tradition, affecting even the otherwise independent fields of metaphysics and epistemology. But this struggle, according to Nietzsche, is not what it is asserted to be within morality itself: the permanent paradox of human nature; rather, it is a

practical creation, purely finite and false, of a particular type of man -- the slave. Unable to achieve value within the "noble" context of natural existence and objective achievement, the slave inverts the sphere of value to become that of pure thought alone. Value, for the slave, resides solely in the inward man -- one becomes responsible in morality, for example, for one's actions and even for one's will and character. The question of what objectively 'is' is now irrelevant to that of value: the categories of 'ought' and 'is' are completely dissociated.

According to Nietzsche, then, the whole realm of moral inwardness is a purely negative construct. It is arrived at and is sustained purely through the negation of the natural life. Morality, therefore, is antinatural. It is a mode of existence in which one's spiritual life comes to be explicitly defined as antinatural, and one's natural life -- from the moral standpoint -- as antispiritual. To quote from Plato:

The soul is most like that which is divine, immortal, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, and ever self-consistent and invariable, whereas body is most like that which is human, mortal, multiform, unintelligible, dissoluble, and never self-consistent.<sup>80</sup>

In Nietzsche, therefore, the problem of morality is essentially the problem of the ages -- that man has the head of a god and the body of an animal. But the problem is not posed in the traditional metaphysical mode, but is posed -- and overcome -- in terms of the finite, this-worldly questions of human values, psychology, and culture, all of which are apprehended under the term "morality."

In negating morality, therefore, Nietzsche is to be understood.

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<sup>80</sup> Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. Hugh Tredennick, in Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 80b.

not as negating ethical codes -- indeed, he has praise for ethical codes<sup>81</sup> -- but as negating this opposition of pure thought, of moral inwardness, to natural, objective existence. And since morality itself is already conceived as an aberration or as a negation, then in the abstract sense Nietzsche's philosophy is a negation of a negation. The positive result in which it issues, therefore, logically must contain within itself that original negation as so negated. More concretely, because Nietzsche is explicitly concerned to end the war of the spiritual life against the natural life within man, then his positive doctrines can nevertheless only be expressed in terms of the spiritual and the natural as distinct categories. Again, the effort is to unify them, but such an effort presupposes in principle that the distinction between them be recognized, even in their final unity. In abstract terms once again, therefore, the positive result of Nietzsche's negation of negation, as containing within itself the expression of morality negated, is precisely expressed as the unity in difference of the spiritual life and the natural life.

As was stated at the outset, it only remains for us to demonstrate that the content of the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* as it appears in Nietzsche does indeed reflect these abstract, logical dynamics. In the first chapter, the concept of the *Ueberschensch* was broken down into three phases: prophetic, psychological, and cultural-historical. The present chapter will thus conclude the argument by dealing with each of these sides of the concept in turn, revealing in each case how this spiritual-natural unity in difference is, in fact, expressed. The confusing and confused concept with which we began will be thereby given a stricter definition.

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<sup>81</sup> Cf., for example, Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 186.

### 3.1 The prophetic vision of the *Ueberschensch*

In Chapter One, Nietzsche's doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* has been seen to arise as a kind of prophetic 'burden' in relation to his struggles with the problem of nihilism. In *Zarathustra* in particular, where the prophetic element is strongest, the *Ueberschensch* explicitly appears as Nietzsche's answer to nihilism. Zarathustra has brought his ashes to the mountain, the ashes of world-weariness, and now comes down bearing tidings of the *Ueberschensch*.<sup>82</sup> Now for Nietzsche, nihilism is simply the extension of morality -- the extremization of it. Indeed -- inasmuch as the nihilist still holds that value and truth 'ought' to pertain to the pure spirit, and yet at the same time denies that the pure spirit has any reality. He thus drives the opposition of spirit to nature and the devaluation of existence to the hilt: in nihilism, there is an 'is' with absolutely no value, on the one hand, and an 'ought' which has no reality, on the other. The existing individual is thus driven further into inwardness -- because of the impossibility of an objective system, perhaps -- since the utter absurdity of existence within nihilism now precludes any will whatsoever to involve himself in objective existence. At least the moralist could dream of redemption, but the nihilist has not even that respite. Nietzsche writes:

For why has the advent of nihilism become necessary? Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence: because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals -- because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these values really had. --<sup>83</sup>

The two are thus born of the one soil: the opposition of spiritual life to the natural.

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<sup>82</sup>Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, Prologue, 2. This is a recurring theme: cf., for example, *ibid.*, I, "On the Afterworldly."

<sup>83</sup>Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Preface, 4.

In Nietzsche's prophetic vision of the *Ueberschensch*, the positive result of the negation of negation, the fact that the positive doctrine has no independent status but arises out of Nietzsche's polemic against morality, is clearly revealed. Every determination of the concept which Nietzsche gives is here derived entirely from his opposition to the moral prejudice, of which nihilism is the extension. The nihilist denies that the world has any meaning; Nietzsche's *Ueberschensch* creates a meaning for the earth. The nihilist cannot affirm the fact that man, and not God, is the author of truth and value; the *Ueberschensch* affirms his own creativity in utter innocence as his highest joy. The nihilist holds that all is lost because all world-views are known to be merely human and relative; the *Ueberschensch* affirms his own view of life as his distinctive right. As was quoted earlier:

A new pride my ego taught me, and this I teach men:  
no longer to bury one's head in the sand of heavenly things, but  
to bear it freely, an earthly head, which creates a meaning for  
the earth.

A new will I teach men: to will this way which man has  
walked blindly, and to affirm it, and no longer to sneak away  
from it like the sick and the decaying.<sup>84</sup>

What the Western tradition ascribes to God alone, therefore, the *Ueberschensch* assumes as his distinctive right — he is the source of the meaning of the universe, and his standard alone constitutes the proper rule for his existence. Or again, as Zarathustra says, rather than submitting dutifully to the "It was" of the moral prejudice, the *Ueberschensch* says, "Thus I will it, thus shall it be!"<sup>85</sup> Through his own creation of meaning, his own creative will, therefore, and not through a redemptive answer given from above, the *Ueberschensch* overcomes nihilism.

<sup>84</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, I, "On the Afterworldly." Quoted above, p. 10.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, "On the Three Metamorphoses."

According to Nietzsche, then, the essence of the experience of nihilism is the problem of morality — the problem of the opposition of man's spiritual life to his natural life. Within morality, the whole of the realm of meaning, of truth, goodness, and beauty, comes to be posited as explicitly antinatural. Truth and value for the moralist are held to be absolute, unchanging, eternal, pure; nature is finite, fleeting, impure. In the philosophy of Plato, for example, the account of the Forms runs along precisely these lines. If truth is to be absolute, then there must be a separate order of Absolutes, an order opposed to the present realm, which sanctions it. Similarly, in Descartes, God is the guarantor of the truth of the *cogito*, for truth and value which one knows to be absolute must be discovered if we are to have truth at all. Nietzsche writes:

This way of judging constitutes the typical prejudgment and prejudice which give away the metaphysicians of all ages; this kind of valuation looms in the background of all their logical procedures; it is on account of this "faith" that they trouble themselves about "knowledge," about something that is finally baptized solemnly as "the truth." The fundamental faith of the metaphysicians is the faith in opposite values. It has not even occurred to the most cautious among them that one might have a doubt right here at the threshold where it was surely most necessary — even if they vowed to themselves, "*de omnibus dubitandum*."<sup>86</sup>

Where spirit and nature are opposites, therefore, *εἶδος* and *φύσις* are likewise divorced.

The idea that truth and value necessarily have their basis in an absolute is therefore, for Nietzsche, a negation. The reality is that man is the sole source of meaning; he creates, and has always created, his own values and truths:

Verily, men gave themselves all their good and evil. Verily, they did not take it, they did not find it, nor did it come to them as a voice from heaven. Only man placed values in

<sup>86</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 2.



things to preserve himself -- he alone created a meaning for things, a human meaning. Therefore he calls himself "man," which means: the esteemer.<sup>87</sup>

Those values the moralist creates, however, he falsely credits to God, and claims for them an absolute status. Holding that his own spiritual life is a participation in the divine -- by grace, perhaps -- he also holds that the 'earthly' part of him can have no role in truth and value. In negating morality, therefore, Nietzsche negates this conviction of absolute knowledge, and the result, since morality is a negation, is positive.

The *Uebermensch* is therefore conceived as a type that has overcome the problem of morality inasmuch as, affirming his own creative will, he creates his own truth and value in self-consciousness. Nietzsche writes:

But this is what the will to truth should mean to you: that everything be changed into what is thinkable for man, visible for man, feelable by man. . . .

And what you have called world, that shall be created only by you: your reason, your image, your will, your love shall thus be realized. And verily, for your own bliss, you lovers of knowledge.<sup>88</sup>

Nietzsche's negation of morality, therefore, is not to be understood as yielding a rejection of the spiritual life altogether, so that we are merely left with the 'natural' life as it is for the moral type. In that case the result would be that no values would be created, or affirmed, or even sought, for the spiritual life would no longer be an appropriate aspiration for the *Uebermensch*. Rather, the spiritual life, the life -- in this case -- that is conscious of truth and value, is preserved, but obviously in a new form. With morality overcome, and the diremption of spirit and nature

<sup>87</sup>Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, I, "On the Thousand and One Goals."

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, II, "Upon the Blessed Isles."

thus suspended, the consciousness of truth and value can no longer be held to be a participation in the divine *Geist*. The spiritual life, rather, now is brought into unity with the natural life, so that the meaning the *Uebermensch* affirms in his existence pertains precisely to the 'earthly' part of him.

But if the realm of spirit is thus assimilated to natural existence, then the moral devaluation and alienation of nature itself is likewise overcome. As Nietzsche writes again:

The true world -- we have abolished. What world has remained?  
The apparent one perhaps? But not *With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one.*

(Noon: moment of the briefest shadow: end of the longest error: high point of humanity: INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA.)<sup>89</sup>

Nature is now of itself spiritual, and here begins Zarathustra.

The type of the *Uebermensch* is to be understood as embodying the unity in difference of the spiritual life and the natural life. Nietzsche knows the two to be necessarily discriminated in the result, while they are just as much an integrity. In other words, while the *Uebermensch* affirms truth and value, he affirms them as his own creation, and hence as relative, this-worldly, finite, perspectival -- i.e., as natural. He is fully aware that without his creativity the nut of existence would be hollow,<sup>90</sup> so that the spiritual life is retained in its distinction from the natural, and yet he is also aware that the values he does create are utterly finite and this-worldly, so that the spiritual and the natural are unified. It is in fact clear, then, that in the prophetic vision of the *Uebermensch*, the positive result of Nietzsche's negation of negation, as the unity in difference of the

<sup>89</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight*, "How the 'True World' Finally Becomes a Fable," §.

<sup>90</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, I, "On the Thousand and One Goals."

spiritual and the natural life. is indeed manifested. The form and the content of the position are here consistent.

### 3.2 The psychological description of the *Uebermensch*.

The unity in difference of the spiritual and the natural life is also manifest in Nietzsche's philosophical psychology, which occupies the bulk of his writings, and which comprehends themes such as *ressentiment*, thwarted instinct, and the existential affirmation or denial of life. In the case of the *Uebermensch*, a psychological type is described whose life-affirmation is absolutely unqualified, and who, being free of *ressentiment*, inevitably attains power in mode which directly reflects an integrity of the spiritual and the natural life. He is, for example, the master of himself, but his self-mastery presupposes both that he has at some point become an object to himself, and that he also has overcome this opposition.<sup>91</sup> There is absolutely no struggle with the passions, for instance, and yet this denotes, not a submission to passion, the immediate, but rather an attained mastery of himself, a realized integrity within the individual which brooks no contradiction -- the "spiritualization," as Nietzsche calls it, of passion.<sup>92</sup>

The *Uebermensch* as Nietzsche conceives him is thus absolutely spontaneous in his relation to the world; yet his spontaneity is not that of bare immediacy, but a conscious spontaneity, a kind of attained mediated immediacy. He neither flees in his existence into the pure ideal, nor does he immerse himself in nature in the raw; rather, his will to mastery and perfection leads him into an appropriation and affirmation as spiritual of all that is natural, and vice versa. In plunging himself into the stream of

<sup>91</sup> Cf., Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, II, 2.

<sup>92</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight*, "Morality as Anti-Nature," 1, 3.

becoming, there is, furthermore, for the *Uebersch* no external limit to his will to power: he is in the complete sense self-determining, an *active* rather than a *reactive* type.<sup>93</sup> As we read in *Zarathustra*, even death is made his own: "My death I praise to you, the free death which comes to me because I want it."<sup>94</sup>

In concrete terms, therefore, Nietzsche's psychology, as "morphology and the doctrine of the development of the will to power,"<sup>95</sup> can be said to come to focus in the basic question of what a human type does with life. The psychological question is thus in all cases reducible to whether there is affirmation or denial, appropriation of the fullness of life, or a negative and one-sided retreat from existence into an abstract, moral subjectivity. The nay-sayer shrinks from existence, fleeing like the Buddha from sickness, old age, and death into the ideal; the *Uebersch*, by contrast, is in Nietzsche characterized by self-mastery and *amor fati*. Having himself fully in hand, and being strong enough to attain mastery in the world as such, he affirms existence unreservedly -- in the formula of eternal recurrence. Nietzsche writes:

I was the first to see the real opposition: the degenerating instinct that turns against life with subterranean vengefulness (Christianity, the philosophy of Schopenhauer, in a certain sense already the philosophy of Plato, and all of idealism as typical forms) versus a formula of the highest affirmation, born of fullness, of overfullness, a Yes-saying without reservation, even to suffering, even to guilt, even to everything that is questionable and strange in existence.

<sup>93</sup> Cf., Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, I, 10-11.

<sup>94</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, I, "On Free Death."

<sup>95</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 23. Quoted above, p. 14.

<sup>96</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecc Homo*, "The Birth of Tragedy," 2. Quoted above, p. 18.

First of all, then, the self-mastery of the *Uebermensch* is itself a demonstration of the unity in difference of the spiritual and the natural in his type. Man, as will to power, incessantly strives to establish himself in a position of mastery in existence, and *self-mastery*, for Nietzsche, is clearly the highest and the rarest form of power. The *Uebermensch* is a self-determining type *par excellence*: like Goethe and Napoleon, he is able to afford the whole range and wealth of being natural, being strong enough for such freedom.<sup>97</sup> But the regained integrity of rational ends and natural desires is in his case not the result of a laborious moral contest: it is rather something given as a "physiological" presupposition, so that it arises spontaneously. Nietzsche writes:

Every mistake is in every sense the effect of the degeneration of instinct, of the disintegration of the will: one could almost define what is bad in this way. All that is good is instinct — and hence easy, necessary, free. Laboriousness is an objection; the god is typically different from the hero. (In my language: light feet are the first attribute of divinity.)<sup>98</sup>

And again:

The proud awareness of this extraordinary privilege of responsibility, the consciousness of this rare freedom, has in his case penetrated to the profoundest depths and become instinct, the dominating instinct.<sup>99</sup>

Being the representative of self-mastery in the highest sense, therefore, the *Uebermensch* no longer flees from life into the ideal. His strength precludes any such retreat into an antinatural mode of existence. But insofar as his self-mastery is conscious, the moment of the distinction of consciousness and natural immediacy is necessarily presupposed, so that

<sup>97</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight*, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," 49.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, "The Four Great Errors," 2.

<sup>99</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, II, 12.

the unity given in his type of the spirit and nature is conceived as an *attained* unity, as something overcome, as unity in difference.

In the broader context of Nietzsche's psychology, man, as will to power, seeks a form of self-determination in which his world is given form after his own image; and since man is still, for Nietzsche, a rational animal of sorts, his eye is generally fixed on human values and world-views as a clue to psychological type. The *ressentiment* against life of the decadent, moral type issues in the affirmation of an ideal realm conceived in opposition to the world as such. "Plato," Nietzsche writes, "is a coward before reality, consequently he flees into the ideal."<sup>100</sup> This is the very essence of psychological decadence: the faith in opposite values, in the "idols," which are in themselves a direct devaluation of finite existence. But the existential attitude of the *Ueberschensch* is given in *amor fati*: that *fatum* which he is, and which life is, is no longer negated, but is affirmed and owned -- as Nietzsche puts it, to all eternity. The psychology of the moral type thus overcome, the *Ueberschensch*, in affirming eternal recurrence, says Yes even to all that is terrible in existence, even to the "little" man, and, rather than retreating from life and actuality, conquers it for himself.

Nietzsche writes in *Ecce Homo* of the doctrine of eternal recurrence as the "highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable."<sup>101</sup> While earlier, according to the *Nachlass*, he had attempted to demonstrate it to be a cosmological principle, his final understanding of it, consistent with his overall views, is indifferent to its literal

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<sup>100</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight*, "What I Owe to the Ancients," 2.

<sup>101</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 1.

truth-value.<sup>102</sup> For Nietzsche, all world-views are 'lies' anyway, being evaluations, or interpretations of life: all they do and can do is express one's existential attitude. He writes:

When we speak of values, we speak with the inspiration, with the way of looking at things, which is part of life: life itself forces us to posit values: life itself values through us when we posit values.<sup>103</sup>

And again:

Moral judgments are therefore never to be taken literally: so understood, they always contain mere absurdity. Semiotically, however, they remain invaluable: they reveal, at least for those who know, the most valuable realities of cultures and inwardnesses, which did not know enough to "understand" themselves. Morality is mere sign language, mere symptomatology; one must know what it is all about to be able to profit from it.<sup>104</sup>

Man, as will to power, seeks a form of self-determination in which his world is given form after his own image; but since man is still, for Nietzsche, a rational animal of sorts, his eye is generally fixed on human values and world-views as a clue to the question of psychological type.

Thus it is that Nietzsche understands the philosophy of Plato, for example, entirely in terms of Plato's subconscious motives. His opposition of the Forms to *physis* is an expression of decadence, an implicit nihilism which issues from his cowardice in the face of actuality. Plato's arguments, to Nietzsche, are therefore irrelevant as arguments: as clues to his psychological type, however, they are of great significance. The

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<sup>102</sup> Much of the present account of eternal recurrence is drawn from, Bernd Magnus, *Nietzsche's Existential Imperative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978). Magnus does not, however, employ the notions of the negation of negation and the unity in difference of spirit and nature, nor is his view of the *Uebermensch* consistent with the one here presented.

<sup>103</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight*, "Morality as Anti-Nature," 5.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, "The 'Improvers' of Mankind," 1.

same is true of the doctrine of eternal recurrence, the systematic expression of the overcoming of morality, and the explicit existential attitude of the *Ueberschensch*. Its truth-value is irrelevant to the account, for it is purely an attitudinal affirmation. And what it expresses is directly an affirmation of the integrity of the spiritual life and the natural: the eternal is affirmed as the occurrent and the occurrent as the eternal: the infinite and the finite are one.

As Nietzsche characterizes the moral world-view, which the vision of eternal recurrence will replace, it is explicitly an opposition of "real" and "apparent" orders, of Being and becoming, and of eternity and time:

Whatever has being does not become; whatever becomes does not have being. Now they all believe, desperately even, in what has being. But since they never grasp it, they seek for reasons why it is kept from them.<sup>106</sup>

The express problem in such a position for Nietzsche is that from the start the very statement of it presupposes that the world be taken as a problem, as something to be transcended or overcome. Only the eternal, and the eternal realm of absolutes, is of value, and only the eternal, consequently, is to be sought. But this speaks of a devaluation of finite existence, and therefore of a degenerating instinct which has turned against life itself and cannot affirm it as the sphere of value and of true being. It is therefore a negation, another expression of morality, a direrption of the spiritual and the natural life of man, and something which itself, in turn, must be negated.

The psychological expression of the doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* is a direct product of Nietzsche's negation of morality. The moral type flees from actuality, from finite existence, into the ideal realm; he denies the world as it is in favour of God, or Truth, or Philosophy. The

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, "Reason in Philosophy," 1.



*Ueberschensch* plunges himself into finite actuality and conquers it as the sphere of his highest fruitfulness, affirming a this-worldly value for his life. The question of what the *Ueberschensch* does with life is therefore clear: in opposition to the life-denial of the moral man, he affirms life as it is without qualification, being strong enough to do so. And since the life-denial of the moral type is expressed most fully in his world-view -- philosophy is "the most spiritual will to power"<sup>106</sup> -- the negation of the negation will also find its central psychological expression in a world-view: the doctrine of eternal recurrence.

What the eternal recurrence represents, as the result of the negation of the negation, is precisely the unity in difference of the spiritual and the natural. In it, the realm of becoming is affirmed as eternal, while what is valued as the eternal is affirmed to be the realm of becoming. What is true and what is only apparent for the moral type, what has being and what has not, are thus identified. But the categories of the moral world-view are nevertheless retained: eternity and time, the absolute and the finite. No return, therefore, is made to the indistinction of the spiritual and the natural, the eternal and the temporal; rather, what is affirmed is their unity in difference. Morality is thus contained within the positive result as negated, *as aufgehoben*. As the formula of affirmation which the *Ueberschensch* alone can embrace, therefore, the eternal recurrence is directly an expression of the Nietzschean negation of negation, and of the spiritual-natural integrity which results.

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<sup>106</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §.

### 3.3 The *Ueberschensch* as a cultural-historical type.

The unity in difference of the spiritual and the natural is no less evident in the cultural-historical aspect of Nietzsche's doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* than in the other aspects of the doctrine. The cultural-historical progression from beast to man to *Ueberschensch* described in Nietzsche, for example, clearly expresses a movement from identity to difference to unity in difference, and we have taken advantage of this already in the discussion.<sup>107</sup> In the broader context, of course, Nietzsche's views were never finalized, and no master plan for the cultural reformation was produced, but the problem of the overcoming of morality, and the question of spirit and nature, is nevertheless the theme:

For when truth enters into a fight with the lies of millennia, we shall have upheavals, a convulsion of earthquakes, a moving of mountains and valleys, the like of which has never been dreamed of. The concept of politics will have merged entirely with a war of spirits: all power structures of the old society will have exploded -- all of them are based on lies: there will be wars the like of which have never yet been seen on earth.<sup>108</sup> It is only beginning with me that the earth knows great politics.

Nietzsche's central argument regarding the cultural-historical type of the *Ueberschensch* is that the changes which must be "willed" in order for his type to appear cannot be effected at the level of consciousness alone. The moral prejudice, of course, would have it precisely that way: since the true man is the 'inward' man of consciousness, and since the natural man is ultimately bound anyway by "the law of sin and death," the

<sup>107</sup> It should be noted that Nietzsche's 'cultural history' cannot be taken to be 'history' in the ordinary sense. It is more akin to surrealism in art, and is intended to give an abstract account of human history from the standpoint of the problem of morality. Man, Nietzsche is convinced, must become conscious of the historical error and will to seize his fate and become what he is. It is all is not to be lost. It thus appears in much the same light as early socialist history -- as in Comte's progression from the religious stage to the metaphysical to that of the positive philosophy -- except that it is given a vastly different content.

<sup>108</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Why I Am a Destiny," 1.

reformation can be in principle only an ideal one. One has to be "redeemed" -- by faith -- and even then one has to wait for the last trump. Or, alternatively, perfection might be held to consist alone in having a good will, since ultimately we are members of the intelligible world, and not merely of the realm of appearances. But in Nietzsche, a real physiological healing of sorts is called for, an *actual* change in the decadent condition of mankind, one which comprehends both 'soul' and 'body,' spirit and nature. He writes:

For one should make no mistake about the method in this case: a breeding of feelings and thoughts alone is almost nothing (this is the great misunderstanding underlying German education, which is wholly illusory): one must first persuade the body. Strict perseverance in significant and exquisite gestures together with the obligation to live only with people who do not "let themselves go" -- that is quite enough for one to become significant and exquisite, and in two or three generations all this becomes inward. It is decisive for the lot of a people and of humanity that culture should begin in the right place -- not in the "soul" (as was the fateful superstition of the priests and half-priests): the right place is the body, the gesture, the diet, physiology: the rest follows from that.

As he argues in the early *Untimely Meditations*, it is not enough to import a dozen philosophical systems into the national universities and educate the youth in the resulting tangle of ideas; nor is it enough to emerge with Strauss from the historical dialectic into the opera house; what for Nietzsche is demanded is above all an attained integral way of life: true character and true culture. Without a concretely established expression of the self, we are left with vapid Philistinism.

If the cultural-historical type of the *Uebermensch* is ever to exist, Zarathustra says, then it is required that he be "willed" by men.<sup>110</sup> Or again, as Nietzsche writes in *Antichrist*:

<sup>108</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight*, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," 47.

<sup>110</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, Prologue, 3, 5.

The problem I thus pose is not what shall succeed mankind in the sequence of living beings (man is an end), but what type of man shall be bred, shall be *willed*, for being higher in value, worthier of a future.

But what is to be bred, or "cultivated," is not a purely natural individual through selective breeding or the like: what is cultivated is rather, and can only be, the human will to power, the will to mastery and perfection. It is a question of the husbandry of vitalistic force:

Breeding, as I understand it, is a means of storing up the tremendous forces of mankind so that the generations can build upon the work of their forefathers — not only outwardly, but inwardly, organically growing out of them and becoming stronger

While it is indeed by this-worldly means that the breeding of the stronger type will proceed, then, neither the means nor the end are 'this-worldly' in the moral sense: both means and end are spiritual-natural, for will to power is spiritual-natural.

The question of cultural type in Nietzsche centers in the question of the form in which will to power receives its concrete expression in the world.<sup>111</sup> Man is not a purely inward being, nor is he purely objective; he is supremely a cultural being, one who does establish himself and gain mastery in the world. This realism in the realm of culture is therefore not an abandonment of either side of the concrete actuality of man. What Nietzsche wants to foster are rather types such as the new philosopher

<sup>111</sup> Nietzsche, *Antichrist*, 3. Quoted above, p. 20.

<sup>112</sup> Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 398. Cited by Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 304, in explanation of the concept of breeding.

<sup>113</sup> The concept of the "type" in Nietzsche ought also to be considered. Since it is an abstract, or universal expression for the "particulars" about us, the breeding of the type "Übermensch" is not so much the breeding of a specific individual as it is the willing of a certain kind of man. Nietzsche's cultural history is a history of cultural types, not of actual individuals. Thus it is that his cultural history cannot be taken to be history in the usual sense.

who inverts eternal verities and creates truth in the real world: artists also like Raphael, who say Yes to reality. Such types, above all else, are extolled because their spirituality is an actual one: they do not retreat into the pure inwardness of the moral consciousness, but rather establish themselves as spiritual beings in the sensuous, natural world: they are cultural phenomena.<sup>114</sup> The aim, therefore, is the highest specimen, a man whose spirituality is wholly actual and whose actuality is spiritual -- a man foreshadowed by the type of Goethe and Napoleon. As Nietzsche writes:

Goethe -- not a German event, but a European one: a magnificent attempt to overcome the eighteenth century by a return to nature, by an ascent to the naturalness of the Renaissance -- a kind of self-overcoming on the part of that century. ... In the middle of an age with an unreal outlook, Goethe was a convinced realist: he said Yes to everything that was related to him in this respect -- and he had no greater experience than that *ens realissimum* called Napoleon.<sup>115</sup>

As the type who embodies the overcoming of morality, the *Uebermensch* can only be conceived as one in whom the spiritual life is made natural, or sensuous, and the sensuous or natural life made spiritual. The unity in difference of the two is here required. Christian morality, Nietzsche argues, is responsible for their diremption, so that the "world" and the Spirit have for millennia stood apart: the overcoming of Christian moral culture will therefore mean the overcoming of the diremption. As he writes in *Antichrist* of Christianity and the Roman Empire:

<sup>114</sup> Nietzsche's early idea of culture as "another and improved physics," as noted by Kaufmann, might be introduced at this point. Culture, for Nietzsche, was and remained an immediate presence of the spiritual in the natural world, so that the "cultural type" is by definition a spiritual-natural construct. Cf., Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-159. Once again, however, there is no unity in difference in Kaufmann's treatment of culture, but a difference which one strives to overcome. Cf., *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>115</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight*, "Blattemieses of an Untimely Man," 49.

[What is essential] had already been there once before! More than two thousand years ago! And, in addition, the good, the delicate sense of tact and taste. Not as brain drill! Not as "German" education with loutish manners! But as body, as gesture, as instinct -- as reality. In short, *All in vain!* Overnight nothing but a memory!

Greeks! Romans! The nobility of instinct, the taste, the methodical research, the genius of organization and administration, the faith in, the will to, man's future, the great Yes to all things, become visible in the *Imperium Romanum*, visible for all the senses, the grand style no longer here as but become reality, truth, life. And not buried overnight by a natural catastrophe, not trampled down by Teutons and other buffaloes, but ruined by cunning, stealthy, invisible, anemic vampires. Everything miserable that suffers from itself, that is afflicted with bad feelings, the whole ghetto-world of the soul on top all at once.

Christian morality taught men to retire from the world, to live the life of spirit in one's cell, or the cell of one's soul. Nietzsche, clearly, holds that nothing is spiritual which does not find actual expression, and his plea, while certainly not for power politics, is for true culture, true expression, and spirituality attained in the concrete.

It is therefore clear that the cultural-historical type of the *Ueberschensch* is to be understood in terms of Nietzsche's negation of morality -- in this case of moral culture -- and in terms of the resulting unity in difference of the spiritual and the natural life. Neither is, for Nietzsche, really possible apart from the other, and yet they are clearly held in distinction. The type of the *Ueberschensch*, as a cultural ideal, necessarily expresses this unity in difference, and, as expressing a spiritual-natural unity in difference, necessarily appears as a cultural ideal. The spiritual life and the natural life here find their integrity.

### 3.4 Conclusion

The doctrine of the *Ueberschensch* has been shown to have its logical genesis in Nietzsche's polemic against the Western moral tradition, and to be defined in the context of that polemic. In each of its expressions, the prophetic, psychological, and cultural-historical, what is given in the concept is a type in whom is expressed the negation of morality carried out in that polemic. The *Ueberschensch*, in opposition to the diremption of spirit and nature in morality, has realized the unity in difference of the two. The natural life becomes spiritual in the end in Nietzsche, and the spiritual life natural.

Who, therefore, is Nietzsche's *Ueberschensch*? He is, as we have seen, the supra-moral man, the product of the self-overcoming of morality,<sup>117</sup> embodying the unity in difference of spirit and nature. God has become man, and man a god; the divine world is no other than the natural, and the natural is the divine. Like Aristotle's *Θεός*, Nietzsche's *Ueberschensch*, in seeking something worthy of his thought and activity, can ultimately find only himself, for while he is not a metaphysical absolute, he is to himself all that there is. Certainly, he does assume God's place:

And that is the great noon when man stands in the way between beast and (*Ueberschensch*) and celebrates his way to evening as his highest hope; for it is the way to a new morning. . . . "Dead are all gods; now we want the (*Ueberschensch*) to live" — on that great noon, let this be our last will.<sup>118</sup>

Thus spoke Zarathustra.

"Thus spoke Zarathustra . . ." and Nietzsche with him. But who is his *Ueberschensch*? The concept embodies remarkably the spirit of nineteenth century millennialism, so that, despite his objections to the

<sup>117</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, III, 27.

<sup>118</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, I, "On the Gift-Giving Virtue," 3.

contrary, Nietzsche must take his seat among the cloud of witnesses surrounding him: men like Feuerbach, Strauss, Marx, and Comte. The concept of the *Ueberschensch* expresses in the most extreme sense the conviction that human beings, once freed from otherworldly entanglements, will rise to new heights of achievement. The new humanity given in his type may well differ radically from the "Man" of Feuerbach, but this does not exempt Nietzsche from this characterization. The reign of those redeemed out of the Western tradition is about to begin, and Nietzsche would not have it otherwise.



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