

THE PHILOSOPHER AS WRITER: FORM AND CONTENT IN NIETZSCHE

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This dual series of experiences, this access to apparently separate worlds, is repeated in my nature in every respect—I am a *Doppelgänger*, I have a 'second' face in addition to the first. And perhaps also a third...

—Nietzsche, from a draft for *Ecce Homo*

Nietzsche's writings have, from the very beginning, provoked misunderstanding among readers. His first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, published in January 1872, was greeted with scornful silence by the philological community. Even Friedrich Ritschl, who three years earlier had recommended Nietzsche for a professorship in classical philology at Basel University with the greatest enthusiasm, could not bring himself to write to his former pupil and reveal his true feelings about the book. In private, however, Ritschl's judgment was all too clear. In a diary entry recorded shortly after receiving an advance copy of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Ritschl describes it as a piece of "ingenious dissipation."¹ Nietzsche, quite shaken by the lack of positive response from Ritschl and others, confesses to his close friend Erwin Rhode to being "seized by a terrible seriousness...because in such voices I divine the future of all that I have planned. This life will be very hard."²

The failure of *The Birth of Tragedy*, which was openly ridiculed by some of Nietzsche's contemporaries, was to confirm his worst fears for the future, and in the following years Nietzsche's writings were to receive little, if any, positive attention. The silence was to continue almost without exception until the decade following Nietzsche's breakdown, when his fame quickly began to spread. The change in fortune was so great that by 1936 Heidegger could speak of the "enormous and varied secondary literature surrounding Nietzsche."³

A glance at the secondary literature, which since Heidegger's time has grown even more substantial, reveals that Nietzsche's writings are only marginally more accessible today that they were in 1872. The reasons for this are familiar to anyone who has attempted seriously to read Nietzsche.

The rejection of traditional philosophical methods and procedures, the eschewal of linear narrative structures, and the variety of voices, personae and registers found in his texts have the cumulative effect of making it extraordinarily difficult to identify and definitively attribute any view to Nietzsche at all. Ironically enough, the one author Nietzsche most resembles in this respect is Plato, who never ‘speaks’ for himself, but only through the mouths of others. Nietzsche’s observation that Plato was forced “by sheer artistic necessity to create an art form that was intimately related to the existing art forms repudiated by him,”⁴ could be applied equally well to Nietzsche himself. One is left with the impression that reading Nietzsche the way one reads Aristotle or Kant is analogous to reading Shakespeare and asking whether a particular soliloquy is true or false; the text and the evaluative criteria being brought to bear upon it appear utterly at odds with one another.⁵

In response to these challenges, recent scholarship, particularly in the United States, has focused on the possibility that paying sufficient attention to Nietzsche’s style — seemingly one of the prime obstacles to understanding — is one way of making sense of his otherwise hermetic texts. Rather than viewing Nietzsche’s style as something to be overcome, there is a growing consensus that his style is an integral part of his thought. In an introductory essay on Nietzsche written in 1988, Michael Gillespie and Tracy Strong describe how scholars have altered their approach to Nietzsche as a result of this recognition: “In the past decade, we have witnessed yet another rebirth of this apparently most protean of thinkers.” Unlike previous approaches, this rebirth “does not start with the assumption that we should look first at the ‘content’ of what Nietzsche says...[but] begins rather with the claim that we can best understand the meaning of what Nietzsche says by coming to terms with how he says it, that the meaning of Nietzsche’s enigmatic utterances can best be understood by examining the style or structure of his thought.”⁶ The recognition that style and content, like the face and obverse of a single coin, cannot be prised apart from one another has led to a greater appreciation of Nietzsche in the Anglophone world. The fact that some of the more inscrutable and politically charged aspects of Nietzsche’s texts are now seen to be parts of conscious philosophical or rhetorical strategies, has allowed scholars to more easily and convincingly draw connections between Nietzsche’s thought and conventional philosophical discourse and thus to integrate Nietzsche into the philosophical canon in a way that seemed unimaginable fifty years ago. An example of this is the popularity and influence of Alexander Nehamas’ study *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, which has probably legitimated Nietzsche and

the new approach to his writings more than any other recent work of scholarship. Another sign of Nietzsche's increasing legitimacy within the larger philosophical community is the number of recent studies authored by philosophers working within the Anglo-American tradition, who, historically speaking, have shown the greatest resistance to Nietzsche.⁷

In spite of the obvious success and influence of the new approach described by Gillespie and Strong, doubts remain as to whether the emphasis on style has truly altered our understanding of Nietzsche. The question is important because of the implicit assumption that by attending to the intrinsic interconnectedness of style and content, the new approach achieves something missed by previous approaches, that, to cite Henry James, the question of style is the figure in Nietzsche's carpet, "the very string...that [his] pearls are strung on."

The Discovery of Style

The unorthodox manner in which Nietzsche's texts are composed has forced readers to self-consciously reflect upon the question of how they are to be read. This is a rare accomplishment, for unlike their literary counterparts, philosophers are generally inclined to view reading and interpretation as relatively perspicuous and unproblematic procedures. Before style became a significant concern for his readers, the most common reaction to the difficulties posed by Nietzsche's writing was to assume that his thought could only be understood properly if it were in a certain respect abstracted from the texts in which it was expressed. Thus in his ground breaking study of Nietzsche, first published in 1950, Kaufmann suggests that the inadequacies of Nietzsche's presentation of his ideas can be overcome if we project them on to a larger, systematic whole. Although he offered "many fruitful hypotheses, Nietzsche failed to see that only a systematic attempt to substantiate them could establish an impressive probability in their favor." The meaning of Nietzsche's individual thoughts and concepts, Kaufmann, continues, "cannot possibly be grasped except in terms of their place in Nietzsche's whole philosophy."⁸

Kaufmann was well aware of Nietzsche's aversion to systematic philosophy and any form of system building. In a well known passage cited by Kaufmann, Nietzsche writes "I mistrust all systematic thinkers and avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity."⁹ However, the openly un-systematic manner in which Nietzsche presented his thought possess a dilemma for Kaufmann who wants to maintain that, all appearances to the contrary, Nietzsche's thought constitutes a unity whose "coherence is organic."¹⁰ Kaufmann's solution to this problem is twofold: to explain the

unsystematic and discontinuous quality of Nietzsche's thought by means of an appeal to a deeply seated skeptical impulse in Nietzsche's thought, and concurrently, to criticize Nietzsche for taking this skeptical attitude to such a length that it had a deleterious effect upon his thought as a whole. The skeptical impulse in Nietzsche is reflected in his insistence that beliefs must continually be subjected to doubt and questioned. Beliefs which one has accepted and ceased to question become convictions, which have a restraining effect upon oneself: "convictions are prisons. A spirit who wants great things, who wants the means to them, is necessarily a skeptic. The freedom from every kind of conviction *belongs* to strength, the *ability* to see freely..."¹¹ For Kaufmann, the motility and protean character of Nietzsche's thought are consequences of this need to continuously subject his beliefs to the most vigilant questioning. This method, which Kaufmann dubs Nietzsche's "experimentalism," is an attempt to "get to the bottom of problems" without being encumbered by the demands of systematization. Nietzsche's mistake, in Kaufmann's view, was to underestimate the extent to which "the insights which he tries to formulate in his aphorisms will have to be accounted for in any comprehensive explanatory system, just as an honest scientific experiment cannot be ignored by any comprehensive scientific system."¹² Nietzsche's experimentalism can only succeed, Kaufmann argues, if the results of previous experiments are codified and only questioned if they conflict with "new experiences and ideas. In this sense, a new insight is not exploited sufficiently, and the experiment is, as it were, stopped prematurely, if systematization is not eventually attempted."¹³

Similar presuppositions to these govern Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche. Like Kaufmann, Heidegger argues that Nietzsche's text must be read against the background of a systematic and coherent whole. As is well known, Heidegger locates this whole, Nietzsche's "philosophy proper," not in the published works, but in the notes, drafts and fragments left behind. In an infamous passage from the lecture course "The Will to Power as Art" offered in 1936, Heidegger writes that

Nietzsche's philosophy proper, the fundamental position on the basis of which he speaks in these and in all the writings he himself published, did not assume a final form and was not itself published in any book, neither in the decade between 1879 and 1889 nor during the years preceding. What Nietzsche himself published during his creative life was always foreground.... His philosophy proper [*die eigentliche Philosophie*] was left behind as posthumous, unpublished work.¹⁴

In this lecture course Heidegger identifies Nietzsche's philosophy proper with the unity and coherence of the three concepts of eternal recurrence, will to power and revaluation of values. The task which Heidegger sets himself is to grasp "in a unified way the doctrines of eternal return of the same and will to power, and these two doctrines in their most intrinsic coherence as revaluation."¹⁵ In later lecture courses, when the problem of nihilism began to figure more prominently in Heidegger's thinking, the list of concepts grows to five. In the lecture course on "European Nihilism" offered in the fall of 1940, Heidegger asserts that the totality of Nietzsche's philosophy is captured in five fundamental concepts or rubrics: "The five rubrics "nihilism," "revaluation of all values hitherto," "will to power," "eternal recurrence of the same," and "Overman"—each portrays Nietzsche's metaphysics from just *one* perspective, although in each case it is a perspective that defines the whole. Thus Nietzsche's metaphysics is grasped only when what is named in these five headings can be thought...in its primordial and heretofore merely intimated conjunction."¹⁶

While Kaufmann's and Heidegger's interpretations differ in important and substantial respects, they share a common conviction that Nietzsche's thought can only be understood properly if it is abstracted from its context and read against the background of his philosophy as a whole. This leads both interpreters to regard Nietzsche's writings as vehicles of communication, rather than as books requiring interpretation. However, if Heidegger and Kaufmann do not read Nietzsche's texts as texts, it is not because they do not take Nietzsche seriously as a thinker, but rather because they fail to take him seriously as a writer, and in this respect they unquestioningly privilege content over form; the 'what' of Nietzsche's writings is thoroughly divorced from the 'how.' The new approach to Nietzsche outlined above aims to remedy this situation by insisting that form and content cannot be separated in this way, that Nietzsche's writing is, in a rather direct way, an integral part of his thought. If this characterization of the new approach to Nietzsche is correct, then one would expect that the interpretations essayed by the practitioners of the new approach would reflect a deeper appreciation of Nietzsche the writer, and that this would broaden our understanding of his philosophy as a whole. Rather than essaying a detailed survey of the recent scholarship, we might do well to briefly focus on an interpretation which perhaps best represents the potentials of the new approach, that of Alexander Nehamas.

Although he observes that one of Nietzsche's achievements was to show "that writing is perhaps the most important part of thinking,"¹⁷ Nehamas

has a rather traditional view of the ends of interpretation. The task of the interpreter is to understand what Nietzsche thought, "the content of his work...his view of the will to power, the eternal recurrence, the nature of the self and the immoral presuppositions of morality." In order to accomplish this aim, one must also consider Nietzsche's style, because his writing "puts the very effort to understand him, to offer an interpretation of his views ...into question."¹⁸ The dilemma which Nietzsche's writing poses is that in his texts we find him putting forth views which he claims are not truths in the traditional sense of the word, but only interpretations. The problem with this is that it seems to undermine the possibility of ever distinguishing between competing interpretations, hence doing away with any reason for believing one view to be truer or more correct than any other. In Nehamas' view, Nietzsche's style is an attempt to get around this problem, to put forth views as interpretations which cannot then be said to be *mere* interpretations, no better or worse than any other:

Nietzsche uses his changing genres and styles in order to make his presence as an author literally unforgettable and in order to prevent his readers from overlooking the fact that his views necessarily originate with him. He depends on many styles in order to suggest that there is no single, neutral language in which his views, or any other, can ever be presented.¹⁹

According to Nehamas, style and content are thus related in only the most general way. Style is constitutive of meaning merely in the rather abstract sense that it determines the general form of what is said, i.e. that what is meant to be understood as a contingent interpretation rather than a kind of absolute truth. Accordingly, Nehamas is less concerned with the style or rhetoric of a particular passage or book, than he is with the stylistic variation Nietzsche employs from book to book. Although he allows that questions such as why Nietzsche employs a particular style in one text rather than another might be important, he states that his "interest in Nietzsche's style is much more general and abstract...[and concerns] not the style of individual works or passages but the fact that he shifts styles and genres as often as he does."²⁰

However, elevated to this level of abstraction, the question of style loses most of its significance.²¹ The assumption made by Nehamas, that the function of interpretation is to offer a coherent and plausible account of Nietzsche's views, implies a privileging of content over style and begs the question of what role, if any, style plays in the production of Nietzsche's texts. Like Gadamer, Nehamas insists that the rhetoric of a text, its manner of meaning, must remain subordinate to its semantic content, which is itself

subject to the demands of the principle of coherence.²² For Nehamas, the question of style is of interest because it allows us to read Nietzsche in such a way that he is neither a philosophical dogmatist, who presents his views as universally true, nor a radical relativist, who gives us no reason to prefer one view to another. Accordingly, style can tell us very little about the content of Nietzsche's views other than how they are to be understood with respect to dogmatism and relativism. The materiality of Nietzsche's texts, the specificity of his writing, is of little or no importance, and it is because Nietzsche's writing as such is overlooked that Nehamas is able to avoid the types of questions which threaten to undermine the distinction between content and style upon which his interpretation depends.²³

One such question which has been raised by recent readings of Nietzsche concerns the relationship between intentionality and meaning. Simply put, the question can be formulated as follows: Is the meaning of a text determined by the intentions of the author or, in addition, by semantic and syntactic structures which are, in principle, beyond the control of a single speaker or author? Although this question might appear to have very little to do with the issues at hand, its importance becomes apparent if we consider that Nehamas' interpretation of Nietzsche's style as a self-conscious strategy, "one of his essential weapons in his effort to distinguish himself from the philosophical tradition...and to offer alternatives to it,"²⁴ commits him to an intentionalist view of meaning. It is because Nehamas views meaning as the product of authorial intention that he can maintain a distinction between form and content, between Nietzsche's views and the texts within which these views are expressed. If, however, style is viewed not as a self-conscious strategy but as one part of a larger, non-intentionalist textual economy, then the end of interpretation ceases to be the articulation and elucidation of an author's views as such, but rather a reading of the texts themselves. Such a reading must begin with the *factum* of the texts as texts, rather than with a set of concepts which are said to represent Nietzsche's views or the content of his work. The limitations of Nehamas' view of Nietzsche's style can be established more concretely if we consider one important element of his interpretation, namely, the relationship between writing and the self.

For Nehamas there is a clear relationship between the questions concerning the nature and constitution of the self and the question of style. If Nietzsche's style is an integral part of his attempt to combat philosophical dogmatism, to present his views as interpretations rather than as truths, one of the ways his texts can accomplish this task is by making it clear to the reader that the views being expressed are not in any sense those of a neutral

and objective narrator, but that there is an essential connection between what is being said and who is doing the saying: "Nietzsche uses his changing genres and styles in order to make his presence as an author literally unforgettable and in order to prevent his readers from overlooking the fact that his views necessarily originate with him."²⁵ However, more is at stake than simply locating the origin of the views one finds in Nietzsche's texts, for Nehamas argues that there is an identification between the personality of the writer and his thought: "Nietzsche's varying self-conscious writing enables the practical reader always to be aware of who it is whose views are being presented, what personality these views express and constitute."²⁶ Nietzsche's writing "never lets his readers forget that the argument they are getting is always in more than one sense personal."²⁷

If Nietzsche's writing is essentially personal, for Nehamas it is also true that the self is at root a construction of the text and the act of writing. Nehamas rightly sees Nietzsche's critique of traditional philosophical conceptions of the self as an incorporeal, rational, thinking substance to be one of the central themes of his philosophy. However the sheer radicalness of Nietzsche's critique seems to undermine the very possibility of talking about a subject in any sense at all. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche criticizes the assertion, which is at the heart of the traditional, which is to say, Cartesian conception of the subject, that the existence of the self can be established by introspection as a mere consequence of the process of thought. "It is," Nietzsche writes,

a *falsification* of the facts of the case to say that the subject 'I' is the condition of the predicate 'think'. It thinks: but that this 'it' is precisely the famous old 'ego' is, to put it mildly, only a supposition, an assertion and assuredly not an 'immediate certainty'. After all, one has even gone too far with this 'it thinks'—even the 'it' contains an *interpretation* of the process and does not belong to the process itself.²⁸

However, if Nietzsche wants to do away with the traditional conception of the self as a rational substance, it does not follow from this that he rejects the concept of the self altogether. Earlier in the same text he writes that the critique of the traditional concept of the self opens the way "for new versions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis: and such conceptions as 'mortal soul', and 'soul as subjective multiplicity', and 'soul as social structure of the drives and affects' want henceforth to have citizens' rights in science" (BGE, 12).

In spite of the appeal of such hypotheses, it is not entirely clear that it makes much sense to talk of the self having done away with the idea that

the self is a substance. For if the self is something which develops over time or is created, as this passage suggests, just precisely what is it that is created? How can one speak about the soul at all if there seems to be nothing substantial about which one is talking? The paradoxes inherent in Nietzsche's critique of the subject are poignantly illustrated by his numerous references to the Pindarian idea that "you ought to become who you are."²⁹ As Nehamas observes, this expression leave us inexorably suspended between the concepts of being and becoming, between thinking of the self as something that exists over time and conceiving of the self as something whose existence is essentially temporal, being created in time: "We are therefore faced with the difficult problem of seeing how that self can be what one is before it comes into being itself, before it is itself something that is. Conversely, if that self is something that is, if it is what one already is, how is it possible for one to become that self?"³⁰

As we suggested above, Nehamas' solution to this paradox lies in the idea that the self is created gradually over time by a complicated process of action and integration: "the self-creation Nietzsche has in mind involves accepting everything that we have done and, in the ideal case, blending it into a perfectly coherent whole."³¹ This is accomplished, in Nietzsche's case, by means of writing. It is no mere coincidence, Nehamas suggests, that the subtitle to Nietzsche's philosophical autobiography, *Ecce Homo*, is a variation of the Pindarian theme, one that is no longer couched in the imperative voice as the citation in the previous paragraph, but is both declarative and illustrative: "How One Becomes What One Is." For it is in *Ecce Homo* that Nietzsche provides a demonstration, as it were, of just how one might go about become what one is:

One way, then, to become one thing, one's own character, what one is, is, after having written all these other books, to write *Ecce Homo* and even to give it the subtitle "How One Becomes What One is." It is to write this self-referential book in which Nietzsche can be said with equal justice to invent or discover himself, and in which the character who speaks to us is the author who has created him and who is in turn a character created by or implicit in all the books that were written by the author who is writing this one.³²

One of the cornerstones of Nehamas' understanding of this process of self-creation which we have not explicitly remarked upon is the idea that, for Nietzsche, the self which is created in this way is necessarily coherent and unified. This is one of the most surprising part of Nehamas' interpretation of Nietzsche, but it is an idea which he expresses and defends with great vigor. We have already noted, in a passage cited in the previous paragraph,

that Nehamas sees the Nietzschean process of self-creation ending, in the ideal case, in a “perfectly coherent whole.” It is important to emphasize that the unity which Nehamas has in mind is far removed from the conception of self-as-substance, which Nietzsche quite clearly rejects. Rather, the unity of the self Nehamas refers to develops over time and is produced by means of a conscious strategy of integration and synthesis:

The unity of the self, which therefore also constitutes its identity, is not something given but something achieved, not a beginning but a goal. And of such unity...Nietzsche is *not at all suspicious*.... [T]he process of dominating, and thus creating, the individual, the unity that concerns us, is a matter of incorporating more and more character traits under a constantly expanding and evolving rubric. (182-183; my italics)

On Nehamas’ reading, Nietzsche’s style is the complement to his theory of the self, which in turn is illustrated or exemplified by his writings.³³ Just as the motivation behind Nietzsche’s multifarious styles is to emphasize the irreducibly personal character of his ideas, so the self which Nietzsche came to create is brought into being by his texts, the very last of which describes the process in retrospect and presents a model for others to follow, not by imitating his path, but by urging others to create themselves and their own way.

Nehamas substantiates his surprising claim that the self should, as far as possible, be a coherent, unified whole by referring to passages such as this one from *Zarathustra*:

I walk among men as among the fragments of the future—that future which I envisage. And this is all my creating and striving, that I create and carry together into One what is fragment and riddle and dreadful accident. And how could I bear to be a man if man were not also a creator and guesser of riddles and redeemer of accidents?³⁴

More direct evidence that Nietzsche sees self-creation as a process of integration and unification can be found in the *Genealogy*, where we read the following:

For this alone is fitting for a philosopher. We have no right to *isolated* acts of any kind: we may not make isolated errors or hit upon isolated truths. Rather do our ideas, our values, our yeas 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.—(GM, P.2)³⁵

For Nehamas, passages such as these are an essential part of his attempt to demonstrate that the picture of Nietzsche as an advocate of polysemy and interpretative indeterminacy which one finds in poststructuralist readings is quite mistaken.³⁶ Although Nietzsche was a radical and highly non-traditional thinker, his radicalness does not lead to a rejection of the concepts of unity, totality and coherence, but rather consists in an effort to reinterpret these concepts in a fundamentally new way. Nietzsche's thinking, like his conception of the self, has "a determinate structure, form [and] meaning."³⁷

While the evidence cited by Nehamas appears to be rather decisive, there are reasons to believe that Nietzsche's texts are less coherent and determinate than Nehamas suggests. Consider a third passage cited by Nehamas in support of his view that, for Nietzsche, the unity of the self is achieved and maintained by means of a conscious strategy of integrating one's character traits into a coherent whole. Here Goethe is apparently held up as a model of one who has achieved true selfhood: "What he wanted was *totality* [*Totalität*]; he fought the mutual extraneousness of reason, senses, feeling, and will [...] he disciplined himself to wholeness [*Ganzheit*], he *created* himself." (TI, IX, 49) Near the end of the aphorism Nietzsche pays Goethe the highest compliment possible by describing him as ennobled with a Dionysian faith:

Such a spirit who has *become free* stands amid the cosmos with a joyous and trusting fatalism, in the *faith* that only the particular is loathsome, and that all is redeemed and affirmed in the whole—*he does not negate anymore*.... Such a faith, however, is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name of *Dionysus*.—

Now it is fairly clear that the whole mentioned in this last passage is an existential rather than an individual totality, and the faith to which Nietzsche refers is none other than an acceptance of the eternal recurrence. This is made explicit in the penultimate section of *Twilight of the Idols*, where Nietzsche links the Dionysian, here once more characterized as a form of affirmation, of "saying Yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems," with the eternal recurrence by describing himself as "the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysus [...] the teacher of the eternal recurrence" (TI, X.5).

Yet what is striking about the characterization of Goethe as Dionysian is not the connection with the eternal recurrence as such, but rather with an earlier and somewhat different description of Dionysus that we find in the same chapter of *Twilight*. Here Nietzsche returns to the concepts of the Apollinian and the Dionysian introduced in *The Birth of Tragedy* and he

gives the following account of the Dionysian:

In the Dionysian state [...] the whole affective system is excited and enhanced: so that it discharges [*entladet*] all its means of expression at once and simultaneously emits [*heraustreibt*] the power of representation, imitation, transfiguration, transformation, and every kind of mimicking and acting. The essential feature here remains the ease of metamorphosis [...]. The Dionysian type [...] enters into any skin, into any affect: he constantly transforms himself. (TI, IX.10)

By itself, of course, this passage is not incompatible with the view of subjectivity Nehamas attributes to Nietzsche. In the spirit of Nehamas' reading one could say that it is a sign of great and exemplary strength for one to be able to control and unify the disparate elements which constitute the Dionysian state as Nietzsche here describes it. Goethe would then be, as Walter Kaufmann has put it, "the passionate man who is the master of his passions."³⁸ Yet this passage also gives us reason to pause. For if the essential feature of the Dionysian type is an ease of metamorphosis and constant transformation, if he can enter into *any* skin, how is it that this most protean figure can claim any or all these personae as his own? Could it not be the case that in order to be himself the Dionysian man must transcend himself and become someone else?

An answer to this question is suggested by Nietzsche's description of the Dionysian type as an actor. This description is certainly not incidental, for the figure of the actor and the related themes of the mask and dissimulation achieve something like emblematic status in Nietzsche's writings. In one of the more important of these texts, section 361 of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche considers the "problem of the actor" which, he opines, might provide the only means of approaching the concept of the artist. It is a problem, Nietzsche says, that

has troubled me for the longest time. I felt unsure (and sometimes still do) whether it is not only from this angle that one can get at the dangerous concept of the 'artist'—a concept that has so far been treated with unpardonable generosity. Falseness with a good conscience; the delight in simulation exploding [*herausbrechend*] as a power that pushes aside one's so-called 'character', flooding it and at times extinguishing it; the inner craving for a role and mask, for *appearance* [...] all of this is perhaps not *only* peculiar to the actor?³⁹

Read from the perspective provided by this passage, the initial description of Goethe takes on a different light. For if Goethe is a truly Dionysian figure, an artist and an actor, then the wholeness which he created for himself is at best a simulacrum for the kind of coherent, unitary subjectivity which Nehamas attributes to Nietzsche. The mechanical, impersonal vocabulary of these passages underscores the extent to which one's identity is hostage to forces and procedures not wholly under one's conscious control: the affective system "discharges" its means of expression; the powers of representation and dissimulation are "emitted"; the delight in simulation "explodes," flooding and extinguishing the character of the actor. An analogous structure underlies Nietzsche's description of Dionysian rapture from *The Birth of Tragedy*, in which "everything subjective vanishes into complete self-forgetfulness" (BT, 1). Dionysus is the symbol of the essentially fractured structure of identity and the prototypical actor and artist: "until Euripides [...] all the celebrated figures of the Greek stage—Prometheus, Oedipus, etc.—are mere masks for this original hero, Dionysus" (BT, 1). On the terms of Nietzsche's text, the concept of identity functions as a synecdoche, in which a part of an essentially fragmentary and provisional self is taken for the whole. Rather than supporting Nehamas' interpretation, these passages suggest that the concepts of wholeness and totality are at bottom nothing more than rhetorical masks.⁴⁰

Although the foregoing raises serious doubts that a close reading of Nietzsche's texts can support the conclusion that he regards the self as a coherent and unified whole, it might be objected that we have ignored the most obvious piece of evidence in support of Nehamas' interpretation, namely, the life and work of Nietzsche himself. For as we have already noted, Nehamas views Nietzsche's writings as prime examples of how one can create oneself in a unified and coherent manner. One way of achieving the "perfect unity" which Nehamas regards as the ideal of self-creation

might be to write a great number of very good books that exhibit great apparent inconsistencies among them but that can be seen to be deeply continuous with one another when they are read carefully and well. Toward the end of this enterprise one can even write a book about these books that shows how they fit together, how a single figure emerges through them.⁴¹

The question which we must now pursue is whether a single figure, an *autos*, does emerge from these pages. Might it not be the case that, on the contrary, *Ecce Homo* is a book about the indeterminacy or suspension of identity which confirms, rather than contradicts, the reading of the self we have offered above? Nehamas' interpretation leaves this question open

because he does not undertake a reading of this or any other of Nietzsche's books. Since the aim of his interpretation is to determine the "content" of Nietzsche's thought, he is principally concerned with discovering thematic connections and continuities among Nietzsche's writings, without attempting to take the texts on their own terms as texts. In an effort to examine Nehamas' claim that a single figure emerges out of Nietzsche's texts, let us briefly turn to *Ecce Homo* itself.

Writing the Self

At first glance, this short, rather striking book opens as one expects any autobiography to begin, namely, with a statement of the book's subject. The opening words of the foreword attest to the seeming conventional character of Nietzsche's undertaking: "Seeing that before long I must confront humanity with the most difficult demand ever made of it, it seems indispensable to me to say *who I am*."⁴² The nature of Nietzsche's demand requires that he tell us who he is; in order to understand it, we must first understand him. Nietzsche emphasizes this point at the end of the first section of the foreword with the following words: "*Hear me! For I am such and such a person. Above all, do not mistake me for someone else!*" Nietzsche's emphatic exhortation not to mistake him for another betrays a suspicion that the reader might be misled, and like Nietzsche's contemporaries, neither see nor hear him. Perhaps in an effort to forestall this possibility, Nietzsche inserts a short exergue between the foreword and the first chapter of the text. The exergue says that the story begins on a particular date, October 15, 1888, Nietzsche's 44th birthday, and that it will be both retrospective and proleptic: "I looked back, I looked forward, and never saw so many good things at once [...]. And so I tell my life to myself." In what follows Nietzsche recounts the story of his life, beginning with the well known description of his parents, his illness, his tastes in matters of literature, food, drink, climate and peoples, followed by a consideration of his writings, including an account of each of his hitherto published books. The last and shortest chapter, "Why I am a destiny," is principally prospective in character. Having told the reader who he is, Nietzsche then returns to the real matter at hand, the reevaluation of values. In a text remarkable for its apocalyptic tone, Nietzsche claims that the destiny of humanity will have been his destiny as well: the wars waged in his writings are precisely those that will be waged on the spiritual battlefields of Europe in the coming century.⁴³

Although the form of Nietzsche's text suggests that it adheres to the prescriptions governing the genre of philosophical autobiography, a genre

whose history extends at least back to Augustine, a close reading of both the title and the subtitle of this text indicate that the situation is rather more complicated than it first appears. Most readers will recognize that the title, *Ecce Homo*, is a quotation from the New Testament. The source of the quotation is the Gospel of John, where we read that Pilate, having listened to Jesus' claim to be a king, turns to the largely Jewish audience and says "*ecce homo*," behold the man.⁴⁴ In its original context, the expression is explicitly not auto-referential, but directs the reader's attention to someone other than the author himself. Written about oneself, therefore, the phrase *ecce homo* produces a paradoxical effect, and points to an internal duality or "contradicting duplicity"⁴⁵ which will be echoed throughout the book in pairs such as male/female, death/life, decadent/beginning and identifications with dualities, for example, father/mother, Nietzsche/Wagner, Nietzsche/Oedipus and Nietzsche/Socrates. Nietzsche underscores this point in a letter to Meta von Salis when he writes: "I myself am this *homo*, the *ecce* included" (KSAB, 8/1144). The duality suggested by the title is echoed in a series of identifications and counter-identifications which run throughout the entire book. The first of these is established by the title, which identifies Nietzsche with Pilate, the speaker of the phrase *ecce homo*. It is not a coincidence that Nietzsche should wish to identify himself with Pilate, since it was Pilate who, according to Nietzsche, enriched the New Testament "with the only saying *that has value* — one which is its criticism, even its *annihilation*: 'What is truth!'" (A, 46). And this is precisely what is at stake in the text of *Ecce Homo* itself, where Nietzsche, like Pilate, questions the value of all that has thus far been taken for the truth: "everything that has hitherto been called 'truth' has been recognized as the most harmful, insidious, and subterranean form of lie" (EH, IV.8).

The subtitle of the book, "How One Becomes What One Is," is also a quotation, namely, from Pindar's Second Pythian Ode. Although this phrase seems at first to run contrary to the sense of the title by emphasizing the unity and stasis of identity, of what one is, the juxtaposition of being and becoming in the subtitle actually produces the opposite effect. Echoing the duality implicit in the expression "*ecce homo*," the juxtaposition of being and becoming deepens the attentive reader's suspicions that rather than affirming the coherence of the author's identity, the text's title and subtitle serve to place this identity into question. The subtitle does not merely reiterate the duality hinted at in the title but actually sharpens it by attributing to this duality a specifically temporal character, namely, by suggesting that being, what one is, is inseparable from becoming, the process of how one becomes what one is. One way in which the implication

of being in becoming manifests itself in Nietzsche's text is in the assertion that one's identity is something that can only be established retrospectively.⁴⁶ The knowledge of what one is, is always in some sense deferred; self-knowledge is mediated by this temporal gap between being and becoming, present and past.⁴⁷ One consequence of this is that self-knowledge is predicated upon ignorance, upon not knowing what one is. Nietzsche says precisely this in section 9 of the chapter entitled "Why I Am So Clever." Yielding to the inevitable, Nietzsche admits that

the genuine answer to the question, *how one becomes what one is*, can no longer be avoided [...]. Assuming that the task, the fate [*Bestimmung*], the *destiny* of the task [*Schicksal der Aufgabe*] transcends the average very significantly, there would be no greater danger than catching sight of oneself *with* this task. That one becomes what one is, presupposes that one does not have the faintest notion *what* one is [*dass man nicht im Entferntesten ahnt, was man ist*].

To become what one is, one must forget and misunderstand oneself. Self-knowledge, Nietzsche suggests, is necessarily fragmentary and incoherent, because it rests upon that which is other than itself, upon ignorance, not having the faintest notion what one is. It is vain to hope that the fragmentary nature of self-knowledge can ever be overcome by introspection and greater efforts at self-integration, as if it were a matter of circumstance, rather than necessity, that one is constantly 'in the dark' about one's self.

Nietzsche is quite explicit that the ignorance which is imbricated within self-knowledge is there by necessity, not chance. In the opening section of the second essay of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche argues that the phenomenon of self-consciousness presupposes the existence of an active and opposing force, namely, forgetfulness. Reversing the traditional negative valuation of forgetfulness as a passive force which produces an unintentional and unwanted lack of knowledge, Nietzsche claims that

it is rather an active and in the strictest sense positive faculty of repression that is responsible for the fact that what we experience and absorb enters our consciousness as little while we are digesting it [...] as does the thousandfold process involved in physical nourishment, so-called 'incorporation' [...] so that it will be immediately obvious how there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no pride, no *present* [*Gegenwart*], without forgetfulness.

knowing what one is would prevent one from actually becoming what one is, so, too, if forgetfulness did not stand before consciousness as a filter, only letting a fraction of the stimuli confronting one actually be experienced, the very possibility of experience as such would be undermined. What one experiences of the world and of oneself is always mediated by the absence of that which is not filtered out, forgotten, repressed.

Elsewhere in the *Genealogy*, the dependence of knowledge upon an active and antecedent faculty of forgetfulness described in this passage is generalized into a principle of identity, where self-identity is said to necessarily presuppose ignorance of just who and what one is:

as one divinely preoccupied and immersed in himself into whose ear the bell has just boomed with all its strength the twelve beats of noon suddenly starts up and asks himself: 'what really was that which just struck?' so we sometimes rub our ears *afterward* and ask, utterly surprised and disconcerted, 'what really was that which we have just experienced?' and moreover: 'who *are* we really?' and, afterward as aforesaid, count the twelve trembling bell-strokes of our experience, our life, our *being*—and alas! miscount them.—So we are necessarily strangers to ourselves, we do not comprehend ourselves, we *have* to misunderstand ourselves, for us the law 'Each is furthest from himself' applies to all eternity—we are not 'men of knowledge' with respect to ourselves. (GM, Preface 1)

Ignorance about oneself is not a lack which can be fully remedied, but is a necessary condition of self-knowledge. To seek to bridge the gap between ignorance and knowledge is, like Oedipus, to run the risk of exchanging one form of blindness for another.⁴⁸

Against the foregoing it might be argued that we have underestimated the importance which Nietzsche assigns to the unity of the self. If the aim of self-creation is to create a unified and coherent self, then perhaps these divisions can be reconciled by means of ever increasing efforts of integration? As we have seen, there is a certain amount of textual evidence to support this claim. Recall Zarathustra's statement that he strives to "create and carry together into One what is fragment and riddle and dreadful accident" (Z II.20). An example of how such a process of integration might proceed is provided in *Ecce Homo*, where Nietzsche reinterprets his youthful enthusiasm for Schopenhauer and Wagner as a necessary step on the way to becoming what he is. In his remarks on the *Untimely Meditations* Nietzsche claims that the two essays devoted to Wagner and Schopenhauer do not really concern them at all, but "at bottom speak only of me." The names

claims that the two essays devoted to Wagner and Schopenhauer do not really concern them at all, but “at bottom speak only of me.” The names Wagner and Schopenhauer are signs for the name Nietzsche, employed “in order to to express something, in order to to have at hand a few more formulas, signs, means of language [...] in the same way that Plato used Socrates as a semiotic for Plato” (EH, ‘UM’.3).⁴⁹ Nietzsche’s retrospective recognition that the names Wagner and Schopenhauer are figures for the name Nietzsche does not, however, imply a progressive pattern of self-identification which would yield a determinate, albeit postponed, subject or ‘I’. The logic of such a pattern in this text is undermined by Nietzsche’s multiple self-identifications which preclude the possibility of a direct substitution of names, one that would affirm that the meaning of the most proper of words, the proper name, remains delimited and determinate. Nietzsche precludes precisely this possibility in an earlier remark on “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth”:

A psychologist might still add that what I heard as a young man listening to Wagnerian music really had nothing to do with Wagner [... In] my essay “Wagner in Bayreuth” [...] I alone am discussed—and one need not hesitate to put down my name or the the word ‘Zarathustra’ where the text has the word Wagner [*man darf rücksichtslos meinen Namen oder das Wort ‘Zarathustra’ hinstellen, wo der Text das Wort Wagner gibt*]. (EH, ‘BT’.4)

The name Wagner, Nietzsche says, can be exchanged at will for the name Nietzsche or Zarathustra.⁵⁰ This means, however, that the substitution remains inextricably suspended between Nietzsche and Zarathustra, and if one exchange is possible, then the field of possible exchanges can never be closed. Hence the meaning of the proper name Nietzsche, under whose signature this book appears, must remain indeterminate, both proper, signifying that which belongs to Nietzsche and enables him to sign his texts, and improper, that which remains other and unrecognizable within the parameters of the classical definition and logic of ‘the proper’.⁵¹

If the names Nietzsche or Zarathustra can be substituted for the name Wagner, it is because the identity of the author Nietzsche, the *ecce* and the *homo* of this text, is itself at bottom a duality, something divided from itself.⁵² And if this is true of oneself, there is no reason to believe that it is not also true of one’s texts. However this is something that can only be recognized if our understanding of style is finally divorced from intentionalist conceptions of meaning. Until this happens, the new approach to Nietzsche will remain barely distinguishable from the old.

Endnotes

1. Cited by M.S. Silk and J.P. Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 92.
2. *Sämtliche Briefe, Kritische Studienausgabe* ed. Giorgi Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986), vol. 3, letter 192. Further references will be given parenthetically in the text with the abbreviation 'KSAB' followed by the respective volume and letter numbers. Although the reaction of Ritschl and others took Nietzsche by surprise, it should not have been totally unexpected. As Nietzsche himself reports to Rhode, his lecture "Socrates and Tragedy," given almost two years before the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, "provoked horror and misunderstanding" in Basel, KSAB 3/58.
3. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* trans. J. Stambaugh, D.F. Krell and F.A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), vol. 1, p. 10.
4. *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann in *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Random House, 1968), section 14. Further references will be given parenthetically in the text with the abbreviation 'BT' and the corresponding section number.
5. For a discussion of this question see Eric Blondel, *Nietzsche: The Body and Culture*, trans. Séan Hand (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), chapter 2.
6. *Nietzsche's New Seas*. ed. Michael Allen Gillespie and Tracy Strong (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 1.
7. Perhaps the most influential of these is Maudemarie Clark's study, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
8. Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 94-95.
9. *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Press, 1954), I.26. Further references will be given parenthetically in the text with the abbreviation 'TI' followed by the corresponding chapter and section numbers.
10. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, p. 91.
11. *The Antichrist*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Press, 1954), section 54. Further references will be given parenthetically in the text with the abbreviation 'A' and the corresponding section number.
12. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, p. 87.
13. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, p. 94.
14. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, p. 9.
15. Heidegger, p. 17.
16. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 4, pp. 9-10.
17. Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 41.
18. Nehamas, p. 1.
19. Nehamas, p. 37.
20. Nehamas, pp. 19-20.
21. As James Winchester has observed, "when Nehamas writes of Nietzsche's 'vast' varieties of 'styles' he means principally literary genres.... Style can be loosely applied to genre, but style is also a designation for what happens within a genre," *Nietzsche's Aesthetic Turn* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 127-28.
22. See H.-G. Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. I, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1990), pp. 296 ff.

23. While it is true that Nehamas rejects what he terms “the problematic distinction between the ‘what’ and the ‘how’” of a text (p. 39), my contention is that his overly abstract understanding of style leads him into a more subtle, though no less nefarious, version of this distinction.
24. Nehamas, p. 20.
25. Nehamas, p. 37.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Nehamas, p. 27.
28. *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Random House, 1968), section 17. Further references will be given parenthetically in the text with the abbreviation ‘BGE’ and the corresponding section number. This passage should be read in conjunction with a parallel passage from section 13 of the First Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*: “there is no ‘being’ behind doing, effecting, becoming; ‘the doer’ is merely a fiction added to the deed [*hinzugedichtet*]—the deed is everything.” Nietzsche’s assertion earlier in this section that it is a “seduction of language” and “of the fundamental errors of reason that are petrified in it” which forces us to posit an agent behind every action and effect suggests that subjectivity is itself a linguistic construction and hence a kind of error or fiction. The translation cited is by Walter Kaufmann, *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Random House, 1968).
29. *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), section 270.
30. Nehamas, p. 175.
31. Nehamas, pp. 188-189.
32. Nehamas, p. 196.
33. “Nietzsche’s texts,” Nehamas writes, “do not describe but, in exquisitely elaborate detail, *exemplify* the perfect instance of his ideal character. And this character is none other than the character these very texts constitute: Nietzsche himself,” pp. 232-233.
34. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Press, 1954), “On Redemption.”
35. Nehamas, following Kaufmann, has the four instances of the word ‘one’ in the last sentence in italics. In the German text these words are in plain text.
36. The interpretations which Nehamas believes exhibit this tendency are those of Jacques Derrida and Sarah Kofman (see pp. 15-18). It should be said, however, that Nehamas does not make a genuine attempt to come to terms with views of these commentators; his interest in them is principally as a foil for his own interpretation of Nietzsche. Commenting upon Derrida’s reading of Nietzsche’s sentence “I have forgotten my umbrella,” which he argues can never be definitively interpreted, Nehamas writes that Derrida “does not defend his assumption that infallibility and certainty are necessary if interpretation is to be possible,” (p. 17, note 13). Such a statement borders on bad faith, since there are numerous texts in which Derrida, vigorously and convincingly, demonstrates the limits of the hermeneutic concept of interpretation. See, for example, “Différance” in *Margins of Philosophy* trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) and *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), Part I, “Writing Before the Letter.”
37. Nehamas, p. 20.
38. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, p. 363.
39. On the errors at work in the formation of character, see *The Dawn*, section 115.

40. Gary Shapiro has argued, contra Nehamas, that in the reading of Greek tragedy articulated in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche "is radically dislocating and de-emphasizing the role of character in drama.... Nietzsche's account of Oedipus the character does not suggest any special interest in him as a unified or integrated figure; rather the accent is on the uncanniness of the man whose existence challenges our tendency to see humans (and other things in the world) as individuals," *Nietzschean Narratives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 155. For Shapiro, Nehamas' tendency to see subjectivity as the product of a conscious strategy of self-construction rather than of forces — linguistic, psychological and cultural — beyond subjective control is reflected in his failure to recognize the importance of Nietzsche's use of the impersonal 'what' [*was*] rather than the personal 'who' [*wer*] in the subtitle and elsewhere in *Ecce Homo*.
41. Nehamas, p. 195.
42. *Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Random House, 1968). Further references will be given parenthetically in the text with the abbreviation 'EH' and the corresponding chapter and section numbers.
43. "I know my fate. One day my name will be associated with the memory of something tremendous—a crisis without equal on earth, the most profound collision of conscience, a decision that was conjured up *against* everything that had been believed, demanded, hallowed so far [...]. 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 likes of which has never been dreamed of. The concept of politics will have merged entirely with a war of spirits," EH, IV.1.
44. John, 19:5. The Latin *ecce homo* is a literal translation of the Greek *idou ho anthrópos*.
45. Jacques Derrida, "Otobiographies: Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name," trans. Avital Ronell, in *The Ear of the Other* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), p. 15.
46. In the 1886 Preface to the second volume of *Human All-Too-Human*, Nietzsche writes: "One should only speak when one cannot be silent, and even then only speak of what one has *overcome*,—everything else is gossip, 'literature', bad breeding [...]. But a few things were necessary—time, convalescence, remoteness, distance—until the desire in me stirred to retrospectively [*nachträglich*] skin, exploit, lay bare, 'represent' (or whatever you want to call it) my experiences, overcomings, some fact or piece of fate for the sake of knowledge. To this degree all my writings—with one single, but essential exception—should be *back dated*; they speak always of something 'behind me,'" Preface, section 1.
47. The movement of deferral described above is one of the central themes of EH. In the first paragraph of the foreword Nietzsche asserts: "I live on my own credit; perhaps it is a mere prejudice that I live." This same idea is taken up later in the text, when he declaims "The time for me has not yet come: some are born posthumously," EH, III.1. See the foreword to *The Antichrist*, where Nietzsche writes that it is "only the day after tomorrow that belongs to me. Some are born posthumously."
48. This same dual structure of identity is described by Nietzsche in a note from 1872-73 entitled "Oedipus. Conversation of the last philosopher with himself": "I call myself the last philosopher because I am the last human being. No one talks with me but my self and my voice comes to me as the voice of one dying [...]. My heart cannot bear the shudder of the loneliest loneliness and compels me to speak as if I were two," *Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgi Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), vol. 7, 19 [131]. It is certainly no coincidence that in this note, as in *Ecce Homo*, the thematic of identity is explicitly linked with the name Oedipus. One

reading of *Ecce Homo* could begin by examining the images of the riddle, the absent father and identity in light of the Oedipal myth. Gary Shapiro has explored some of the connections between *Ecce Homo* and the story of Oedipus in a very suggestive way. See *Nietzschean Narratives*, chapter 6.

49. See Nietzsche's letter to Köselitz from December 9, 1888, the day after the manuscript of *Ecce Homo* was sent to the publisher: "In *Ecce Homo* you will read about a discovery concerning the *third* and *fourth* untimely ones that will make your hair stand on end—mine, too, stands on end. Both speak only of me *anticipando* [...]. Neither Wagner nor Schopenhauer are psychologically present there [...] I first *understood* both texts only 14 days ago.—" KSAB, 8/1181.
50. It is interesting to recall that two of the people Nietzsche had extensive contact with during this period, Peter Gast and Georg Brandes, both used pseudonyms. Gast's given name was Heinrich Köselitz, while Brandes was born Morris Cohen.
51. The classical conception of the proper stretches back at least to the *Republic*, where Socrates distinguishes between what is proper to human beings, the soul, the city and what is alien to them. See, for example, 462b-d and 470b-d. For a rich discussion of the proper in relation to Nietzsche, see Sarah Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, trans. Duncan Large (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).
52. This conclusion is in fact already announced in the opening lines of the text, where Nietzsche writes that the good fortune of his existence lies precisely in the duality of his identity: "The good fortune of my existence, its uniqueness perhaps, lies in its fatality: I am to express it in the form of a riddle, already dead as my father, while as my mother I am still living and becoming old. [A] dual descent, as it were, both from the highest and the lowest rung on the ladder of life, at the same time a decadent and a *beginning* [...]. I know both, I am both—" EH, I.1.