

True to the Earth: Nietzsche's Epicurean Care of Self and World¹

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Epicurus has been alive in all ages and he lives now, unknown to those who called and call themselves Epicureans, and without a reputation amongst the philosophers. He too forgot his own name: it was the heaviest burden he ever cast off (WS 227)

Epicurus relates to the Stoics as beauty does to sublimity; but one would have to be a Stoic at the very least to catch sight of this beauty at all! To be able to be jealous of it!

(Nietzsche 1883, KSA 10, 7 [151])

That Nietzsche is concerned with forms or modes of philosophical therapy which will promote human flourishing is, I think, evident from the concerns of his earliest writings, such as his conception of the philosopher as the physician of culture. Here my focus is on the Epicurean-inspired therapy we find put to work in the middle period writings. Although the late Nietzsche has problems with Epicurus, in his middle period writings, he writes in praise of him and draws upon his philosophy as a way of promoting what I would like to call an Epicurean-inspired care of self. At the start, we can note the following: Epicurus becomes a significant and inspiring figure for Nietzsche at the time of his free spirit middle period (1878–82); by the time of the late writings (1886–8), he is a more ambivalent figure for Nietzsche, still celebrated for waging war against Christianity in its preexistent form but also said to be a typical decadent (A 30). With the return of the Dionysian in his thinking, which on the surface seems to disappear in his middle period writings, we get the fundamental contrast between “Epicurean delight” (*Vergnügen*) and “Dionysian joy” (*Lust*): “I have presented such terrible images to knowledge that any ‘Epicurean delight’ is out of the question. Only Dionysian joy is sufficient: *I have been the first to discover the tragic*” (KSA 11, 25 [95]: WP 1029). In this chapter, I do not wish to subject this later contrast to analysis. Instead, I want to show how Nietzsche draws on Epicurus in his middle period writings and deploys Epicurean ideas as a way of promoting a care of self and world.

In Nietzsche's middle period writings, we encounter a significant portrait of Epicurus as the inventor of a specific and unique mode of philosophizing. For

Nietzsche, Epicurus's teaching can show us how to quieten our being and so help to temper a human mind that is prone to neurosis. Nietzsche confesses to having dwelled like Odysseus in the underworld and says that he will often be found there again. As a "sacrificer" who sacrifices so as to talk to the dead, he states that there are four pairs of thinkers from whom he will accept judgment, and Epicurus and Montaigne make up the first pair he mentions (AOM 408).² Epicurus, along with the Stoic Epictetus, is revered as a thinker in whom wisdom assumes bodily form (AOM 224). Indeed, Nietzsche admits at this time to being inspired by the example of Epicurus whom he calls one of the greatest human beings to have ever graced the earth and the inventor of a "heroic-idyllic mode of philosophizing" (WS 295).³

It is heroic, then, because conquering the fear of death is involved and the human being has the potential to walk on the earth as a god, living a blessed life, and idyllic because Epicurus philosophized, calmly and serenely, and away from the crowd, in a garden.⁴ In *Human, all too Human* Nietzsche writes of a "refined heroism" "which disdains to offer itself to the veneration of the great masses . . . and goes silently through the world and out of the world" (HH 291). This is deeply Epicurean in inspiration: Epicurus taught that one should die as if one had never lived. I think this Epicurean philosophy, which so inspired Nietzsche in his middle period, is highly relevant to our concerns today regarding the care of the planet and I will seek to indicate this in more detail in the final main section of the chapter.

Nietzsche and Epicurus

Catherine Wilson neatly lays out the central tenets of the Epicurean system in her recent study, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity*. 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.⁵ There is much here that accords with what Nietzsche found appealing in Epicurus. However, it is also the case that Nietzsche's reception of Epicurus has quite specific features. For example, he shows little interest in the ontological status of atomism and the problems of the theory of knowledge and much more interest in Epicurean cosmology, such as its distinction between world and universe. As one commentator has noted, this focus on the world and distrust of the idea of *the* universe, including the idea of the sum of all possible worlds, "allowed Nietzsche to collect the themes of Epicurean divinity, blessedness, friendship and philosophical regimen around the focus of the ancient science of this world of 'meteorology.'" ⁶ As Liba Taub has put it, the Epicurean aim "was to demonstrate that the universe and various distant phenomena can be explained without reference to anything outside nature, or extraordinary."⁷ Informing Epicurean views on cosmology and meteorology was the desire to eliminate fear and anxiety, especially about the intervention of the gods in the world. Epicurus thus developed a strict materialist philosophy that was designed to provide natural explanations of phenomena that were often seen as due to the activities of supernatural powers.⁸

Although acknowledging the existence of an infinite number of worlds (*cosmoi*), Epicurus sought to account for the *meteōra*, such as the phenomenon of the sky and earthquakes, in terms of the natural workings of our local cosmos. Thus, the fundamental Epicurean aims, such as the alleviation of anxiety, are at the heart of their cosmological and meteorological explanations. In the middle period, Nietzsche is inspired by Epicurus's focus on the world, his redemption of nature from human projection and teleology, and his conception of philosophy as the art of living in which one lives the philosophical life and does not engage merely in theoretical discourses.

In Nietzsche's time, there was something of a revival of interest in Epicurus and Epicureanism, and Nietzsche's texts, especially *Dawn*, can be seen as part of this development and the attempt to retrieve the resources of ancient materialism. Writing in 1878, the French naturalist philosopher, Jean-Marie Guyau, hailed at the time as the "Spinoza of France," portrayed Epicurus as the original free spirit, "Still today it is the spirit of old Epicurus who, combined with new doctrines, works away at and undermines Christianity."⁹ In Germany, Friedrich Albert Lange's *History of Materialism* of 1866, a text that deeply impressed the young Nietzsche, was largely responsible for the revival of interest in Epicurus. Lange devoted a chapter to Epicurus and a separate chapter to Lucretius's poem, *On the Nature of the Universe (De Rerum Natura)*.¹⁰ The aim of the explanation of nature sought by Epicurus "is to free us from fear and anxiety."¹¹ As Lange notes, in Epicurus, physics is placed in the service of ethics: "The mere historical knowledge of natural events, without a knowledge of causes, is valueless; for it does not free us from fear nor lift us upon superstition. The more causes of change we have discovered, the more we shall attain the calmness of contemplation; and it cannot be supposed that this inquiry can be without result upon our happiness."¹² If events can be explained in accordance with universal laws, with effects attributable to natural causes, an important goal of philosophy can be attained and secured, chiefly liberation from fear and anxiety. Moreover, if peace of soul and freedom from pain are the only enduring pleasures, then these constitute the true aim of existence, including the philosophical endeavor. For Lange, Greek philosophy, properly understood, begins with the Ionian natural philosophers and terminates with Epicurus and his school: the further developments in it belong to the natural sciences whilst speculative philosophy—notably in the form of neo-Platonism—is a "thoroughly degenerate" expression of philosophy.¹³ Epicurus is to be praised not so much for his system as for the "general Materialistic principles" which underlie it.¹⁴ Finally, Lange notes the "quietistic and contemplative" character of Epicureanism, and it's this character that appeals to the Nietzsche of the middle period¹⁵ (the late Nietzsche is quite different on this point).

In his book *Nietzsche and Modern Times*, Laurence Lampert notes that the portrait of Epicurus that can be drawn from Nietzsche's scattered reflections provides us with an important component in understanding his genealogy of philosophy. He rightly notes, however, that Nietzsche provides his readers only with "fragmentary glimpses" of his interpretation of Epicurus even though it forms a major element in his reworking of the history of philosophy.¹⁶ Nietzsche writes in 1882 that he is proud of the fact that he experiences the character of Epicurus differently from perhaps everybody else: "Whatever I hear or read of him, I enjoy the happiness of the afternoon of antiquity"

(GS 45). Lampert claims that Nietzsche's "recovery" of Epicurus forms a key component in his new history of philosophy, providing a point of access to its all-important themes such as the philosophical and scientific tradition prior to Socrates—typically demoted in the history of philosophy to the status of mere *pre-Socratic* thought—that Epicurus sought to preserve.¹⁷ He further argues that Nietzsche experienced Epicurus in a way different to everybody else because he was able to experience him as an heir to what was best in Greek science.¹⁸ However, this cannot be right since, as we have just seen, it is precisely in these terms that Lange writes in praise of him. Much better, I think, is when Lampert claims that Nietzsche located a peculiar happiness in Epicurus's life and teaching. He notes that the happiness of Epicurus does not stem from Epicurean *ataraxia*, conceived as an indifference to all passions, but that it arises *from a passion*, from a *Wollust* "grown modest and transformed into the observing eye that watched the sun set out on the magnificence of antiquity."¹⁹

As Lampert's appreciation indicates, Nietzsche is capable of arresting psychological insight into Epicurus. In 1882, he writes, for example:

I see his eyes gaze upon a wide, white sea, across rocks at the shore that are bathed in sunlight, while large and small animals are playing in this light, as secure and calm as the light and his eyes. Such happiness could be invented only by a man who was suffering continually. It is the happiness of eyes that have seen the sea of existence become calm, and now they can never weary of the surface and of the many hues of this tender, shuddering skin of the sea. Never before has voluptuousness (*Wollust*) been so modest (GS 45).

As Monika Langer has recently noted in her interpretation of this aphorism, although clearly a paean of sorts to Epicurus, Nietzsche does not elaborate on the origin or nature of his happiness and suffering, but rather tacitly encourages the reader to consider various possibilities. In the end, she argues that Nietzsche is reading Epicurus as a figure who while standing securely on firm ground, gazes at the sea and is able to enjoy the possibility of uncertainty it offers. She writes, "Literally and figuratively he can float on the sea."²⁰ Epicurus is depicted as the antithesis of modernity's shipwrecked man since such is his liberation and serenity he can "chart his course or simply set sail and let the wind determine his way."²¹ Although he might suffer shipwreck and drown or survive he does not live in fear of dangers and hazards: "In taking to the sea he might lose his bearings and even his mind." In contrast to modern man who is keen to leave behind the insecurity of the sea for the safety of dry land, "Epicurus delights in the ever present possibility of leaving that secure land for the perils of the sea."²²

I think this interpretation is too strong and misses the essential insight Nietzsche is developing into Epicurus in the aphorism. Rather than suggesting that the sea calls for further and continued exploration, hiding seductive dangers that Epicurus would not be afraid of, Nietzsche seems to hold to the view that Epicurus is the seasoned traveler of the soul who has no desire to travel anymore and for whom the meaning of the sea has changed. Rather than serving as a means of transportation or something that beckons us toward other shores, the sea has become an object of contemplation in the here and now. It is something to be looked at for its own sake and in a way that discloses

its infinite nuances and colors. One might describe this in Heidegger's terms, with its mode of being changed from the ready-to-hand (either threatening or alluring, but in both cases on the background of a form of instrumentalization, such as exploration) to something more akin to the present-at-hand, except that here the disclosing attitude is not one of theoretical detachment but a sensitivity that entails a special receptivity that is hard to attain and maintain.²³ One might even invoke *Gelassenheit* to define the experience. This interpretation is in accord with the stress Nietzsche places in his middle period writings on the joyful riches, calm and serene, to be had from the *vita contemplativa* (see D 440; GS 329). Nietzsche even discovers what one might call a materialist sublime in the contemplation of nature:

One day, and probably soon, we need some recognition of what above all is lacking in our big cities: quiet and wide, expansive places for reflection. Places with long, high-ceilinged cloisters for bad or all too sunny weather where no shouting or noise of carriages can reach and where good manners would prohibit even priests from praying aloud – buildings and sites that would altogether give expression to the sublimity (*Erhabenheit*) of thoughtfulness and of stepping aside. The time is past when the church possessed a monopoly on reflection, when the *vita contemplativa* had to be first all a *vita religiosa*; and everything built by the church gives expression to that idea. I do not see how we could remain content with such buildings even if they were stripped of their churchly purposes. The language spoken by these buildings is far too rhetorical and unfree, reminding us that they are houses of God and ostentatious monuments of some supramundane intercourse; we who are godless could not think *our thoughts* in such surroundings. We wish to see *ourselves* translated into stones and plants, we want to take walks *in ourselves* when we stroll around these buildings and gardens (GS 280).

In short, for the middle period Nietzsche, Epicurus is a figure who has liberated himself from the fear and anxiety of existence and is capable of spiritual joyfulness that consists, in part, in the serene contemplation of the beauty and sublimity of things and a cultivation of simple, modest pleasures. Epicurus is a figure who was “true to the earth,” abandoning all hubristic conceptions of human significance, including exceptionalism, and who taught that one should die as if one had never lived. As Nietzsche astutely noted, never in the history of thought has such a voluptuous appreciation of existence been so modest.

Nietzsche on Epicurus in the middle period

With respect to the middle period Epicurus is important to any appreciation of Nietzsche's sources and influences because it is primarily from him that he gets the inspiration to detach from the first and last things and to devote attention to the closest things—and, moreover, to learn to know and accept, even embrace, the mortal conditions of human existence. These are some of the major concerns Nietzsche has in his middle period. What appeals to Nietzsche about Epicurus is the emphasis on a

refined egoism, the teaching on mortality, and the general attempt to liberate the mind from unjustified fears and anxieties. One of the earliest references to Epicureanism is an incidental remark in *Schopenhauer as Educator* where Nietzsche says that to write today in favor of an education that sets goals beyond money and acquisition, that takes a great deal of time, and also encourages solitude, is likely to be disparaged as “refined egoism” and “immoral cultural Epicureanism” (SE 6). Epicurus does not become an important component in Nietzsche’s philosophy until around 1879, and it is in these terms—refined egoism—that he draws on him again and becomes inspired by certain Epicurean notions and ideals. Indeed, at this time, he was inspired by Epicurus’s conception of friendship and the ideal of withdrawing from society and cultivating one’s own garden. In a letter to Peter 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” (KGB III, 1, 418). 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!”²⁴

If, as Pierre Hadot has suggested, philosophical therapeutics is centered on a concern with the healing of our own lives so as to return us to the joy of existing,²⁵ then in the texts of his middle period Nietzsche can be seen to be an heir to this ancient tradition. Indeed, if there is one crucial component to Nietzsche’s philosophical therapeutics in the texts of his middle period that he keeps returning to again and again it is the need for spiritual joyfulness and the task of cultivating in ourselves, after centuries of training by morality and religion, the joy in existing. In the final aphorism of *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, Nietzsche writes, for example:

Only the *ennobled human being* may be given freedom of spirit; to him alone does *alleviation of life* draw near and salve his wounds; only he may say that he lives for the sake of joy (*Freudigkeit*) and for the sake of no further goal . . . (WS 350)

The difference from Epicurus is that he is developing a therapy for the sicknesses of the soul under modern conditions of social control and discipline. Nevertheless, it is the case that Nietzsche at this time is seeking to revive an ancient conception of philosophy. In a note from 1881, he states that he considers the various moral schools of antiquity to be “experimental laboratories” containing a number of recipes for 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]). Nietzsche recognizes in Epicurus what he calls in one note a “refined heroism,” and here the thought seems to center on conquering the fear of death, of which Nietzsche says he has little of it (KSA 8, 28 [15]). For Epicurus, the study of nature should make human beings modest and self-sufficient, taking pride in the good that lies in themselves, not in their estate, and as opposed to the display of learning coveted by the rabble.²⁶ Indeed, Nietzsche admires Epicurus for cultivating a modest existence and in two respects: first, in having “spiritual joyfulness (*Freudigkeit*) in place of frequent indulgence in single pleasures” (KSA 8, 41 [48]), and, second, in withdrawing from social ambition and living in a garden as opposed to living publicly in the market-place.²⁷ As Nietzsche stresses, “A

little garden, figs, little cheeses and in addition three or four good friends – these were the sensual pleasures of Epicurus” (WS 192).²⁸ Nietzsche is appreciative of what one commentator has called the “refined asceticism” we find in Epicurus, which consists in the enjoyment of the smallest pleasures and the disposal of a diverse and delicate range of sensations.²⁹

In the middle period, then, Epicurus is an attractive figure for Nietzsche because of the emphasis on a modest lifestyle, the attention given to the care of self, and also because he conceives philosophy not as a theoretical discourse but one that, first and foremost, is a kind of practical activity aimed at the attainment of eudemonia or the flourishing life.³⁰ Nietzsche wants free spirits to take pleasure in existence, involving taking pleasure in themselves and in friendship, and in simple and modest living.

Nietzsche, then, is keen to encourage human beings to cultivate an attitude toward existence in which they accept their mortality and attain 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).³¹ As Pierre Hadot notes, for the Epicurean sage, the world is the product of chance, not divine intervention, and this brings with it pleasure and peace of mind, freeing him from an unreasonable fear of the gods and allowing him to consider each moment as an unexpected miracle. Each moment of existence can be greeted with immense gratitude.³² Indeed, as Graham Parkes has noted, Nietzsche expresses in his writings, especially *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, a kind of gratitude with respect to life that is “reminiscent of Epicurus,” with meditation cultivating “a keen appreciation of the ‘once-only’ character of existence in a radically contingent universe.”³³ Parkes cites from section 5 of “Old and New Law-Tablets” in *Zarathustra*: “Thus does the nature of noble souls wish it: they want to have nothing for free, and least of all life. Whoever is of the rabble wants to live for free: we others, however, to whom life has given itself – we are always wondering *what we can best give in return!*”

Epicurus's teaching is that gratitude should be our primary attitude toward life and a result of our acceptance and recognition of life's essentially finite character. We are to accord value to the slightest moment of existence.³⁴ As Hadot has pointed out, Epicurus's teaching seeks to transform our relationship to time, in which we become focused on the present moment, and this transformation presupposes a quite specific conception of pleasure, “according to which the quality of pleasure depends neither on the quantity of desires it satisfies, nor on the length of time it lasts.”³⁵ As Guyau notes, true pleasure bears its infinity within itself, and as Nietzsche teaches the time of the moment is “eternity,” an eternity reclaimed “for the fair earth,” as Herbert Marcuse put it.³⁶ According to Hadot, the secret of Epicurean joy and serenity is to live each instant as if it were the last, but also as if it were the first. In this way we, “experience the same grateful astonishment when we accept the instant as though it were unexpected, or by greeting it as entirely new . . .”³⁷ (225). Metrodorus memorably expressed the wisdom one might acquire by living the Epicurean life: “Remember that, born a mortal, with a limited life-span, you have risen up in soul to eternity and the infinity of things, and that you have seen all that has been and all that shall be.”³⁸

In *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, Nietzsche describes Epicurus as “the soul-soother (*Seelen-Beschwichtiger*) of later antiquity.” He had the “wonderful insight” that to quieten

our being it is not necessary to have resolved the ultimate and outermost theoretical questions (WS 7). To those who are tormented by the fear of the gods, one points out that if the gods exist, they do not concern themselves with us and that it is unnecessary to engage in “fruitless disputation” over the ultimate question as to whether they exist or not. Furthermore, in response to the consideration of a hypothesis, half belonging to physics and half to ethics, and that may cast gloom over our spirits, it is wise to refrain from refuting the hypothesis and instead offer a rival hypothesis, even a multiplicity of hypotheses. To someone who wishes to offer consolation—for example, to the unfortunate, to ill-doers, to hypochondriacs, and so on—one can call to mind two pacifying formulae of Epicurus that are capable of being applied to many questions: “firstly, if that is how things are they do not concern us; secondly, things may be thus but they may also be otherwise” (WS 7).

In the middle period, then, Epicurus is one of Nietzsche's chief inspirations in his effort to liberate himself from the metaphysical need, to find serenity within his own existence, and to aid humanity in its need to now cure its neuroses. Epicureanism, along with science in general, serves to make us “colder and more sceptical,” helping to cool down “the fiery stream of belief in ultimate definitive truths,” a stream that has grown so turbulent through Christianity (HH 244). The task, Nietzsche says, is to live in terms of “a constant spiritual joyfulness (*Freudigkeit*)” (HH 292) and to prize “the three good things”: greatness, repose, and sunlight, in which these things answer to thoughts that elevate, thoughts that quieten, thoughts that enlighten, and, finally, “to thoughts which participate in all three qualities, in which everything earthly comes to transfiguration: it is the kingdom where there reigns the great *trinity of joy* (*Freude*)” (WS 332).

Care of self

It is also from Epicurus that Nietzsche gets the inspiration to give up on what he calls the first and last things, the questions of a theologically inspired metaphysics, and devote attention to the closest things. Nietzsche has made this decision in 1878–9, and it provides the context for much of what it follows in the free spirit works of the middle period. Let me outline some of its features. Before I do, let me simply note that I think in making this decision Nietzsche is, in fact, reviving the antique conception of ethics as centered on a care of self. Foucault contends that in Greek ethics we find a focus on moral conduct, on relations to oneself and others, rather than a focus on religious problems such as what is our fate after death? What are the gods and do they intervene in life or not? For the Greeks, Foucault argues, these were not significant problems and not directly related to conduct. What they were concerned about was to constitute an ethics that was an “aesthetics of existence.”³⁹

In modern culture we can detect, Nietzsche writes, a “feigned disrespect for all the things which human beings in fact take most seriously, *for all the things closest to them*” (WS 5). As Ruth Abbey notes, in devaluing the small, worldly matters Christian and post-Christian sensibility, “puts people at war with themselves and forbids a close study of which forms of care of the self would be most conducive to individual flourishing.”⁴⁰

As Nietzsche notes, most people see the closest things badly and rarely pay heed to them, while “*almost all the physical and psychical frailties of the individual derive from this lack . . . being unknowledgeable in the smallest and everyday things and failing to keep an eye on them - this it is that transforms the earth for so many into a ‘vale of tears’*” (WS 6). Our understanding of existence is diverted away from the smallest and closest things:

Priests and teachers, and the sublime lust for power of idealists of every description . . . hammer even into children that what matters is something quite different: the salvation of the soul, the service of the state, the advancement of science, or the accumulation of reputation and possessions, all as the means of doing service to mankind as a whole; while the requirements of the individual, his great and small needs within the twenty four hours of the day, are to be regarded as something contemptible or a matter of indifference. (WS 6)

Nietzsche notes that our greatness does not crumble away all at once but through continual neglect:

. . . the little vegetation that grows in between everything and understands how to cling everywhere, this is what ruins what is great in us – the quotidian, hourly pitifulness of our environment that goes overlooked, the thousand tiny tendrils of this or that small and small-minded feeling growing out of our neighborhood, our job, the company we keep, the division of our day. If we allow these small weeds to grow unwittingly, then unwittingly they will destroy us! (D 435)

The closest things are those things which are overlooked or even disparaged by priests and metaphysicians who devote all their time and energy to the care of the soul. They include things like eating and diet, housing, clothing, and social intercourse. These should all be made the object of constant impartial and general reflection and reform. Nietzsche argues: “Our continual offences against the most elementary laws of the body and the spirit reduce us all . . . to a disgraceful dependence and bondage . . . on physicians, teachers and curers of soul who lie like a burden on the whole of society” (WS 5). All the physical and psychical frailties of the individual derive from a lack of knowledge about the smallest and most everyday things, such as what is beneficial to us and what is harmful to us in the institution of our mode of life, in the division of the day, eating, sleeping, and reflecting, and so on (WS 6).

Nietzsche insists that we do not require certainties with regard to the first and last things—what he calls “the furthest horizon”—in order to live a “full and excellent human life” (WS 16). He proposes a fundamental rupture be affected with regard to customary habits of thinking. In the face of questions such as, what is the purpose of man? What is his fate after death? How can man be reconciled with God? It should not be felt necessary to develop knowledge against faith; rather we should practice an indifference toward faith and supposed knowledge in the domains of metaphysics and religion. From this Epicurean-inspired demotion of metaphysics, he proposes the following as a principle of the new life: “life should be ordered on the basis of what is most certain and most demonstrable, not as hitherto on that what is most remote,

indefinite, and no more than a cloud on the horizon" (WS 310). This concern with the small things and "casuistry of selfishness" continues well into the late Nietzsche, with Nietzsche writing in *Ecce Homo* that "nutrition, place, climate, recreation" are "inconceivably more important than everything one has taken to be important to date," and here it is necessary to relearn (EH II: 10).

An Epicurean attachment to life

It is important that we appreciate the distinctive character the enjoyment of life has for the Epicurean. This is what I want to focus on in this section of the chapter.

In the letter to Menoeceus, Epicurus seeks to identify what the study of philosophy can do for the health of the soul and on the premise that, "pleasure is the starting-point and goal of living blessedly."⁴¹ Epicurus stresses that he does not mean the pleasures of the profligate or of consumption; rather, the task is to become accustomed to simple, nonextravagant ways of living. Although Epicurus regards *voluptas* as the highest good, in which we can take delight in all that nature has provided to stimulate pleasure, it is an error to suppose that for him happiness is to be found "simply in eating, drinking, gambling, wenching, and other such pastimes."

⁴²Nietzsche seems to have fully appreciated this point. The key goal for Epicurus is to liberate the body from pain and remove disturbances from the soul. Central to his counsel is the thought that we need to accustom ourselves to believing that death is nothing to us; our longing for immortality needs to be removed: "... there is nothing fearful in life for one who has grasped that there is nothing fearful in the absence of life."⁴³ What appears to be the most frightening of bad things should be nothing to us, "since when we exist, death is not yet present, and when death is present, then we do not exist."⁴⁴ The wise human being "neither rejects life nor fears death. For living does not offend him, nor does he believe not living to be something bad."⁴⁵ If, as Epicurus supposes, everything good and bad consists in sense-experience, then death is simply the privation of sense-experience. The goal of philosophical training, then, is freedom from disturbance and anxiety in which we reach a state of *ataraxia* or psychic tranquility: the body is free from pain and the soul is liberated from distress.

But is Epicureanism a philosophy of life-affirmation, or does it simply depict a universe of atoms and the void that is indifferent to life and in which freedom consists in little more than attaining a contemplative tranquility with respect to this fact? As James Porter notes, life has no intrinsic value for Epicurus, but does this mean that life is an indifferent for him?⁴⁶ When viewed from a third-person point of view, that is, the cosmological one (of atoms and the void), then life has no claim on us; rather, it discloses to us that "we are nothing more than physical entities, mere fortuitous combinations of matter which reduce to their elements upon disbanding."⁴⁷ From the viewpoint of nature, then, life is an indifferent. The matter changes, Porter argues, when we view things from a first-person perspective on life, that is, the world of sensations, desires, and needs, or of nature in its human aspect. Here we find that life by definition is not indifferent but a meaningful source of value. As Porter puts

it, the issue facing the Epicurean philosopher “is to decide just what this value is and where it lies.”⁴⁸ The argument is that life is a source of human pleasure and thus of moral happiness, involving a strong attachment. Porter argues that once we connect pleasure to life, it is possible to show that Epicurus has a philosophy of life in addition to a philosophy of death and that, in fact, it is this emphasis on life and not death that dominates his writings.

Porter goes on to note that the “apparent pessimism” of the doctrine “clashes with the joy and even fascination with life” that are found in the Epicurean perception of the world.⁴⁹ The task is to account for this disparity and the question to focus on is that of what makes creatures cling to life and remain attached to it. We can rule out, he thinks, the fear of death since such a fear produces phantasms of life (such as ideas of the afterlife) and does not prolong or propagate life itself. He thinks that love of life, in the form of an attachment to life, precedes the fear of death, operating at a primitive level of psychic attachment, and may even precede what he takes to be the most primitive root fear present in the fear of death, that of the fear of the blank void or *horror vacui*. Furthermore, it cannot be supposed that what makes us cling to life is constant novelty since this seems to be a consequence of the love of life and not its cause. The Epicurean affirmation of life, the practice of its love, consists in attending to and enjoying the present feelings or sensations of life, that is, living in the here and now without desire and expectation and in a condition of gratitude. As Porter puts it, “To love life is to be in an unqualified state of affirmation about what lies most immediately to hand: it is the pleasure, the unalloyed passion, and even thrill, of living itself.”⁵⁰ For Epicurus, then, a correct understanding of our mortality is one that should lead to the enjoyment of this mortal life. The Epicurean love of life “is a love of mortal life and not a love of life abstracted from death, much less of immortal life.”⁵¹ Moreover, this Epicurean love of life is not a longing for life, but “rather an immediate expression of what is dear about life, what is most life worthy in life,” and which makes it something fragile and easily ruptured.⁵²

We are perhaps now in a position perhaps to grasp something of the special nature of Epicurean pleasure. As Porter states, “what an Epicurean enjoys is not some pleasure that is distinct from life, but life *qua* pleasure.”⁵³ Epicurus does not, then “disdain life” and has little truck with the pessimist who maintains, as he puts it in his letter to Menoeceus, it is good not to be born and once born to pass through the gates of Hades as quickly as possible.⁵⁴ A key point to appreciate is that pleasure is not simply bound up with moral hedonism but also with an epistemology: “as a criterion of truth, as one of the *pathê* by which we feel our way through the world.”⁵⁵ In contrast to pain, which causes us to shrink back from the world, pleasure draws us to it: it is both congenital and congenial.⁵⁶ The Epicurean state of mind (*ataraxy*) is best described as one of “stable (*katastematic*) pleasure,” and, furthermore, as the “basal experience of pleasure” on account of it being the criterion of all pleasure. In this sense, then, it is more than a condition of simple or mere happiness: “it seems to operate as life’s internal formal principle, as that which gives moral sense and shape to a life that is lived . . .”⁵⁷

As Porter incisively brings out, the theory of pleasure we find in Epicurus is minimalist in that the highest kind of pleasure consists not in seeking out a range of

pleasures but rather focusing on a single kind of pleasure and that presents the fewest possible requirements, and hence his theory of autarky or self-sufficiency. Moreover, experiencing this stable or static pleasure is not a matter of “the defection of pain” (of having painless sensory pleasures), as this would amount to a solely negative definition.⁵⁸ As Porter puts it, it is rather the case that “pleasure is the removal, by subtraction, of pain . . . and then the discovery of what is left once that removal has been made.”⁵⁹ He maintains that what is left is a positive pleasure in its own right and that does not amount to a merely painless sensory pleasure but is a purer and higher form of pleasure. He adds that this discovery “may bring joy and delight, but these are contingent pleasures of a kinetic kind, caused by an underlying pleasure of a stable kind, which is ataraxic and valuable in and of itself.”⁶⁰ Bliss or ataraxy, then, involves a rediscovery of this primary form of pleasure and it is what is perceived once all pain has been removed: it is life experienced in a moment of special intensity. In its higher form, then, pleasure is not a desire, and curiously perhaps, not a desire for pleasure: to want pleasure is to perceive a lack, but in the experience of tranquility one lacks nothing.⁶¹

What does it mean to live well for Epicurus? Porter answers this question exquisitely, so let me cite him:

Its lesson is simple and basic: it is that we ought to cultivate an attentiveness to ourselves and to the world, which is to say to redirect our bodies and minds away from pain, not so much in the direction of pleasure as in a direction *away from pain*, with this redirection constituting our pleasure. The redescription of pain as painless or indifferent, achieved pragmatically through intense mental focusing, disposes us . . . to the Epicurean virtues: to pleasure, happiness, justice, piety, and friendship . . . To be virtuous just is to experience a precious attachment to the world and to its highest reality.⁶²

Before we move back to Nietzsche, a final point is worth making and this concerns Epicurus's so-called hedonism. As Porter points out, Epicurus comes to value pleasure owing to his affirmative philosophy of life. Hedonism is Epicurus's “wager that life on balance will prove more attractive than death,” and it is for this reason that pleasure resides at the centre of his thinking: “it would be a mistake to say that Epicurus entertains the value of life to the extent he does just because he is a hedonist. The truth is the other way round: Epicurus is a hedonist just because he believes at some level in the moral value of living. What Epicurus enjoys is not some pleasure that is distinct from life, but life *qua* pleasure.”⁶³

Nietzsche appreciated the special quality of Epicurean pleasure. In *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, he depicts an idyllic scene entitled “*Et in Arcadia ego*,” involving looking down “over waves of hills, through fir-trees and spruce trees grave with age, towards a milky green lake” (WS 295). While cattle graze on their own and gather in groups, the narrator of the aphorism experiences “everything at peace in the contentment of evening.” While looking upon the herders in the field, he witnesses mountain slopes and snowfields to the left and, high above him, to the right two gigantic ice-covered peaks that seem to float in a veil of sunlit vapor: “everything big, still and bright” (ibid.). The beauty of the whole scene induces in him an experience of the sublime, “a sense

of awe and of adoration of the moment of its revelation"; involuntarily, as if completely natural, he inserts "into this pure, clear world of light," free of desire and expectation, with no looking before or behind, Hellenic heroes, and he compares the feeling to that of Poussin and his pupil (probably Claude Lorrain), at one and the same time heroic and idyllic, noting to himself that some human beings have actually *lived* in accordance with this experience, having "enduringly *felt* they existed in the world and the world existed in them" (ibid.).⁶⁴ Epicurus is singled out for special mention. As one commentator notes, for Nietzsche, the idyll is not in any inaccessible celestial heavens but belongs in this world and is within our reach, and what takes place after death does not concern us anymore.⁶⁵ Nietzsche writes: "An unspeakable blessing . . . and once again, Epicurus triumphs!" (D 72)

Nietzsche finds in Epicurus a victory over pessimism in which "death becomes the last celebration of a life which is constantly embellished"⁶⁶ (Roos 2000: 299). This last of the Greek philosophers "teaches the joy of living in the midst of a world in decay and where all moral doctrines preach suffering."⁶⁷ As Roos puts it, "The example of Epicurus teaches that a life filled with pain and renunciation prepares one to savour the little joys of the everyday better. Relinquishing Dionysian intoxication, Nietzsche becomes a student of this master of moderate pleasures and careful dosages."⁶⁸ Roos asks what I think is the decisive question concerning this appropriation of Epicurus: can this teaching fill the void left by the loss of faith, the abandonment of Schopenhauer, and the renunciation of Dionysian music? His answer to the question is incisive: "he clings to Epicurus and his consolations with a vigour proportional to the violence of the Christian temptation."⁶⁹ In Epicurus, Nietzsche discovers what Roos calls aptly an "irresistible power" and a rare strength of spirit and quotes Nietzsche from 1880: "I found strength in the very places one does not look for it, in simple, gentle and helpful men . . . powerful natures dominate, that is a necessity, even if those men do not move one finger. And they bury themselves, in their lifetime, in a pavilion in their garden" (KSA 9, 6 [206]).⁷⁰

An ecological Nietzsche?

I think that an appreciation of Nietzsche's Epicurean care of self (and world) is relevant to engaging with the debates on Nietzsche and ecology. There has been a lively set of debates in the literature concerning Nietzsche's credentials as an ecological thinker with those in favor arguing that both his lifestyle and his naturalistic way of thinking make him a forerunner of ecological ideas, and with skeptics insisting that his focus is on aristocratic self-cultivation, not the fate of the planet. I do not want to enter directly into this debate here but would argue instead that we need to follow an Epicurean lead. We need to discover this Epicurean-inspired Nietzsche for ourselves and in part as a way of contesting Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche which focuses on the late writings, mostly the *Nachlass*, and construes all the major concepts of the late period, notably the will to power and the overman, as indicating that Nietzsche is the "technological" thinker of our age.⁷¹ In an essay on Nietzsche and ecology, Michael Zimmerman follows Heidegger in focusing on the late Nietzsche and argues that he does not share

the anti-anthropocentrism and asceticism of the environmentalist movement and that his main concern is “how to avoid degeneration and *nihilism*, not how to avoid environmental destruction and *ecocide*.”⁷² Furthermore, he thinks that Heidegger offers “a plausible, though controversial, reading of Nietzsche’s Overman as heralding the culmination of 2,500 years of metaphysics, which takes the form of technological domination of the planet.”⁷³

My view is that we need a much more subtle and nuanced appreciation of Nietzsche than this Heideggerian reading permits, and one way to develop this is to focus on the neglected middle period of Nietzsche’s writings. It is here, I believe, that we find rich resources for recognizing a Nietzschean commitment to ecology. The historian of ancient ecological thought J. Donald Hughes has argued that Epicurean philosophy, especially evident in the work of Lucretius, asked questions that are now regarded as ecological, including alluding to air pollution due to mining and the disappearance of forests, as well as arguing that human beings are not radically distinct from animals.⁷⁴ The Epicurean philosophy of nature, with its principle of conservation—nothing is created by divine power out of nothing and nature never reduces anything to nothing—thus tends toward an ecological mode of thinking.⁷⁵ Let me make clear that I think it is anachronistic to state that Nietzsche is, as Laurence Lampert has claimed, following Max Hallman, a “deep ecologist.”⁷⁶ Moreover, there is no, as we might put it, “politics” of ecology to be found in Nietzsche. If anything Nietzsche recommends at this time, social withdrawal, even isolation, and on this point, he adheres to Epicurean principles (see GS 338).⁷⁷ We have to acknowledge that there are limits to any use we can make of Nietzsche for the ends of an ecological-centered politics: his thinking is too complex and contradictory to serve as the basis for a programmatic ecological philosophy.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, I think there is to be found within the writings what one might call an “ecological” conscience and this conscience informs his new appreciation of nature, a nature that has been de-deified and that requires the “naturalization” of humanity (GS 109).

Let me list what I see as some of Nietzsche’s principal “ecological” concerns in his middle period writings:

- A critique of commercial society and an emerging consumer culture.
- A commitment to stable pleasures and mental equilibrium over the need for *constant* change.
- An attempt to live free of the delusions of human exceptionalism, and free from the gods, especially the fear of the gods.
- An emphasis on a therapy of slowness and the *vita contemplativa*, including a tempering of the human mind in order to liberate it from moral and religious fanaticism.
- The search for a simpler and cleaner existence purified of the metaphysical need with an attention to the importance of the closest things.
- A care of self that is intended to be coextensive with the whole of life, suggesting an ecological rather than atomistic approach to the art of living.

My contention, then, is that if Nietzsche is to be claimed for ecological thinking, it can be done wisely on the basis of his Epicurean attachments and inspirations.

Conclusion

The evaluation of Epicurus we find in the late Nietzsche stands in marked contrast to the appreciation we find in his free spirit period. In Nietzsche's late writings, from *Beyond Good and Evil* onward, Epicurus becomes a much more ambivalent figure for Nietzsche. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he refers to both Epicureanism and Christianity as offering a medicine that tranquilizes (BGE 200), while in the *Genealogy*, he 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 promise of the absence of suffering (GM III. 17). In the middle period, however, Epicurus is deployed, at least in part, as a way of breaking with fanatical enthusiasms and intoxications, including quite possibly Nietzsche's own early Dionysian ones. The serene teaching of Epicurus provides Nietzsche with one way of shedding his previous skin, that of *The Birth of Tragedy*, and now conducting the patient labor of self-analysis and self-cultivation as a therapy of body and soul. For the middle period Nietzsche, Epicurus is the philosopher who affirms the moment, having neither resentment toward the past nor fear of the future.⁷⁹ Moreover, he teaches us the value of self-sufficiency and his cultivation of a refined egoism greatly appeals to Nietzsche. The late Nietzsche is marked by the explicit return of Dionysus in his thinking and this seems to influence his reception of Epicurus, giving rise to the contrast between "Epicurean delight" and "Dionysian joy."⁸⁰

In his middle period, Nietzsche portrays an Epicurus that represents an alternative model to his later configuration of Dionysian joy, the importance of which perhaps the extreme pathos of his last years blinded him to. In the middle period, Epicurus is prized as one of those rare souls who remain true to the earth by demythologizing nature, embracing human mortality, and accepting human nonexceptionalism. What Nietzsche does seem ambivalent about in the course of his writings is the kind of "happiness" symbolized by Epicurean delight. Sometime he depicts this, as in GS 45, as a happiness that is hard-won, conscious of its precarious character, and inseparable from suffering: the sea of existence has become calm but, as one commentator has put it, "its continued calmness cannot be guaranteed, and the 'shuddering skin of the sea' is a constant reminder of the turmoil that may return."⁸¹ At other times, especially in his late writings, he depicts it as a form of tranquility, a kind of Schopenhauerian release from the turmoil of existence and the cravings of the will. When he reads it in these terms, it is viewed as an expression of decadence.

Let me end by returning to the portrait of Epicurus we encounter in the beautiful aphorism from *The Gay Science*. The scene Nietzsche depicts is one of Epicurean illumination or enlightenment: Epicurus is not estranged from nature and recognizes his kinship with animals and the elements of nature. Rather than deploying his contemplation of the sea to bolster his own ego (thinking of his own safety or taking pride in fearlessness), Epicurus abandons his sense of self altogether so that he can open himself up to the sea of existence, and perhaps here we find an alternative to Dionysian ecstasy, entailing a more peaceful and less grandiose loss of the self into the *Ur-Eine*. Unlike Christ, Epicurus does not walk on the water but floats serenely on the sea, buoyed up by it and even cradled by it, happy with the gifts life has to offer, and

existing beyond fear and anxiety even though he is opening himself up to troubling realities, such as the approach of death and his personal extinction: "We are born once and cannot be born twice, but we must be no more for all time."⁸²

AQ: Since notes only provided in this chapter can we change the heading as "Notes"

Notes and References

- 1 This chapter has been greatly inspired by the work of Horst Hutter and Michael Ure, and I am indebted to both. For comments and feedback that enabled me to improve this chapter, I am indebted to Daniel W. Conway, Beatrice Han-Pile, Rainer J. Hanshe, Lawrence J. Hatab, and Michael Ure. Thanks also to Andreas Urs-Sommer for supplying me with references to Nietzsche on Epicurus in the German and French scholarship, and to Frank Chouraqui for assisting me with the translations of the chapter from French version written by Richard Roos.
- 2 The other three pairs are: Goethe and Spinoza, Plato and Rousseau, and Pascal and Schopenhauer.
- 3 According to Julian Young WS "is impregnated by Epicurean philosophy," *Friedrich Nietzsche. A Philosophical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 281.
- 4 On philosophy and the heroic, see also GS 324.
- 5 Catherine Wilson, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity* (Oxford: New York, Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 37.
- 6 Howard Caygill, "Under the Epicurean Skies," *Angelaki* II(3), (2006): 107–115, 107.
- 7 Liba Taub, "Cosmology and meteorology," in James Warren (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 105–24, 124.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 105.
- 9 Jean-Marie Guyau, *La Morale D'Epicure* (Paris: Librairie Gerner Baillière, 1878), p. 280.
- 10 See Nietzsche's letter to Carl von Gersdorff of enf of August 1866, in Christopher Middleton (ed.), *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996), pp. 18–19.
- 11 F. A. Lange, *The History of Materialism* (London: Kegan Paul, 1925), First Book, 103.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 102. See also Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, trans. R. E. Latham (Middlesex; Penguin, 1994), p. 39: "All life is a struggle in the dark . . . This dread and darkness of the mind cannot be dispelled by the sunbeams, and the shining shafts of day, but only by an understanding of the outward form and inner workings of nature."
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 112.
- 14 Lange notes, astutely I think, that Epicurus's reverence for the gods is not a case of hypocrisy; it is, rather, that they, as "careless and painless" ones, represent "an incarnated ideal of his philosophy," namely, being in a condition free from pain (*ibid.*, p. 101). There is thus no real contradiction between his reverence for the gods and his general attack on the fears and superstitions of the mind. As Lange puts it: "Thus Epikuros could at once impart a flavour of piety to his life, and still make the central point of his philosophy the effort to win that calmness of the soul which finds its only immovable foundation in deliverance from foolish superstitions" (*ibid.*).
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 121.

- 16 Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times: A Study of Bacon, Descartes, and Nietzsche* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 423.
- 17 Ibid., p. 427.
- 18 Ibid., p. 426.
- 19 Ibid., p. 423.
- 20 Monika M. Langer, *Nietzsche's Gay Science: Dancing Coherence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 67.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), pp. 99–103. I am grateful to Beatrice Han-Pile for suggesting this use of Heidegger to illuminate the section.
- 24 See letter to Peter Gast, August 26, 1883, in Oscar Levy (ed.), *Friedrich Nietzsche: Selected Letters*, trans. A. N. Ludovici (London: Soho Book Company, 1985), p. 164.
- 25 Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995), p. 87.
- 26 Epicurus, "Vatican Sayings," no. 45.
- 27 See Julian Young, *Friedrich Nietzsche. A Philosophical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 279.
- 28 Young describes the asceticism advocated by Epicurus as a "eudaemonic asceticism," which is clearly very different to ascetic practices of world denial and self-denial. Young, 2010, p. 279.
- 29 Richard Roos, "Nietzsche et Épicure: l'idylle héroïque," in Jean-François Balaudé and Patrick Wotling (eds), *Lectures de Nietzsche* (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2000), pp. 283–350, 298.
- 30 For further insight, see Young, 2010, pp. 279–81.
- 31 On Epicurus on fear and chance, see Hadot, 1995, 87, 223, and 252. See also A. A. Long, "Chance and laws of nature in Epicureanism," in Long, *From Epicurus to Epictetus: Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 157–78.
- 32 Hadot, 1995, p. 252.
- 33 Graham Parkes, "Nature and the human 'redivinised': Mahāyāna Buddhist themes in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*," in John Lippitt and James Urpeth (eds), *Nietzsche and the Divine* (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2000), pp. 181–99, 195.
- 34 Hadot, 1995, p. 222.
- 35 Ibid., p. 223.
- 36 Marcuse, 1987, p. 123.
- 37 Hadot, 1995, p. 225.
- 38 Ibid., p. 226.
- 39 Michel Foucault, "On The Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of work in progress," in Foucault, *Ethics: The essential works 1*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley & others (Harmondsworth, Penguin 1997), p. 255.
- 40 Ruth Abbey, *Nietzsche's Middle Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 99.
- 41 Epicurus, in Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson (eds), *The Epicurus Reader* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), p. 30.
- 42 Howard Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 152.
- 43 *The Epicurus Reader*, p. 29.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Ibid.

- 46 James I. Porter, "Epicurean Attachments: Life, Pleasure, Beauty, Friendship, and Piety," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 33(2003): 205–27, 206.
- 47 Ibid., p. 207.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Ibid., p. 211.
- 50 Ibid., p. 212.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Ibid., p. 213.
- 54 Epicurus, *The Epicurus Reader*, p. 29.
- 55 Porter, 2003, p. 214.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Ibid., pp. 214 and 218.
- 58 Ibid., p. 216.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Ibid. On the distinction between katastematic (stable) and kinetic (transient and episodic) pleasures, see Raphael Woolf, "Pleasure and desire," in Warren, 2009, pp. 158–78, 170–7. On the status of "joy" (*khara*) in Epicurus's account of the emotions, see David Konstan, *A Life Worthy of the Gods: The Materialist Psychology of Epicurus* (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2008), chapter one, especially 13–18. According to Konstan, it is best not to confuse *khara* with the goal of philosophy, which is described as either as *hêdonê* (the absence of feeling pain in the body or disturbance in the soul) or as *ataraxia* (freedom from perturbation), and with the former being a kinetic activity, the latter a katastematic pleasure.
- 61 Ibid., p. 217.
- 62 Ibid., p. 225.
- 63 Ibid., p. 226.
- 64 One might even see in this contemplation of nature, where all is peace and calm and where we have moved beyond "desire and expectation," something of Schopenhauer's ideas on art, including the release from the subjectivity of the will and the attainment of "objectivity" or pure perception. Schopenhauer, in fact, depicted such a state in Epicurean terms: "Then all at once the peace, always sought but always escaping us on that first path of willing, comes to us of its own accord, and all is well with us. It is the painless state, prized by Epicurus as the highest good and as the state of the gods; for that moment we are delivered from the miserable pressure of the will." Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, in two volumes, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Press, 1966), volume one, section 38, 196. See also Schopenhauer on the "aesthetic delight" to be had from the experience of light: "Light is most pleasant and delightful; it has become the symbol of all that is good and salutary," 199. For further insight into Nietzsche's "Epicurus" as mediated by Schopenhauer, see Fritz Bornmann, "Nietzsches Epikur," *Nietzsche-Studien* 13 (1984); and Andrea Christian Bertino, "Nietzsche und die hellenistische Philosophie: Der Übermensch und der Weise," *Nietzsche-Studien* 36 (2007). See also Roos 2000, p. 293. Roos also notes the influence of Montaigne and Jacob Burckhardt on Nietzsche's appreciation of Epicurus.
- 65 Roos 2000, p. 322.
- 66 Ibid., p. 299.
- 67 Ibid., p. 301.
- 68 Ibid., 309.

- 69 Ibid., p. 333.
- 70 Ibid., p. 300.
- 71 Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead,'" in Heidegger (ed.), *The Question Concerning Technology & Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 53–112, especially 83–4, 96–101. For Heidegger Nietzsche's philosophy of the will to power and overman is part of the history of metaphysics conceived as the history of subjectness. He thus writes in his reflection on the word of Nietzsche: "Man, within the subjectness belonging to whatever is, rises up into the subjectivity of his essence . . . The world changes into object. In this revolutionary objectifying of everything that is, the earth, that which first of all must be put at the disposal of representing and setting forth, moves into the midst of human positing and analyzing. The earth itself can show itself only as the object of an assault, an assault that, in human willing, establishes itself as unconditional objectification. Nature appears everywhere – because willed from out of the essence of Being – as the object of technology" (100).
- 72 Michael E. Zimmerman, "Nietzsche and Ecology: A Critical Inquiry," in Steven V. Hicks and Alan Rosenberg (eds), *Reading Nietzsche at the Margins* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008), pp. 165–86, 167.
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 See J. Donald Hughes, *Pan's Travail: Environmental Problems of the Ancient Greeks and Romans* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994). Cited in John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), p. 37.
- 75 See Foster, *Marx's Ecology*, pp. 35, 37.
- 76 Lampert 1993, p. 279. See Max O. Hallman, "Nietzsche's Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 13 (1991): 99–125. For a critique of Hallman, see Ralph R. Acampora, "Using and Abusing Nietzsche for Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 16 (1994): 186–94. For a response to Acampora see Graham Parkes, "Nietzsche's Environmental Philosophy: A Trans-European Perspective," *Environmental Ethics* 27(1), (2005): 77–91. Inspired by Lampert, Parkes has written that Nietzsche's philosophy of nature "qualifies him as one of the most powerful ecological thinkers of the modern period." See Parkes, "Staying Loyal to the Earth: Nietzsche as an Ecological Thinker," in John Lippitt (ed.), *Nietzsche's Futures* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 167–88, 167.
- 77 On the Epicurean avoidance of political activity, see Eric Brown, "Politics and Society," in James Warren (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 179–97, especially 180–2.
- 78 This is a point noted by Lane and Clark in their consideration of *Rousseau's* importance for deep ecology. See Joseph H. Lane and Rebecca R. Clark, "The Solitary Walker in the Political World: The Paradoxes of Rousseau and Deep Ecology," *Political Theory* 34(1), (2006): 62–94, 83.
- 79 Howard Caygill, "The Consolation of Philosophy; or neither Dionysus nor the Crucified," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 7(1994): 131–51, 144.
- 80 For insight into the disappearance and reappearance of Dionysus in Nietzsche's writings, see Adrian Del Caro, "Nietzschean self-transformation and the transformation of the Dionysian," in Salim Kemal, Ivan Gaskell and Daniel W. Conway (eds), *Nietzsche, philosophy, and the arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 70–92. He maintains that a transformed Dionysian surfaces around the time of *Dawn* and gains in concreteness throughout the 1880s, "closely associated

- with Nietzsche's disavowal of metaphysics, and with his articulation of the major tenets of life-affirmation . . ." (73). Furthermore, "No longer an artistic deity or an aesthetic principle by 1880, the Dionysian became a hypostatization for the life-affirming individual, and it transformed as Nietzsche himself transformed" (83).
- 81 Richard Bett, "Nietzsche, the Greeks, and Happiness (with special reference to Aristotle and Epicurus)," *Philosophical Topics* 33(2), (2005): 45–70, 63.
- 82 Epicurus, "Vatican Sayings," p. 14.

Editions of Nietzsche used

- A *The Anti-Christ*, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- AOM *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- BGE *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Marion Faber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
- BT *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- D *Dawn: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. Brittain Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).
- EH *Ecce Homo*, trans. Duncan Large (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- GM *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- GS *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974).
- HH *Human, all too Human*, volume one, trans. Gary Handwerk (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
- KGB *Nietzsche Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Eds. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1981).
- KSA *Friedrich Nietzsche: Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, Eds. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin and New York/Munich: dtv and Walter de Gruyter, 1967–77 and 1998).
- WP *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1968).
- WS *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).