

For Mortal Souls: Philosophy and Therapeia in Nietzsche's *Dawn*

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How one should turn to stone. – Slowly slowly become hard like a precious stone – and finally lie there still and silent, to the joy of all eternity (*Dawn* 541)¹

This chapter seeks to make a contribution to the growing interest in Nietzsche's relation to traditions of therapy in philosophy that has emerged in recent years.² It is in the texts of his middle period (1878–82) that Nietzsche's writing comes closest to being an exercise in philosophical therapeutics, and in this chapter I focus on *Dawn* from 1881 as a way of exploring this. *Dawn* is a text that has been admired in recent years for its ethical naturalism³ and for its

¹ The following translations of Nietzsche are cited in my chapter: *The Anti-Christ* (AC), trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); *Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE), trans. Marion Faber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); *Dawn: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, (D) trans. Brittain Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming) and *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, Random House, 1974); *Human, All too Human* (in two volumes), trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) [includes *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* (AOM) and *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (WS)]; *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann & R. J. Hollingdale (New York, Random House, 1968). For the German I have used, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe* in 15 Bänden (München, Berlin & New York, dtv/de Gruyter, 1988).

² See the two fine studies by Horst Hutter, *Shaping the Future: Nietzsche's New Regime of the Soul and Its Ascetic Practices* (Lanham:, Lexington Books, 2006) and Michael Ure, *Nietzsche's Therapy: Self-Cultivation in the Middle Works* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008). See also the essays collected in Jacob Golomb et al. *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

³ See Maudmarie Clark and Brian Leiter, 'Introduction' to F. Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans.

anticipation of phenomenology.⁴ My interest in the text in this chapter is in the way it revitalises for a modern age ancient philosophical concerns, notably a teaching for mortal souls who wish to be liberated from the fear and anguish of existence, as well as from God, the 'metaphysical need',⁵ and romantic music,⁶ and are able to affirm their mortal conditions of existence. As a general point of inspiration I have adopted Pierre Hadot's insight into the therapeutic ambitions of ancient philosophy which was, he claims, 'intended to cure mankind's anguish' (for example, anguish over our mortality).⁷ This is evident in the teaching of Epicurus which sought to demonstrate the mortality of the soul and whose aim was, 'to free humans from "the fears of the mind"'.⁸ Similarly, Nietzsche's teaching in *Dawn* is for mortal souls. In the face of the loss of the dream of the soul's immortality, philosophy for Nietzsche, I shall show, has new

R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. vii–xxxiv. See also Ruth Abbey, *Nietzsche's Middle Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 7–10.

⁴ See Rüdiger Safranski, *Nietzsche. A Philosophical Biography*, trans. Shelley Frisch (New York: Norton, 2002), pp. 207–19.

⁵ In a note from the autumn of 1880 Nietzsche maintains that the metaphysical need is not the source of religion, as might be supposed, but rather the after effect of its decline: the 'need' is a result and not an origin. Nietzsche, *KSA* 9, 6 [290]. See also *GS* 151 where Nietzsche makes it clear that he is arguing contra Schopenhauer on this point.

⁶ The texts of the middle period find Nietzsche seeking to emancipate himself from Wagner and his youthful captivation by his music. In *HH* 153 he states that the free spirit's intellectual probity is put to the test in moments when it listens to something like Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* which makes him feel that he is hovering above the earth in a dome of stars and with the dream of immortality in his heart: 'If he becomes aware of being in this condition he feels a profound stab in the heart and sighs for the man who will lead him back to his lost love, whether she be called religion or metaphysics'.

⁷ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995), pp. 265–6. In a letter to Heinrich von Stein of December 1882 Nietzsche says he 'would like to take away from human existence some of its heartbreaking and cruel character'.

⁸ Catherine Wilson, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity* (Oxford: New York, Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 7. See Epicurus in Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson, *The Epicurus Reader* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), p. 29: 'For there is nothing fearful in life for one who has grasped that there is nothing fearful in the absence of life...the wise man neither rejects life nor fears death'.

consolations to offer in the form of new sublimities.⁹ Indeed, for Nietzsche it is by reflecting, with the aid of psychological observation, on what is ‘human, all too human’, that ‘we can lighten the burden of life’ (*HH* 35). Nietzsche’s thinking in *Dawn* contains a number of proposals and recommendations of tremendous value to philosophical *therapeia*, including (a) a call for a new honesty about the human ego and human relations, including relations of self and other and love, so as to free us from certain delusions;¹⁰ (b) the search for an authentic mode of existence which appreciates the value of solitude and independence; (c) the importance of having a rich and mature taste in order to eschew the fanatical. After an introduction to Nietzsche’s text the chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first main part I explore various aspects of his conception of philosophical therapy, including purification of the higher feelings and liberation from the destructive effects of ‘morality’ and Christianity. In the second main part I explore his conception of ‘the passion of knowledge’, which is the passion that guides modern free spirits as they seek to overcome the need of religion and constraints of ‘morality’, and to access the new sublimities of philosophy.

Dawn’s Therapy of Slowness

Dawn: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality was researched between January 1880 and March 1881 and published in the early summer of 1881. It is one of Nietzsche’s ‘yes-saying’ books, a work of enlightenment which, Nietzsche tells his readers, seeks to pour out ‘its light, its love, and its delicacy over nothing but bad things’, giving back to these things the ‘lofty right and *prerogative* of existence’ (*EH* III ‘Daybreak’, 1). The Indian motto from the Rig Veda, ‘there are so many dawns that have not yet broken’ lies inscribed on the door to the book (*ibid.*). Nietzsche’s amanuensis Peter Gast had written the

⁹ We should note that Nietzsche confesses to not fearing death himself in a note of 1878: ‘A prominent quality: a more refined heroism (which, by the way, I recognize in Epicurus). In my book there is not a word against the fear of death. I have little of that’ (*KSA* 8, 28 [15]). There are a number of places in his published writings where Nietzsche writes in praise of the rational and voluntary death, and in a note from 1888 he writes of the need to ‘convert the stupid psychological fact’ of death ‘into a moral necessity. So to live that one can also *will at the right time to die!*’ (*KSA* 12, 10 [165]; *WP* 916).

¹⁰ In *Dawn* ‘Redlichkeit’ (integrity or probity) is said to be mankind’s youngest virtue (*D* 456).

motto on the title page whilst making a fair copy of the manuscript and this, in fact, inspired Nietzsche to adopt the new title and replace its original title of 'The Ploughshare'. In 1888 Nietzsche speaks of the book as amounting to a search for the new morning that ushers in a whole series of new days and he insists that not a single negative word is to be found in it, and no attack or malice either. In this book we encounter a thinker who lies in the sun, 'like a sea creature sunning itself among rocks' (ibid.) – and the book was largely conceived in the rocks near Genoa in solitude and where, so Nietzsche discloses, he 'had secrets to share with the sea'. *Dawn* is a book that journeys into the future, and which for Nietzsche constitutes, in fact, its true destination: 'Even now', he writes in a letter of March 1881 to his old friend Erwin Rohde, 'there are moments when I walk about on the heights above Genoa having glimpses and feelings such as Columbus once, perhaps from the very same place, sent out across the sea and into the future'. Nietzsche's appeal to Columbus is figurative; he is, in fact, critical of the real Columbus (D 37). The book concludes on an enigmatic note with Nietzsche asking his readers and fellow travellers whether it will be said of them one day that they too, 'steering toward the west, hoped to reach an India' but that it was their fate to shipwreck upon infinity (D 575).

At this point in his writings 'India' denotes for Nietzsche the path to self-enlightenment. Nietzsche holds that Europe remains behind Indian culture in terms of the progress it needs to make with respect to religious matters since it has not yet attained the 'free-minded naiveté' of the Brahmins. The priests of India demonstrated 'pleasure in thinking' in which observances – prayers, ceremonies, sacrifices, and hymns – are celebrated as the givers of all good things.¹¹ One step further, he adds, and one also throws aside the gods – 'which is what Europe will also have to do one day' (D 96). Europe remains distant, he muses, from the level of culture attained in the appearance of the Buddha, the teacher of self-redemption. Nietzsche anticipates an age when all the observances and customs of the old moralities and religions have come to an end. Instead of speculating on what will then emerge into existence, he calls for a new community of non-believers to make their sign and communicate with one another: 'There exist today among the different nations of Europe perhaps ten to twenty million people who no longer 'believe in God' – is it too much to ask that they *give a sign* to one another?' He imagines these people constituting a new

¹¹ See Kate Wharton, this volume.

power in Europe, between nations, classes, rulers and subjects, and between the un-peaceable and the most peaceable.

Dawn strikes me, at least in part, as a distinctly Epicurean moment in Nietzsche's development. In *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (1879) Nietzsche confesses to being inspired by the example of Epicurus whom he calls the inventor of an 'heroic-idyllic mode of philosophizing' (WS 295). We can follow Epicurus's example and learn to quieten ourselves by appreciating that it is not necessary to solve the ultimate and outermost theoretical questions; e.g. if the gods exist they do not concern themselves with us (WS 7).¹² In *Dawn* Epicurus is portrayed as the enemy of the idea of punishments in Hell *after* death, which was developed by numerous secret cults

¹² Melissa Lane has suggested that from *The Gay Science* (1882) on, that is, after *Dawn*, Nietzsche's preoccupation with Epicurus and Epicureans evaporates and that his subsequent remarks on them are almost relentlessly negative. M. Lane, 'Honesty as the Best Policy: Nietzsche on *Redlichkeit* and the Contrast between Stoic and Epicurean Strategies of the Self', in Mark Bevir, Jill Hargis, and Sara Rushing (eds), *Histories of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 25–53. She also argues that the late Nietzsche favours Stoicism over Epicureanism. On her reading the difference is that whereas for Nietzsche Epicureanism is fatally flawed as a cognitive stance, the Stoics steel themselves cognitively and emotionally so as to confront reality and in the process they expand their knowledge to the whole of nature. Where the one restricts knowledge the other acknowledges reality in terms of a non-consolatory, non-delusional cognitive attitude towards it. Nietzsche's later appraisal of Epicurus is complex since he is identifying in him both a will to knowledge (in the form of knowledge of our actual mortal conditions of existence) and the denial of such a will (in the form of 'decadent' attempt to escape from the pain and tragic lot of human existence). In *GM* (1887) Nietzsche refers to the super cool but 'suffering Epicurus' as one who may have been hypnotized by the 'feeling of nothingness' and the 'repose of deepest sleep', that is, the *absence* of suffering (*GM* III. 17). In *NCW* (1888) Nietzsche notes that Epicurus may well have worn a *mask* and so may have been superficial out of profundity: 'Profound suffering makes you noble; it separates. – One of the most refined forms of disguise is Epicureanism, and a certain showy courage of taste that accepts suffering without a second thought and resists everything sad and profound. There are 'cheerful people' who use cheerfulness because it lets them be misunderstood: – they *want* to be misunderstood'. (*NCW* 'The Psychologist Has a Word,' 3) For further insight into Nietzsche's reading of Epicurus see also Howard Caygill 'The Consolation of Philosophy or 'Neither Dionysus nor the Crucified'', *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 7 (1994), pp. 131–51.

in the Roman Empire and was taken up by Christianity.¹³ For Nietzsche the triumph of Epicurus's teaching resounds most beautifully in the mouth of the sombre Roman Lucretius but comes too early. Christianity takes the belief in 'subterranean terrors' under its special protection and this foray into heathendom enables it to carry the day over the popularity of the Mithras and Isis cults, winning to its side the rank of the timorous as the most zealous adherents of the new faith (Nietzsche notes that because of the extent of the Jews' attachment to life such an idea fell on barren ground). However, the teaching of Epicurus triumphs anew in the guise of modern science which has rejected 'any other representation of death and any life beyond it' (*D* 72; see also 150). Nietzsche is keen to encourage human beings to cultivate an attitude towards existence in which they accept their mortality and attain a new serenity about their dwelling on the earth, to conquer unjustified fears, and to reinstitute the role played by chance and chance events in the world and in human existence (*D* 13, 33, 36).¹⁴

Not only does Nietzsche subscribe at this time to much of the teaching of Epicurus on cosmology and philosophy, he was also inspired by Epicurus's conception of friendship and the ideal of withdrawing from society and cultivating one's own garden.¹⁵ In a letter to Peter

¹³ In *D* 202 Nietzsche encourages us to do with away with the concepts of 'sin' and 'punishment': 'May these banished monsters henceforth live somewhere other than among human beings, if they want to go on living at all and do not perish of disgust with themselves!' In *D* 208 entitled 'Question of Conscience' he states what he wishes to see changed: 'We want to cease making causes into sinners and consequences into executors'. In *D* 53 he notes that it is the most conscientious who suffer so dreadfully from the fears of Hell: 'Thus life has been made gloomy precisely for those who had need of cheerfulness and pleasant pictures...'

¹⁴ On Epicurus on fear and chance see P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p. 87, p. 223, and p. 252.

¹⁵ Catherine Wilson neatly lays out the central tenets of the Epicurean system in her recent study. They include: the denial of supernatural agency engaged in the design and maintenance of the world; the view that self-moving, subvisible particles acting blindly bring about all growth, change, and decline; and the insistence that the goal of ethical self-discipline, which involves asceticism, is the minimization of mental and physical suffering', *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity*, p. 37. It is on this last point that Nietzsche will come to later criticize Epicureanism and describe Epicurus as a 'typical decadent'. See *AC* 30. In the same text Epicurus is once again prized on account of his battle against 'the subterranean cults, the whole of latent Christianity', his fight against the 'corruption of the soul' through notions of guilt, punishment, and immortality' (*AC* 58).

Gast of 1883 Nietzsche writes that Epicurus, 'is the best negative argument in favour of my challenge to all rare spirits to isolate themselves from the mass of their fellows'.¹⁶ If philosophical therapeutics is centred on a concern with the healing of our own lives,¹⁷ then in Nietzsche's texts of his middle period, including *Dawn*, can be seen to be an heir to this ancient tradition. The difference is that he is developing a therapy for the sicknesses of the soul under peculiarly modern conditions of existence of social control and indoctrination.¹⁸ Like Epicurus, Nietzsche's philosophical therapy is in search of pupils and disciples: 'What I envy in Epicurus are the disciples in his garden; in *such circumstances* one could certainly forget noble Greece and more certainly still ignoble Germany!'¹⁹

In *Dawn* Nietzsche is tracing a history of human fear and self-torment. However, his evaluations of our inheritance—of the origins and sources of human identity in fear; of the cruel practices employed by the ancient discipline of customary morality; and of Christianity—are not simply negative but subtle and nuanced (which does not prevent him from making certain key decisions about the future direction of humanity).²⁰ Nietzsche notes that cultural institutions and mores instil in the passions, and contrary to their nature, a belief in their duration and responsibility for this duration, and gives the example of the institution of marriage which has this effect on the passion of love. Whilst such transformations introduce much hypocrisy and lying into the world they also bring with them 'a *suprahuman*, human-exalting concept' (*D* 27). On the one hand, and on a wider scale, an 'obscure fear and awe' has directed humanity in its consideration of 'higher and weightier affairs', and in the process a fearful humanity has prejudged and paralysed thinking, choosing instead to enslave itself to self-abasement, self-torture,

¹⁶ See Oscar Levy (ed.), *Friedrich Nietzsche. Selected Letters*, trans. A. N. Ludovici (London: Soho Book Company, 1921), pp. 157–8.

¹⁷ Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 1995, p. 87.

¹⁸ In a note from 1881 Nietzsche states that he considers the various moral schools of antiquity to be 'experimental laboratories' containing a number of recipes for worldly wisdom or the art of living and holds that these experiments now belong to us as our legitimate property: 'we shall not hesitate to adopt a Stoic recipe just because we have profited in the past from Epicurean recipes' (*KSA* 9, 15 [59]; cited in Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p. 277).

¹⁹ Letter to Gast in Levy, *Selected Letters*, p. 164.

²⁰ In *D* 18 Nietzsche writes: 'Nothing has been purchased more dearly than that little bit of human reason and feeling of freedom that now constitutes our pride'.

and much torment of body and soul (*D* 107; see also 142). On the other hand, however, it is possible to locate in the history of human rituals, including rituals of sacrifice, a ‘prodigious training ground of the intellect’ (*D* 40). As Nietzsche notes, it is not only religions that have been hatched and nurtured on this soil but also the ‘prehistoric world of science’ as well as the poet, the thinker, the physician, and the lawgiver: ‘The fear of the incomprehensible, which, in ambiguous fashion, demanded ceremonies from us, metamorphosed gradually into a fascination with the hardly-comprehensible, and where one knew not how to explicate, one learned to create’ (ibid.). He goes so far as to claim that it is fear and not love that has furthered the universal knowledge of humanity – where love is deceptive and blind (it harbours a secret impulse to elevate the other as high as possible), fear has a capacity for genuine discernment, for example, discerning the powers and desires of a person or an object (*D* 309).

For Nietzsche we are both heirs to, and continuers of, a history of sacrifice and of the sublime; the difference is that now for us the promise of happiness—which centres on a strengthening and elevation of ‘the general feeling of human *power*’—seeks to remain true to our mortal dwelling on the earth. Our task is now to take our time in our search; we are no longer looking for a single answer to our questions or some ultimate solution to the riddles of existence. Nietzsche advises us to go slowly and wisely:

Small doses. – If you want to effect the most profound transformation possible, then administer the means in the smallest doses, but unremittingly and over long periods of time! What great things can be accomplished at one fell swoop? Thus we want to guard against exchanging head over heels and with acts of violence the moral condition we are used to for a new evaluation of things – no, we want to keep on living in that condition for a long, long time – until we, very late, presumably, become fully aware that the *new evaluation* has become the predominant force and that the small doses of it, *to which we will have to grow accustomed from now on*, have laid down in us a new nature (*D* 534).

Purification of the Higher Feelings

For Nietzsche a chief task is to purify ourselves of the origins and sources of our desire for the sublime, since the higher feelings associated with it are bound up with humanity’s investment in an

imaginary world: an 'exalted humanity' is full of self-loathing and this needs to be conquered. However, he does not propose that we simply transcend the sublime, but that we go in search of new experiences of it. As we shall see, these will centre on knowledge and self-experimentation. Through knowledge a purified humanity can conquer the fear and anxiety that has captivated previous humanity and taught it to kneel down before the incomprehensible. In accordance with the tradition stretching from Longinus to Kant and Schiller, Nietzsche employs the sublime in connection with notions of elevation, exaltation, loftiness, ennoblement and the attainment of newly-discovered heights of experience. At the same time it is bound up for him with practices of purification and sublimation that involve the conquest and overcoming of traditional and conventional conceptions of reality and of what is possible in experience. In *Dawn* Nietzsche's concern is with a transitional humanity that is moving from a heritage of religions and moralities to something new, in fact, to uncharted conditions of existence. He is keen to militate against the sublime of dread and terror and to configure the sublime in a more modest and even humbling manner.²¹ For Nietzsche the new sublimities of philosophy are bound up with a new comportment towards existence as it now concerns us as searchers of knowledge—and a new fearlessness is required as we embark on this search free of 'the prejudices of morality'.²² We are in the process of becoming creatures that exist largely to know and who seek to conquer the elevation offered by 'morality'.

In *Dawn* Nietzsche operates with two main critical conceptions of morality: (a) the ancient morality of custom which characterizes eras that precede world history and are decisive for determining the character of humanity (*D* 9, 16, 18); (b) the modern emphasis on self-sacrifice in which it is supposed that we have defined the essence of the moral (*D* 132). In addition, he is keen to attack the view that everything that exists has a connection with morality and thus an ethical significance can be projected onto the world (*D* 3, 100). Hitherto individuals have lived in fear and as conforming herd animals; they have concealed themselves in the communal generality

²¹ The link between the sublime and terror is, of course, the one made by Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), part 1, section VII and part II, section II. Compare Immanuel Kant *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), section 28.

²² Book five of *GS*, which Nietzsche added to the text's second edition in 1887, is entitled 'We Fearless Ones'.

of the concepts 'human being' and 'society'. Even our distinctive sense for truth is a sense for security and is a need we share with other animals: 'one doesn't want to let oneself be deceived, be led astray by one's actions' (*D* 26). In short, human existence has been constrained by its evolutionary conditions of adaptation: 'everything to which we give the name *Socratic virtues is bestial*' (ibid.). Today the prejudice holds sway in Europe that the sympathetic affects and compassion define the moral, such as actions deemed to be congenial, disinterested, of general utility, and so on. Although Nietzsche mentions Schopenhauer and Mill as famous teachers of this conception of morality, he holds that they merely echo doctrines that have been sprouting up in both fine and crude forms since the French Revolution (*D* 132). Central to modernity, as Nietzsche perceives it, is the idea that the ego must deny itself and adapt itself to the whole and as a result the 'individual' is debilitated and cancelled: 'one never tires of enumerating and excoriating everything evil and malicious, prodigal, costly, and extravagant in the prior form of individual existence...compassion for the individual and passion for society here go hand in hand' (ibid.). Nietzsche contests the morality of self-sacrifice and looks ahead to a different morality, one that is in keeping with the spirit of the book as a whole. In contrast to a narrow, petty bourgeois morality a higher and freer manner of thinking will now look beyond the immediate consequences our actions have for others and seek to further more distant aims. Under some circumstances this will be at the expense of the suffering of others, for example, by furthering genuine knowledge: does not 'free thinking' initially plunge people into doubt and distress? In seeking victory over ourselves we need '*to get beyond our compassion*' (*D* 146). The grief, despair, blunderings and fearful footstep of individuals will form part of 'a new ploughshare' that will 'cleave the ground, rendering it fruitful for all...' (ibid.)

In one of the text's opening aphorisms Nietzsche argues that 'We must again rid the world of much *false grandeur*' simply because 'it offends against the justice which all things may lay claim to from us' (*D* 4). In fact, the task goes much deeper than this since we are in the process of unlearning an inherited symbolism. The task of purifying ourselves of this inheritance involves inquiring into the origins and sources of the sublime. This is something Nietzsche had already begun to undertake in the previous text, *Human, all too Human*, where, for example, he had located the origins of the sublime in the religious cult (*HH* 130). Several aphorisms of *Dawn* continue this inquiry. In *D* 33 Nietzsche notes that for primitive humanity some evil chance event is interpreted in terms of a demonic power and

caprice; there is no investigation into the natural causes of the phenomenon since the demonic cause is taken for granted. In this mental schema we have a demonic cause and a supernatural consequence, such as the punishments and mercies administered by the divinity, in which the sense for reality and taking pleasure in it is spoiled: reality only has value to the extent that '*it is capable of being a symbol*'. It is, therefore, under the spell of the ancient morality of custom that man disdains the causes, the effects, and reality of events and 'spins all his higher feelings of reverence, sublime exaltation, pride, gratitude, and love *from an imaginary world*: the so-called higher world' (D 33). The results of the process are, Nietzsche thinks, perceptible today: 'wherever a man's feelings are *exalted*, the imaginary world is involved in some way'. It is for this reason that the scientific human being has to be suspicious of all higher feelings, so tremendously nourished are they by delusion and nonsense: 'Not that they necessarily are or forever have to be: but of all the gradual purifications awaiting humanity, the purification of the higher feelings will no doubt be one of the most gradual' (D 3). In D 32 Nietzsche clearly indicates that the feeling of being '*sublimely exalted* above reality' grew out of the experience of suffering for the sake of morality: humanity developed the consciousness that suffering brought it closer to a deeper world of truth (D 32). We now have a pride in morality that stands in the way of a new understanding of morality, and only a new pride stemming from the tasks of knowledge can break with this inheritance.

In aphorism 45 entitled 'A Tragic Ending for Knowledge' Nietzsche notes that it is human sacrifice that has traditionally served as the means of producing exaltation; this sacrifice has both elevated and exalted the human being. What if mankind were to now sacrifice itself: to whom would it make the sacrifice? Nietzsche suggests that it would be 'the knowledge of truth' since only here could the goal be said to be commensurate with the sacrifice, 'because for this goal no sacrifice is too great'.²³ But this goal remains too distant and lofty; much closer to home is the task of working out the extent to which humanity can take steps towards the advancement of knowledge and ascertaining what kind of knowledge-drive could impel it to the point of extinction 'with the light of

²³ See also on this *GM* II. 7, in which Nietzsche notes that life has always known how to play tricks so as to justify itself, including its 'evil', and today, for us moderns and free spirits, this takes the form of 'life as a riddle, life as a problem of knowledge'.

an anticipatory wisdom in its eyes'. But perhaps here we discover the madness of such a drive if divorced from human ends of cultivation:

Perhaps one day, once an alliance for the purpose of knowledge has been established with inhabitants of other planets and one has communicated one's knowledge from star to star for a few millennia: perhaps then enthusiasm for knowledge will swell to such a high tide! (*D* 45)

Nietzsche reflects on how a person's experience of the world and existence assumes the form of a 'revelation' and suggests that this is the problem that underlies the origin of all religions. He imagines the disclosure of the world through human consciousness amounting to a blissful experience. However, the ancient religious human being is so overwhelmed by the experience that they are unable to credit themselves as the source of insight and of such bliss; rather, they feel compelled to credit God (or some superior godlike human being) as the source of the world's revelation. In this process the experience is removed from the domain of doubt and critique and is rendered something holy. Humanity has come to experience itself as being indebted to what can be described as a law of the father: 'whenever we elevate our creation over ourselves and seemingly disregard our own worth, we then experience the exultation of paternal love and pride, which compensates and more than compensates for everything' (*D* 62). The problem goes deep because from its history of elevation and exaltation humanity has developed within itself much self-abasement, self-hatred, and self-loathing. He notes, for example, that those who live for exalted and enraptured moments are usually wretched and disconsolate. They view these moments of intoxication as their true self, whilst the thought of their environment, their age, their entire world fills them with vengeful emotions. He continues:

Humanity has these rapturous drunkards to thank for a great deal of evil: for they are insatiable sowers of the weeds of dissatisfaction with self and neighbour, of disdain for this world and this time, especially of world-weariness. Perhaps a whole Hell of *criminals* could not muster an impact as sinister and uncanny, as oppressive and ruinous of earth and air into the farthest future as that tiny, noble community of intractable, half-mad fantasists, people of genius who cannot control themselves and who take all possible pleasure in themselves only at the point where they have completely lost themselves...(*D* 50)

The morality that humanity has cultivated and dedicated itself to is one of 'enthusiastic devotion' and 'self-sacrifice' in which it looks down from sublime heights on the more sober morality of self-control (which is regarded as egotistical). Nietzsche suggests the reason why morality has been developed in this way is owing to the enjoyment of the state of intoxication which has stemmed from the thought that the person is at one with the powerful being to whom it consecrates itself; in this way 'the feeling of power' is enjoyed and is confirmed by a sacrifice of the self. For Nietzsche such an overcoming of the 'self' is impossible: 'In truth you only *seem* to sacrifice yourselves; instead, in your thoughts you transform yourselves into gods and take pleasure in yourselves as such' (*D* 215; see also *D* 269).

Nietzsche is dealing with a problem that preoccupies him in his middle and late periods: the problem of fanaticism (*D* 57–8, 68, 298, 511; see also *AOM* 15; *GS* 347; *BGE* 10).²⁴ As he notes, such 'enthusiasts' will seek to implant the faith in intoxication 'as being that which is actually living in life: a dreadful faith!' (*ibid.*). Such is the extent of Nietzsche's anxiety that he wonders whether humanity as a whole will one day perish by its 'spiritual fire-waters' and those who keep alive the desire for them. The 'strange madness of moral judgements' is bound up with states of exaltation and 'the most exalted language' (*D* 189). Nietzsche is advising us to be on our guard, to be vigilant as philosophers against 'the half-mad, the fantastic, the fanatical', including so-called human beings of genius who claim to have 'visions' and to have seen things others do not see. We are to be cautious, not credulous, when confronted with the claims of visions, that is to say, 'of a profound mental disturbance...' (*D* 66) The problem with the consolations that have been offered to humanity by religions to date is that they have imparted to life the fundamental character of suffering: 'the human being's greatest diseases grew out of the battle against its diseases, and the apparent remedies have, in the long run, produced something much worse

²⁴ At this time Nietzsche is reading Voltaire's *Mahomet* (see *HH* 221) and recommending to people, including his sister Elisabeth, that they read it (see letter to her dated 13 February 1881, *Friedrich Nietzsche Briefe* III. 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981), p. 62). However, we need to read carefully here since there is the danger of turning Nietzsche's championing of the Enlightenment against forces of reaction into an all-too timely position against Islam. To avoid this requires a careful analysis of Nietzsche's comments on different religions. In *GS* 347, for example, it is not Islam but Christianity and Buddhism that he describes as teaching fanaticism. In *D* 68 Saint Paul is described as a fanatic whilst in *D* 546 Epictetus is presented as an example of a non-fanatical person.

that what they were supposed to eliminate' (*D* 52). Humanity has mistaken 'the momentarily effective, anesthetizing and intoxicating means, the so-called consolations, for the actual remedies' (*ibid.*). It is under the most 'scandalous quackery' that humanity has come to treat its diseases of the soul.

Nietzsche appeals to Epictetus for an example of a non-fanatical mode of living and as a counterweight to modern idealists who are greedy for expansion. Epictetus's ideal human being, lacking all fear of God and believing strictly in reason, 'is no penitential preacher' (*D* 546). Although this ancient thinker was a slave, the exemplar he invokes is without class and is possible in every class. Nietzsche notes, moreover, that while Christianity was made for a different species of antique slave (one weak in will and mind), Epictetus neither lives in hope nor accepts the best he knows as a gift but 'possesses it, he holds it bravely in his own hand, he defends it against the whole world if the world wants to rob him of it' (*ibid.*). Epictetus is also admired by Nietzsche on account of his dedication to his own ego and for resisting the glorification of thinking and living for others (*D* 131). He serves as a useful contrast to Christian thinkers such as Pascal, who considered the ego to be something hateful:

If, as Pascal and Christianity claim, our ego is always *hateful*, how might we possibly ever allow or assume that someone else could love it – be it God or a human being! It would go against all decency to let oneself be loved knowing full well that one only *deserves* hate – not to mention other feelings of repulsion. – 'But this is precisely the kingdom of mercy'. – So is your love-thy-neighbour mercy? Your compassion mercy? Well, if these things are possible for you, go still one step further: love yourselves out of mercy – then you won't need your God any more at all, and the whole drama of original sin and redemption will play itself out to the end in you yourselves (*D* 79).

In an aphorism on 'pseudo-egotism' Nietzsche notes how most people do nothing for their ego, but rather live in accordance with the 'phantom ego' that has been formed in the opinions of those around them. The result is that we live in a fog of impersonal or half-personal opinions and arbitrary evaluations: 'one person always in the head of another and then again this head in other heads: a curious world of phantasms that nonetheless knows how to don such a sensible appearance!' (*D* 105) We live within the effect of general opinions about the 'human being', which is a 'bloodless abstraction' and 'fiction' (*ibid.*). Even the modern glorification of

work and talk of its blessings can be interpreted as a fear of everything individual. The subjection to hard industriousness from early until late serves as 'the best policeman' since it keeps everyone in bounds and hinders the development of reason, desire, and the craving for independence. It uses vast amounts of nervous energy which could be given over to reflection, brooding, dreaming, loving and hating and working through our experiences: '...a society in which there is continuous hard work will have more security: and security is currently worshipped as the supreme divinity' (*D* 173). Nietzsche claims that it is the moral fashion of a commercial society to value actions aimed at common security and to cultivate above all the sympathetic affections. At work here is a collective drive toward timidity which desires that life be rid of all the dangers it might have once held: 'Are we not, with this prodigious intent to grate off all the rough and sharp edges of life, well on the way to turning humanity into *sand*!' (*D* 174) In place of the ruling ethic of sympathy and self-sacrifice, which can assume the form of a 'tyrannical encroachment', Nietzsche invites individuals to engage in self-fashioning, cultivating a self that the other can behold with pleasure, a 'lovely, peaceful, self-enclosed garden...with high walls to protect against the dangers and dust of the roadway, but with a hospitable gate as well' (*ibid*). Before an individual can practise benevolence towards others he has to be beneficently disposed towards himself, otherwise he is running from and hating himself, and seeking to rescue himself from himself in others (*D* 516).

Clearly, Nietzsche is not advocating the abolition of all possible types or forms of morality. Where morality centres on 'continual self-command and self-overcoming... in great things and in the smallest', Nietzsche is a champion of it (*WS* 45). His concern is that 'morality' in the forms it has assumed in the greater part of human history, right up to Kant's moral law, has opened up an abundance of sources of displeasure and with every refinement of morals the human being has only become more discontented with itself, its neighbour, and its lot (*D* 106).²⁵ The individual in search of happiness, and who wishes to become its own lawgiver, cannot be treated with prescriptions to the path to happiness simply because individual happiness springs from one's own unknown laws and external prescriptions only serve to obstruct and hinder it: 'The so-called 'moral' precepts are, in truth, directed against individuals and are in no way aimed at

²⁵ Nietzsche considers Kant an important figure because he stands outside the movement within modernity that places the stress on the sympathetic affects (*D* 132). The problem is that his conception of the rational moral law conceals a remnant of ascetic cruelty (*D* 338; see also *D* 187 & 207).

promoting their happiness' (*D* 108). Up to now, Nietzsche notes, the moral law has been supposed to stand above our personal likes and dislikes; we did not want to impose this law upon ourselves but preferred to take it from somewhere or have it commanded to us.

Christianity brought into the world 'a completely new and unlimited *imperilment*', creating new securities, enjoyments, recreations, and evaluations. Although we moderns may be in the process of emancipating ourselves from such an imperilment we keep dragging into our existence the old habits associated with these securities and evaluations, even into our noblest arts and philosophies (*D* 57). Nietzsche holds that in wanting to return to the affects 'in their utmost grandeur and strength' – for example, as *love* of God, *fear* of God, fanatical *faith* in God, and so on – Christianity represents a popular protest against philosophy and he appeals to the ancient sages against it since they advocated the triumph of reason over the affects (*D* 58). Christianity has sought to transform the great passions and powers, such as Eros and Aphrodite, which are capable of idealisation, into 'infernal kobolds and phantoms of deceit', arousing in the conscience of the believer tremendous torments at the slightest sexual excitation (*D* 76). The result is to fill human beings with a feeling of dread at the sight of their natural animal conditions of existence, turning necessary and regularly recurring sensations into a source of inner misery to the point where inner misery becomes a necessary and regularly recurring phenomenon in human beings. This may even be a misery that we keep secret and is more deeply rooted than we care to admit (Nietzsche mentions in this regard Shakespeare's confession of Christian gloominess in the *Sonnets*). Christianity has contempt for the world and makes a new virtue of ignorance, namely 'innocence', the most frequent result of which is the feeling of guilt and despair: 'a virtue which leads to Heaven via the detour through Hell' (*D* 321; see also *D* 89).

Nietzsche notes, quite seriously, that Christianity has wanted to free human beings from the burden of the demands of sober morality by showing a shorter way to perfection, perhaps imitating philosophers who wanted a 'royal road to truth' that would avoid wearisome and tedious dialectics or the gathering of rigorously tested facts. In both cases a profound error is at work even though such an error has provided comfort to those caught exhausted and despairing in the wilderness of existence (*D* 59). Christianity has emerged from a 'rustic rudeness' by incorporating the spirit of countless people whose need is to take joy in submission, 'all those subtle and crude enthusiasts of self-mortification and other-idolization'. As a result Christianity has evolved into a 'very *spirited* religion' that has made

European humanity something sharp-witted and not only theologically cunning. The creation of a mode of life which tames the beast in man, which is the noble end of Christianity, has succeeded in keeping awake 'the feeling of a superhuman mission' in the soul and in the body. Here one takes pride in obeying, and this, Nietzsche notes, is the distinguishing mark of all aristocrats. It is with their 'surpassing beauty and refinement' that the princes of the church prove to the people the church's 'truth' and which is itself the result of a harmony between figure, spirit, and task. Nietzsche then asks whether this attempt at an aristocratic harmony must also go to the grave with the end of religions: 'can nothing higher be attained, or even imagined?' (D 60) When in the next aphorism Nietzsche invites sensitive people who are still Christians from the heart to attempt the experiment of living without Christianity he is in search of an authentic mode of life: 'they owe it to *their faith* in this way for once to sojourn 'in the wilderness' – if only to win for themselves the right to a voice on the question whether Christianity is necessary. For the present they cling to their native soil and thence revile the world beyond it...' (D 61) After such a wandering beyond his little corner of existence, a Christian may return home, not out of homesickness, but out of sound and honest judgement.

Nietzsche sees here a model for future human beings who will live in this way with respect to all evaluations of the past: 'one must voluntarily *live through* them once again, and likewise their opposite – in order, in the final analysis, to have the *right* to let them fall through the sieve' (D 62).

The Passion of Knowledge and the Sublimities of Philosophy

According to Nietzsche philosophy's love of knowledge is now assuming the form of a passion which shrinks at no sacrifice. He notes that our drive to knowledge has become so strong for us that we now cannot tolerate the idea of happiness without knowledge: 'Restless discovering and divining has such an attraction for us, and has grown as indispensable to us as is to the lover his unrequited love...' (D 429) We now honestly believe, Nietzsche writes, that 'under the pressure and suffering of this passion the whole of humanity must believe itself to be more sublime and more consoled than previously, when it had not yet overcome its envy of the cruder pleasure and contentment that result from barbarism' (ibid.). We even entertain the thought that humanity might perish of its newfound

passion for knowledge, though clearly Nietzsche is not an advocate of this. As he notes, such a thought can hold no sway over us. Our evolution is now bound up with this passion, however, and the task is to allow ourselves to be ennobled and elevated by it: '...if humanity is not destroyed by a *passion* it will be destroyed by a *weakness*: which does one prefer? This is the main question. Do we desire for humanity an end in fire and light or in sand?' (ibid.).

Nietzsche notes that it is errors that have hitherto served as forces of consolation for humanity. If today we are seekers of truth and idealists of knowledge may we *not*, then, expect the same from truth? But can truths be capable of producing the effect of consolation? Is it not in the nature of truth precisely not to console? If human beings exist as truthful beings but employ philosophy as a cure for themselves, does this not suggest that they are not, in fact, seeking truth at all? But if the character of truth as a whole is one that makes us ill should we not abolish it in the same way the Greeks abolished gods once they were unable to offer consolation? Nietzsche spells out the reason for our ambivalent stance towards errors. On the one hand it is on their basis that humanity has been elevated and has excelled itself again and again, for example, through errors as to its descent, uniqueness, and destiny. On the other hand, it has to be noted that it is through the same errors that unspeakable amounts of suffering, persecution, suspicion, and misery have come into the world (*D* 425). Our moralities and religions do not wed us to the earth as a site of dwelling and thinking; rather, we consider ourselves 'too good and too significant for the earth', as if we were paying it only a passing visit. The 'proud sufferer' has thus become in the course of human development the highest type of human being that is revered. We cannot assume that truth will offer remedies and in the future, then, truth '*as a whole* and something wholly coherent' will have to exist only for those souls that are full of joy and peace, at once powerful and harmless.²⁶ Nevertheless, in spite of its cold, dry and inhuman character knowledge can offer genuine instruction and aid the coming into being of a mature humanity, showing that we are not what we take ourselves to be as subjects and agents (see *D* 115–117). We will grow in power by now making sacrifices of ourselves to knowledge.

In an aphorism entitled 'Mortal souls' Nietzsche suggests that it is a question of relearning what it is to be human, including human time as mortal time. Several aphorisms in the book consider humanity's

²⁶ Nietzsche mentions Aristotle as an example of a philosopher full of joyfulness and peace (*D* 424).

misguided dream of an immortal existence. 211 is an especially witty aphorism in which Nietzsche considers the impertinent nature of the dream. He notes that the actual existence of a single immortal human being would be enough to drive everyone else on earth into a rampage of death and suicide out of being sick and tired of it. The better strategy is for us to take more seriously the creature that lives typically for seventy years and give it back the actual time it has hitherto lacked for itself. Nietzsche is inviting us to replace the sublime dream of immortality with a new sobriety towards existence, as this aphorism from book five makes clear:

With regard to knowledge the most useful accomplishment is perhaps: that the belief in the immortality of the soul has been abandoned. Now humanity is allowed to wait; now it no longer needs to rush headlong into things and choke down half-examined ideas as formerly it was forced to do. For in those days the salvation of poor 'eternal souls' depended on the extent of their knowledge acquired during a short lifetime; they had to *make a decision* overnight – 'knowledge' took on a dreadful importance. (D 501)

Nietzsche argues we are now in a new situation with regard to knowledge and as a result we can conquer anew our courage for mistakes, for experimentation, and for accepting things provisionally. Without the sanction of the old moralities and religions, individuals and entire generations 'can now fix their eyes on tasks of a vastness that would to earlier ages have seemed madness' (ibid.). Humanity has earned the right to self-experimentation: 'The greatest sacrifices to knowledge have not yet been made – indeed, previously it would have meant blasphemy and the surrender of one's eternal salvation even to *have a presentiment* of the thoughts that precede our actions' (ibid.).

Aphorism 507 entitled 'Against the Tyranny of the True' signals a warning however concerning our devotion to knowledge through experimentation. Here Nietzsche stages an anxiety that takes on a more dramatic form in his later writings and their questioning of the will to truth. In this aphorism he asks why it should be considered desirable that truth alone should rule and be omnipotent. We can esteem it as a 'great power' but we should not allow it to rule over us in some tyrannical fashion. Much healthier is to allow truth to have opponents and for us to find relief from it from time to time, and be at liberty to reside knowingly in 'untruth'. Failure to place truth within a rich economy of life will make truth, and ourselves in the process, 'boring, powerless, and tasteless' (D 507). In the

next work, *The Gay Science* Nietzsche focuses on the task of the 'incorporation' (*Einverleibung*) of truth and knowledge and holds this to be our new experiment (*GS* 110). Ultimately, the task of the passion of knowledge is to give existence an 'aesthetic meaning', that is, to increase our taste for it (*KSA* 9, 11 [162]).

Nietzsche observes that, as the world becomes more comprehensible to us, the more solemnity of all kinds decreases. Hitherto, he notes, it was fear that informed humanity's attitude of reverence as it found itself overcome in the face of the unknown and the mysterious, forcing it to sink down before the incomprehensible. He then asks whether the world will lose some its appeal once a new humanity comes into being that has grown less fearful in the face of the character of the world: might it not also result in our own fearsomeness becoming slighter? His answer is negative and it is such because of the courage that he sees as amongst our new virtues; this is a species of courage so courageous that it feels itself to be 'above people and things', it is a kind of 'excessive magnanimity' and, Nietzsche notes, has hitherto been lacking in humanity. He declares the age of 'harmless counterfeiting' to be over and looks ahead to the 'astronomers of the ideal' who will take over the role of the poets whose task was to be seers who could recount to us 'something of the *possible!*' If, as might be supposed, there are reasons for nihilism there are also equally good reasons for its exact opposite:

If only they wanted to let us experience in advance something of the *future virtues!* Or of virtues that will never exist on earth, although they could exist somewhere in the world – of purple-glowing galaxies and the whole Milky Ways of the beautiful! Where are you, you astronomers of the ideal? (*D* 551)

Nietzsche does not, then, align his thinking with the cause of spreading fear or terror but instead commits himself to expanding our appreciation of the beautiful:

The pessimist, who gives all things the blackest and gloomiest colours, makes use of only flames and bolts of lightning, celestial effulgence, and everything that has glaring brilliance and confuses the eye; brightness is only there for him to increase the horror and to make us sense that things are more terrifying than they really are (*D* 561).

In aphorism 469 entitled 'The Realm of Beauty is Bigger', Nietzsche suggests that new appreciations of beauty are becoming possible now that we no longer accept the limitation of restricting beauty to the morally good: 'Just as surely as evil people have a hundred types of

happiness about which the virtuous have no clue, they also have a hundred types of beauty: and many have not yet been discovered' (*D* 468). In aphorism 550 on 'Knowledge and Beauty' Nietzsche suggests a reorientation in our thinking about beauty and reality. He notes that hitherto people have reserved their veneration and feeling of happiness for works of imagination and dissemblance whilst the opposite phenomena leave them cold. Pleasure or delight is taken only by plunging into the depths of semblance and by taking leave of reality. This developed taste for semblance and appearance over reality has encouraged the aesthetic attitude that takes reality to be something ugly. Contra this development Nietzsche suggests that knowledge of the ugliest reality can be something beautiful for us and the discovery of reality generates for us so many subtle pleasures. Do we not need to ask whether the 'beautiful in itself' makes any sense? Nietzsche appeals to a number of philosophers who have *enjoyed* knowledge and sought the highest happiness in the activity of a well-trained, inquisitive, and inventive understanding, including Plato and Aristotle, Descartes and Spinoza:

The happiness of those who seek knowledge increases the amount of beauty in the world and makes everything that is here sunnier; knowledge does not merely place its beauty around things but, in the long run, into things – may future humanity bear witness to this proposition!...What danger for their honesty of becoming, through this enjoyment, a panegyrist of things! (*D* 550)

Nietzsche addresses what philosophy now does in relation to the emerging science of knowledge. He draws a comparison with rococo horticulture which arose from the feeling that nature is ugly, savage, and boring and thus the aim was to beautify it. This is now what philosophy does with science, beautifying what strikes us as ugly, dry, cheerless, and laborious. Philosophy is a species of art and poetry and thus a form of 'entertainment': it wants to entertain 'but, in accordance with its inherited pride, it wants to do this in a more sublime and elevated manner and before a select audience' (*D* 427). Nietzsche already has here, then, the conception of the project of the 'gay science' with its mixture of poetry, song, the philosophical aphorism, and dedication to science. In this aphorism from *Dawn* Nietzsche speaks of philosophy enabling us to wander in science as in 'wild nature' and without effort or boredom. Such an ambition for philosophy is one that makes religion, hitherto the highest species of the art of entertainment, superfluous. Eventually a cry of dissent against philosophy may emerge, one voiced by pure

scientism and naturalism: “back to science,” to the nature and naturalness of science!’ At this point, Nietzsche notes, an age of humanity’s history may then commence that discovers the mightiest beauty in precisely the wild and ugly sides of science, ‘just as it was only from the time of Rousseau that one discovered a sense for the beauty of high mountains and the desert’ (D 427). In short, Nietzsche can see no good reason why humanity cannot grow in strength and insight with science: even when science deflates it humanity can experience an elevation above itself.

Nietzsche appeals to the ‘spiritually needy’ and considers how the new tasks and new modes of knowledge suppose solitude as their condition. He imagines a time for higher festivals when one freely gives away one’s spiritual house and possessions to ones in need. In this condition of solitude the satiated soul lightens the burden of its own soul, eschewing both praise for what it does and avoiding gratitude which is invasive and fails to respect solitude and silence. This is to speak of a new kind of teacher who, armed with a handful of knowledge and a bag full of experiences, becomes ‘a doctor of the spirit to the indigent and to aid people here and there whose head *is disturbed by opinions...*’ (D 449). The aim is not to prove that one is right before such a person, but rather ‘to speak with him in such a way that...he himself says what is right and, proud of the fact, walks away!’ Such a teacher exists like a beacon of light offering illumination. Nietzsche imagines this teacher existing in the manner of a new kind of Stoic and inspired by a new sublime:

To have no advantage, neither better food, nor purer air, nor a more joyful spirit – but to share, to give back, to communicate, to grow poorer! To be able to be humble so as to be accessible to many and humiliating to none! To have experienced much injustice and have crawled through the worm-tunnels of every kind of error in order to be able to reach many hidden souls along their secret paths! Always in a type of love and a type of self-interest and self-enjoyment! To be in possession of a dominion and at the same time inconspicuous and renouncing! To lie constantly in the sun and the kindness of grace and yet to know that the paths rising to the sublime are right at hand! – That would be a life! That would be a reason to live, to live a long time. (ibid)

Nietzsche in fact raises the question whether the philosopher of the morning is really renouncing things or gaining a new cheerfulness or serenity:

To relinquish the world without knowing it, like a *nun* – that leads to an infertile, perhaps melancholic solitude. This has nothing in common with the solitude of the thinker's *vita contemplativa*: when he elects it, he in no way wishes to renounce; on the contrary, it would amount to renunciation, melancholy, downfall of his self for him to have to endure the *vita practica*: he relinquishes the latter because he knows it, because he knows himself. Thus he leaps into *his* water, thus he attains *his* serenity. (D 440)

For the thinker who now has the new dedication to knowledge existence is lived magnanimously. In aphorism 459 entitled 'The thinker's magnanimity' Nietzsche writes:

Rousseau and Schopenhauer – both were proud enough to inscribe upon their existence the motto: *vitam impendere vero* ('to dedicate one's life to truth'). And again – how they both must have suffered in their pride that they could not succeed in making *verum impendere vitae*! ('to dedicate truth to life') – *verum*, as each of them understood it – in that their lives tagged along beside their knowledge like a temperamental bass that refuses to stay in tune with the melody! But knowledge would be in a sorry state if it was meted out to every thinker only as it suited his person! And thinkers would be in a sorry state if their vanity were so great that they could only endure this! The great thinker's most beautiful virtue radiates precisely from: the magnanimity with which he, as a person of knowledge, undauntedly, often shamed, often with sublime mockery and smiling – offers himself and his life in sacrifice (D 459).

Neither Rousseau nor Schopenhauer, Nietzsche is arguing, had the cognitive maturity needed to allow for knowledge and life to enter into a new marriage in which knowledge elevates and pulls life up with it: their emotional personalities interfered too much to permit this process to take place.

Nietzsche suggests that we should no longer feel the need to rush knowledge along to some end point. There is no longer the need, he holds, to approach questions and experiments as if the solutions to them had to correspond to a typical human time span. The course of science is no longer being crossed by the accidental fact that people live to be approximately seventy years old. We are now free to take our time and go slowly: 'To solve everything at one fell swoop, with one single word – that was the secret wish: this was the task one imagined in the image of the Gordian knot or of Columbus' egg; one did not doubt that in the realm of knowledge

as well it was possible to reach one's goal after the manner of an Alexander or a Columbus and to solve all questions with *one answer*' (*D* 547). The idea evolved that there was a riddle to solve for the philosopher and that the task was to compress the problem of the world into the simplest riddle-form: 'The boundless ambition and jubilation of being the 'unriddler of the world' were the stuff of thinker's dreams' (ibid). Under such a schema of the task of thinking philosophy assumed the guise of being a supreme struggle for the tyrannical rule of spirit reserved for a single individual (Nietzsche thinks that it is Schopenhauer who has most recently fancied themselves as such an individual).

The lesson to be drawn from this inheritance is that the quest for knowledge has been retarded by the moral narrow-mindedness of its disciples. In the future, Nietzsche declares, it needs to be pursued with a higher and more magnanimous feeling: "What do I matter!" stands over the door of the future thinker' (ibid).

For Nietzsche the consolations of religion are rapidly disappearing from our consciousness (*AOM* 169; *D* 68). The new sublimities of philosophy he is fashioning can be understood, I think, as affording new consolations (for example, the personal sacrifices we make to knowledge may contribute to the greater health of a future humanity). What has gone for us free spirited moderns are precisely those things Boethius sought as consolation from philosophy: belief in ultimate goodness, in an avenger and a final improver, belief in Providence, resting in endless trust, and so on (*GS* 285).²⁷ Whilst the passion of knowledge does not exist in order to console us or to satisfy the heart's desire – indeed, it challenge us to the very core of our being since truth and knowledge reveal that we are not what we take ourselves to be as agents or subjects – philosophy can entertain us (hold our attention) in new ways and by reflecting on the 'human, all too human' through psychological observation it will help 'lighten the burden of life' (*HH* 35).

Conclusion

What, ultimately, is it that drives Nietzsche's project in the texts of his middle period and as we encounter it in *Dawn*? I believe it is

²⁷ What Boethius wants from philosophy is assurance that the wicked will not go unpunished and knowledge that the world is a rational order and guided by Providence. See Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. V. E. Watts (Middlesex: Penguin, 1969).

the search for an authentic mode of existence: 'We, however, want to become the ones that we are: ones who are new, unique, incomparable, self-creating, self-legislating' (*GS* 335). In *Dawn* Nietzsche notes that we typically adopt out of fear the evaluations which guide our actions, and only pretend that they are our own; we then grow so accustomed to the pretence that this ends up being our nature. To have one's own evaluation of things is something exceedingly rare (*D* 104). It is necessary to contest the idea that there is a single moral-making morality; every code of ethics that affirms itself in an exclusive manner 'destroys too much valuable energy and costs humanity much too dearly' (*D* 164). In the future, Nietzsche hopes, the inventive and fructifying person shall no longer be sacrificed and numerous new attempts at living life and creating community shall be undertaken. When this takes place we will find that an enormous load of guilty conscience has been purged from the world. Humanity has suffered for too long from teachers of morality who wanted too much all at once and sought to lay down precepts for everyone (*D* 194). In the future the care of truth will need to centre on the most personal questions and create time for them: 'what is it that I actually do? What is it precisely that I wish to accomplish thereby?' (*D* 196). Small individual questions and experiments are no longer to be viewed with contempt and impatience (*D* 547). We will grow and become the ones that we are, however, only by experiencing dissatisfaction with ourselves and assuming the risk of experimenting in life, even to the point of living unwisely,²⁸ freely taking the journey through our wastelands, quagmires, and icy glaciers. The ones who don't take the risk of life 'will never make the journey around the world (that you yourselves are!), but will remain trapped within yourselves like a knot on the log you were born to, a mere happenstance' (*D* 343).

In *Dawn* Nietzsche makes numerous practical recommendations for how we might go about cultivating and practising such an authentic existence. When we are tired and fed up with ourselves and require fresh stimulation the best practice is to sleep a lot, 'literally and figuratively! That way one will also awaken again upon a new morning!' (*D* 376) An essential test to learn is the endurance of solitude (*D* 443). Solitude has the advantage of providing us with the distant perspective we need to think well of things: 'on my own I seem to see my friends more clearly and more appealingly than

²⁸ See *BGE* 205: '...the true philosopher...lives 'unphilosophically' and 'unwisely' and above all *imprudently* and feels the burdensome duty of a hundred tests and temptations in life – he is continually risking *himself*...'

when together with them; and at the time when I loved music most and was most sensitive to it, I loved at a distance from it' (*D* 485). We need solitude 'so as not to drink out of everyone's cisterns' for amongst the many we simply do not think as an 'I'. Not only is such solitude of benefit to ourselves it also improves our relation to others; when we turn angry towards people and fear them we need the desert to become good again (*D* 491).

Nietzsche seeks to counsel us in the wisdom of 'slow cures' (*D* 462). He notes that chronic diseases of the soul, like those of the body, rarely emerge through one-time large offences against the rationality of body and soul, but rather through countless undetected little acts of negligence. If this is the case then the cure has to be equally subtle and entail countless little offsetting exercises and the unwitting cultivation of different habits: 'Many a person has a cold, malicious word to say for his environment ten times a day and doesn't think anything of it, especially since, after a few years, he has created for himself a *law* of habit that from now on *compels* him ten times every day to sour his environment. But he can also accustom himself to doing it a kindness ten times!' (ibid).

Finally, if we are to grow as a species and attain a new human maturity we need a new honesty about matters of love. Nietzsche wonders whether people speak with such idolatry about love – the 'food of the gods' – simply because they have had so little of it. But would not a utopia of universal love be something ludicrous? – 'each person flocked around, pestered, longed for not by one love...but by thousands, indeed by each and everyone' (*D* 147). Instead, Nietzsche wants us to favour a future of solitude, quietude, and even being unpopular. In addition, he proposes that individuals should be discouraged from reaching a decision affecting their life while in the state of being in love; marriage needs to be taken much more seriously and not allowed to grow on the basis of the whim of lovers (*D* 151; see also *D* 532). The imperatives of philosophies of universal love and compassion will serve only to destroy us. If we are tempted by them we should put them to the test and stop all our fantasizing (*D* 137).

It goes without saying perhaps that Nietzsche's emphasis on the individual's self-development entails a corresponding devaluation of economics and politics. He considers these to represent a squandering of spirit: 'Our age, no matter how much it talks and talks about economy, is a squanderer: it squanders what is most precious, spirit' (*D* 179). Today, he holds, we are in a state of 'colossal and ridiculous lunacy' with everybody feeling obliged to know what is going on day in and day out and longing at every instant to be actively

involved to the point of abandoning the work of their own therapy. The philosophical therapy he is proposing in *Dawn* is thus reserved for those solitaries who have seceded from society and who wish to be the harbingers of a new earth and new peoples to come:

To build anew the laws of life and of behaviour – for this task our sciences of physiology, medicine, sociology, and solitude are not yet sure of themselves: and only from them can we take the foundation-stones for new ideals (if not the new ideals themselves). Thus we are living either a *preliminary* or *posterior* existence, depending on taste and talent, and it is best in this interregnum to be to every possible extent our own *reges* and to found little *experimental states*. We are experiments: let us also want to be such! (*D* 453)