

NIETZSCHE'S EARTH: THE GROUND OF VALUATION IN *THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA*

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I discuss the place of the notion of "earth" (Erde) in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Nietzsche imagines a culture that is profoundly loyal to the earth, to becoming, to the concrete reality and says no to any otherworldly aspirations. At the center of this culture lies an emphasis on love, more specifically on a procreative eros. For Nietzsche, modernity represents an enormous violence exerted on body and on creative life energies, which actually proves to be a self-violence whose presupposition is a culture based on an unbounded faith in rationality, of rational explicability of reality (earth), which Nietzsche associates with the priority accorded to truth itself in the Western tradition. Nietzsche, however, envisages an earth-minded humanity serving the meaning of the earth and places this in opposition to the alienation of modernity.

Keywords: Earth, Culture, Eros, Rationality, Modernity, Valuation, Truth.

NIETZSCHE'NİN ARZI: BÖYLE BUYURDU ZERDÜŞT'TE DEĞERLEMENİN ZEMİNİ

ÖZ

Bu makalede Nietzsche'nin Böyle Buyurdu Zerdüşt adlı eserinde arz (Erde) kavramının yerini mütalaa ediyorum. Nietzsche arza, olagelişe, somut realiteye tümüyle sadık ve öte-dünyacı heves ve temayüllere hayır diyen bir kültür hayal etmektedir. Bu kültürün merkezinde aşka, daha spesifik olarak prokreatif eros'a yapılan bir vurgu yatmaktadır. Nietzsche'ye göre, modernite bedene ve yaratıcı yaşam enerjisine yöneltilmiş muazzam bir şiddeti temsil etmektedir. Bu gerçekte insanın kendine yönelttiği bir şiddettir, temeli ise rasyonaliteye, gerçekliğin (arz) rasyonel açıklanabilirliğine yönelik sınırsız bir inançtır. Nietzsche Batı geleneğinde hakikate izafe edilen önceliği bu tutumla birlikte ele alır. Nietzsche, buna mukabil, arzın anlamına hizmet eden arz-bilinçli bir beşeriyet tasavvur etmekte ve bunu modern yabancılaşmanın karşısına yerleştirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arz, Kültür, Eros, Rasyonalite, Modernite, Değerleme, Hakikat.

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In the initial pages of *Zarathustra*¹ we hear a whole-hearted call:

I beseech you, my brothers, *remain faithful to the earth* and do not believe those who speak to you of extraterrestrial hopes! They are mixers of poisons whether they know it or not." (TSZ I, 6)

The call is repeated later towards the end of the first part:

Remain faithful to the earth, my brothers, with the power of your virtue! Let your bestowing love and your knowledge serve the meaning of the earth! Thus I beg and beseech you. (TSZ I, 57)

This somewhat prophetic call, one might argue, determines the whole tone and tenor of the work. But to appreciate this one needs first to get clear about the earth as Nietzsche understands it. How does Nietzsche conceive of the earth? Nietzsche's notion of the earth is quite fundamental to the philosophical vision played out in *Zarathustra*. Indeed, the work is full of indications and allusions to the earth, and usually in the critical places of its flowing. So, a discussion of Nietzsche's notion of the earth will be helpful for making better sense of *Zarathustra* and in this way, one might well argue, of Nietzsche's whole encounter with modernity.

This will also shed important light on what it is to be a human being in Nietzsche's sense. For it appears that when Nietzsche thinks of the earth, what is at stake is always a new determination of the meaning of being human. Put simply, in Nietzsche's case, the attempt to establish the earthly meaning of human existence and the human meaning of the earth are closely intertwined. In what follows, thus, I provide a philosophical construal of how Nietzsche understands, in *Zarathustra*, the earth and human beings' place in it. I should make it clear in advance that the following is an attempt at interpretive exposition, rather than critical analysis.

The Meaning of Earth

In the above quotation Nietzsche speaks of "serving the meaning (*Sinn*) of the earth". What is precisely "the meaning of the earth" which we human beings need to serve with love and knowledge? And what does it mean to "serve the meaning of the earth"? As a first answer, we may pay attention to Nietzsche's

¹ All quotations are from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) referred to as TSZ with part numbers (Roman numeral) and page numbers (Arabic numerals). For the German original I follow *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 4, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (München: De Gruyter, 1999). I would like to express my thanks to the anonymous reviewer for his/her useful suggestions.

assertion that the meaning of the earth is a human one, and that it is the Overhuman (*Übermensch*) (TSZ I, 6, 57). Suggestion here is that there is no given, no universal or objective meaning of things, but only one that we create. Note, however, that for Nietzsche this creation can only take place if we remain faithful/ true (*treu*) to the earth. That is to say, where measures, values and meanings are arbitrary inventions, they are merely artificial and empty constructs alien to the earth. It is in this sense that Nietzsche considers the earth to be the ultimate source of all values as well as the ground of their legitimacy. We thus see that the notions of the earth and the Overhuman (*Übermensch*) belong to the same context in Nietzsche's thought. The question of the Overhuman is crucial here, but first we should address some preliminary points.

Earth or nature is, first of all, the material ground of things, the concrete reality, the realm of the particular and the individual. But it seems that Schopenhauer's Kantian distinction between the world as representation and the world as will governs Nietzsche's point of view throughout (beginning from the *Birth of Tragedy* till the late writings). Thus Nietzsche retains the idea that representation (*Vorstellung*) does not give us the concrete reality, but it rather keeps us away from it; Nietzsche's earth is not the object of knowledge. It remains foreign to any form of scientific intelligibility. Again under the influence of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche believes that earth, the concrete reality, is essentially something defined by willing and desiring. Will and desire belong to the very essence of life and beings. It is thus in will and desire that we experience its essential character. Life, will and the earth thus appear to be interchangeable words.

One preliminary way to make sense of Nietzsche's earth is to see it as Plato's sensible world divorced from any relation to a transcendent reality; that is, the realm of time, movement and change, of constant generation and destruction. Nietzsche insists that we should read our earthly experience simply as such, without having recourse to any transcendent reference, for such reference is not only absent, but also leads ineluctably to an alienation to life, by rendering us unable to come to terms with the intrinsic temporality of life. Corollary of the rejection of transcendence is Nietzsche's transformation of tripartite structure of the human soul (*psukhe*) described in *Republic*. Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer before himself, reduces reason to a function of body, of the desiring-willing life energy (*epithumia* and *tymos*). Even if Nietzsche preserves the dark, tragic and unintelligible character of the material reality, the earthly existence, he, as distinct from Plato (and from Schopenhauer), does not attempt to negate it for that reason. Just the contrary; Nietzsche presents his thought as a profound affirmation of the earth as life itself. This also means to affirm the dark, tragic and unintelligible character of our human existence as springing from and belonging to the earth itself.

Hence in a section of the first part of *Zarathustra* called "von den Hinterweltlern" (on the Hinterworldly or Otherworldly), Nietzsche attacks the Platonic-Christian (and also Kantian) view that there is another world, a world hidden to our senses, the real world, a world of being, behind what appears to us. He thinks that this actually results from weariness from life that wants death, wants nothing (TSZ I, 21). This is at bottom body's getting sick of itself. Consider the following:

Believe me, my brothers! It was the body that despaired of the body – it probed with the fingers of a befooled spirit on the walls of the ultimate.

Believe me, my brothers! It was the body that despaired of the earth – then it heard the belly of being speaking to it.

And then it wanted to break head first through the ultimate walls, and not only with its head, beyond to "the other world."

But "the other world" is well hidden from humans, that dehumaned, inhuman world that is a heavenly nothing. And the belly of being does not speak at all to humans, unless as a human. (TSZ I, 21)

From this perspective, almost all the history of metaphysics seems to follow from man's self-alienation as the self-alienation of the body, or better man's alienation to the earth. Platonic heaven of eternal, true beings, as opposed to a changing, sensible nature, is "a heavenly nothing". But this fiction is body's own creation, nonetheless. It is the desire of the body that ultimately speaks here, albeit in a pathological form, in the form of self-negation. Even "I" itself, this suggests, is the function, the manifestation of body. "I" then can only be thought of as desire, as something willing and desiring, something earthly. Even thought itself is a work of desire, an activity of body. By contrast, philosophy in its history has always associated itself with an opposition to the merely physical, the material, the earthly. As the heart of philosophy, metaphysics is said to represent the highest, the most valuable form of knowledge we humans should pursue; the pure form of intellectual activity most removed from the impurity of matter.

According to the ideal of metaphysical wisdom, body appears as an obstacle of which thought should get free. If Nietzsche is right, all the terms and concepts of metaphysics then can be read medically, that is, as various symptoms of a deeply rooted disease. A careful reading of Nietzsche's writings should reveal that he is exceedingly concerned with the question of health. Above all, he seems to think about the preconditions of a healthy culture and finds these fulfilled in ancient Greece; what he saw in the ancient Greeks was a powerful taste, a purely earthly taste that allowed the unimpeded, creative display of instincts. The question of health is here tied closely to the question of culture where culture represents a regimen through which the workings of instinctual energy are largely regulated and structured. Nietzsche's aim, generally speaking, can be

summed up as helping realize an earthly transformation of western culture (“an earthly head”).

This leads Nietzsche to interpret the dichotomy posited between nature and culture in a new light. Such a dichotomy informs, for instance, Plato’s *Republic*, where Plato dreams a rational culture, and to this purpose sketches out a program of education. It is also interesting to note that the Greek word *paideia*, just like German *Bildung*, means both culture and education. This finds echo in Hegel who conceptualizes the power of reason as something to work over against nature, with the objective to spiritualize it, that is, to subjugate it to the demands of reason by way of imposing on it its own forms. Indeed modern culture (and education) shows itself as the progressive triumph of reason and knowledge over nature, but this is in Nietzsche’s sense, impoverishment in man’s life energies, “the last man” (which we might also call “the sterile man”). Such a vision of culture and education which positions itself over against and above the earth, a project of rational culture, is, Nietzsche insists, something suicidal. In this sense, Nietzsche is a thinker whose thought is strictly opposed to reason-based culture. If the earth is the ultimate source of all values, culture must not be conceived in terms of a rational control of the earth, but must become the self-expression of the natural.

The same animosity against the dream of “rational culture” (as the enfeebling of life) is reflected in Nietzsche’s attack on state as the bearer of rationalization of a society. This, again, calls to mind Hegelian idea of the state (see, “on the new idol”, TSZ I, 34-36). Here one should keep in mind that Nietzsche’s naturalism is not only hostile to the idea of transcendence (to the Christian god, above all), to the religious interpretation of the world, but it is also deeply suspicious of any trust in reason. Nietzsche actually would locate the two in the same context; both grow out of an inability to accept the earthly and thus temporal character of our being. Nietzsche’s interpretation of the modern state as “a new idol” deserves attention. An idol is a false god. Nietzsche would only accept a dancing god (TSZ I, 29), or as Greeks called it, *Dionysos*, which is, simply put, the earth itself (as unlimited ecstatic or erotic energy).² Something can also be said to be an idol if it is created by us, human beings, but falsely absolutized. State, in his sense, is an idol. What we ourselves have created turns against us, against the whole instinctual powers of the earth, as a fettering, repressive force. State as the bearer of rationality, as moral agent, as replacing god in the earth would only be a principle against life.³ As is well known, the parallelism

² The final sentence of *Ecce Homo* (1888) is suggestive: “dionysos versus the crucified”. See also Julian Young, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 195-200.

³ For an interesting recent account on the political implications of Nietzsche’s concept of earth, see Gary Shapiro, *Nietzsche’s Earth: Great Events, Great Politics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016). Shapiro views Nietzsche’s earth as a “political concept”

Nietzsche finds between rationalization and ascetic orientation towards life inspired Max Weber's analysis of the emergence of modern society. Weber uses the metaphor "iron cage"⁴ to give expression to the Nietzschean insight that rationalization is basically an imprisonment of natural, instinctual energy.⁵

Now all values are human creations. And when we make them into absolute categories, we make them into idols. The ground of this valuation is ultimately our body, the earth. With these values, we attempt to give expression to the meaning of the earth. We absolutize values (meanings, measures, truths, norms, concepts etc) we have created, where we sever them from their earthly root and give them validity beyond the earth, that is, an absolute validity. We are in this way denied an authentic and open relation not only to the other individuals but also to ourselves, to the natural ground of our being. This is what Nietzsche means when he says: "no longer bury your head in the sand of heavenly things, but bear it freely instead, an earthly head that creates a meaning for the earth!" (TSZ I, 21). That "earthly head" (*irdische Kopf*), it seems, refers first of all to a liberation of sense perception, that is, to a state in which sense perception is no longer clouded or yoked by the abstract categories, but exercises a decisive primacy in life. Such liberation may therefore be called being true to the earth, becoming earth-minded. But crucial is the fact that Nietzsche also brings together such freedom (as freedom or openness towards the earth) with a creative comportment towards the earth, as two inseparable moments, as it were. It is only out of openness to the earth that human beings can turn authentically creative. The meaning of creativity in turn consists in "creating a meaning for the earth". It also appears that Nietzsche can speak of genuine philosophy only as the wisdom *of* earth, as wisdom serving the meaning of the earth, or as he sometimes calls it, "the wild wisdom" (TSZ II, 64, 65, 81, 84, 157), or "the tragic wisdom"⁶ in *Ecce Homo*, as opposed to the abstract rationality of theory. Accordingly, philosophy is not the study of objectively given facts and things, or the world as it is, but must create meanings (values) for the earth, which is to say, it must assume an artistic character.

and ties it to Nietzsche's opposition to Hegel's notion of state, to Hegel's whole political theology (see, pp. 1-22). Another political reading of Nietzsche can be found in Stanley Rosen's commentary, *The Mask of Enlightenment: Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Rosen reads the entire *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as a text with an underlying political motivation; namely to pave the way for a political revolution which will breed a new, a higher race of mankind.

⁴ See, M. Weber, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. T. Parsons (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 123-124.

⁵ It also seems the case that the principle of Dionysos features more prominently in Nietzsche's later thought thus threatening the balance proposed, in the *Birth of Tragedy*, between Apollon and Dionysos.

⁶ *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo and Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 110.

But we should expand a bit more on this issue of “serving the meaning of the earth” as value-creating and thus about health and liberation it represents. As a general point, one might say that Nietzsche seems to think of creating values in terms of a creative-artistic attitude towards the earth (1). This creativity, in turn, seems to be understood in terms of procreative *eros* (2) and in terms of a good (noble) taste (3). I owe an explanation.

Creating Values and Earth

Let us first consider the following remark (from the section “On a Thousand and One Goal”, TSZ I) that gives us a clue about the nature of giving value:

Indeed, humans gave themselves all of their good and evil. Indeed, they did not take it, they did not find it, it did not fall to them as a voice from heaven.

Humans first placed values into things, in order to preserve themselves – they first created meaning for things, a human meaning!

That is why they call themselves “human,” that is: the esteemer.

Esteeming is creating: hear me, you creators! Esteeming itself is the treasure and jewel of all esteemed things.

Only through esteeming is there value, and without esteeming the nut of existence would be hollow. Hear me, you creators! (TSZ I, 43)

Nietzsche would embrace the sophist Protagoras’ word, “man is the measure of all things”, but with a twist; man does this in the form of creating and with the objective of self-preserving or self-empowering. Thus human essence is understood as esteemer, as the one creating values. Without such creation existence or earth is said to remain without meaning, “hollow”. Humans cannot do so as part of herd or crowd, but need a liberation from the social; they need a radical self-esteeming, a delight in the ego. Rather the crowd is the death of human as a creative being. Taking refuge in the safety of crowd is self-negation, and therefore life-denying, a will not to be. Nietzsche finds this complacent and conformist drive nihilistic and he seems to observe it at work even in the cult of “love of neighbor” (TSZ I, 44-48). All this is to say that creators are very rare.

What does Nietzsche find in the root of creating values? The answer is love. This creation of values can only be done through *eros* that is the most powerful drive and desire in the earth. In the same section Nietzsche indicates this as follows:

It was always lovers and creators who created good and evil. The fire of love glows in the names of all virtues and the fire of wrath.

Zarathustra saw many lands and many peoples: no greater power did Zarathustra find on earth than the works of the lovers: "good" and "evil" are their names. (TSZ I, 44)

The will to create is the function of love as the most native desire of the earth; here love shows itself as the principle of growth, and ultimately of giving birth to works and values. Nietzsche's view of eros (as the principle of procreation) seems to be closely connected with Plato's *Symposium*⁷ where Socrates distinguishes a lower *eros* from a higher one (*Symposium*, 206 ff). The lower *eros* is identified by Socrates as the drive to procreate, to give birth to offsprings, that is, something biological in nature and common to all living beings. The higher *eros*, by contrast, refers to the theoretical activity, as the activity of contemplating the absolute beauty beyond time and space. As intellectual activity, the latter is characteristic only of man, among animals. The theoretical *eros* reflects the erotic drive, as becoming one with the beautiful, in the form of intellectually merging with the perfect divine being, attaining thereby a perfection otherwise denied to us human beings as physical, temporal beings.

Nietzsche's account of love directly rejects Plato's higher love, the contemplative love of the Divine, in favor of the earthly, procreative love. Thus it is important to point out that what Nietzsche means by the term, create, is basically a quite natural drive, a drive characteristic of all earthly existence, namely, to give birth. He understands creation in an earthly manner, that is, in terms of procreation. Nietzsche's philosophy is, in a sense, a glorification of procreative *eros* and an attempt at spelling out its metaphysical, aesthetical implications. This also invites comparison with Aristotle who sees the desire to become like god, as much as possible, natural and intrinsic to all beings, indeed the principle of movement in the whole universe. In the living beings, such imitation of God takes place in the form of procreation; an animal resembles the divine in the only manner possible for it, namely by way of reproduction whereby it produces another like itself "in order to partake as best it can in the eternal and divine. This is what all things strive for, and everything they do naturally is for the sake of that" (*De Anima*, 415b). This refers to a life pursued in view of procreating and raising offsprings. But humans, as different from other animals, are also able to imitate the divine by participating the divine activity itself, which is pure thinking, by way of *theoria*.

As indicated, Nietzsche would refuse the second strategy, the primacy of theoretical life, for he believes that it consists in being untrue to the earth, by way of elevating the spectator's relationship to life to a defining position. This is parallel to Nietzsche's downplaying spirit (*Geist*) in favor of soul (*Seele*) as something purely biological, that is, in favor of body (see, "On the Despisers of

⁷ This point is also suggested by Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 249.

Body", TSZ I, 22- 24). He puts it succinctly: "feeding on the acorns and grass of knowledge and for the sake of truth suffering hunger in one's soul?" (TSZ I, 16). Nietzsche returns to the original Greek sense of "soul" (*Seele*); *psukhe* as the animating force, wholly biological in nature. It is, as Aristotle says, the functioning of the body. Spirit, by contrast, represents the drive of knowledge and rationality, a principle contrary to the ownmost drive of life. Nietzsche seems to think that people invented spirit (*Geist*) for the sublimation of truth (see, TSZ I, 109-112), that is, for the sublimation of reason-based and reason-guided life orientation, moving with the assumption that reality is intelligible and that truth is the most important thing in human life (everything else being subservient to this end). This quest, Nietzsche argues, leads to an impoverishment of the soul, to a mutilated soul, and therefore inevitably to a meaningless life.

Now, Nietzsche finds in procreative *eros* a creative and concrete affirmation of body, and thus of life and the earth. He also expands its meaning to include everything one creates artistically, that is, all artistic human creations from art-works to ideas. A value in this sense is a natural event, a product coming from the depths of the earth. It belongs to the earth and it comes from the earth. But it also reflects the striving, pain and suffering presupposed by such an event. Every giving birth, Nietzsche contends, follows from a desire common to living beings; a desire to transcend oneself. One's children and works should elevate and immortalize one. Immortality accessible to us is one in which we live in our children and works. This signifies a life lived for the sake of child or work, a self-transcendence achieved through child or work. Nietzsche thinks of this will to create something beyond oneself, this will to self-overcoming, against spirit's will to pure knowledge which is ultimately life-denying. Consider the following:

Oh you sentimental hypocrites, you lechers! Your desire lacks innocence, and now therefore you slander all desiring!

Indeed, you do not love the earth as creators, begetters, and enjoyers of becoming!

Where is innocence? Where there is will to beget. And whoever wants to create over and beyond himself, he has the purest will.

Where is beauty? Where I must will with my entire will; where I want to love and perish so that an image does not remain merely an image.

Loving and perishing: these have gone together since the beginning of time. Will to love: that means being willing also for death. Thus I speak to you cowards! (TSZ II, 96).

The above excerpt is from the section called "immaculate cognition" (*unbeflekte Erkenntnis*) that attacks the ideal of reaching pure knowledge of things. Being immaculate here is being pure and free of the earth, of the material reality. This

also calls to mind the kernel of Kant's aesthetic theory, the notion of "disinterested reflection" (that is, in turn, decisive for Schopenhauer's aesthetics). The standpoint of pure spectator goes hand in hand with a celebration of freedom from the earthly reality. Nietzsche sees this as incapacitated will, as the loss of the will to beget; the beautiful is reduced to an object of disinterested look, that is, the beautiful ceases to be an object of erotic desire, which Nietzsche would call an impossibility. Likewise theoretical relation to life⁸ demands us turn into sterile, pure observers in relation to the earth, a relation which is neutral and without risk. Nietzsche seems to set spectator's experience (*Beschaulichkeit, Beschauen*) inherent in reflective attitude in opposition to living or experiencing directly something, to taste (more on this below). It is delusional to think that abstract, reflective and objective knowledge of things is possible and the most important thing in human life. That would amount to putting what is represented before what is directly experienced, i.e. the universal before the particular, the abstract before the concrete. Rather such abstractness of theory hides a loss of reality, of the earth.

Overhuman, Eros and the Suffering Earth

Originating from the earth, all desire for Nietzsche is somehow erotic or sexual. Stated simply, life is an immense erotic energy. The section called "The Other Dance Song" (TZS, III) is quite suggestive in this regard. "Into your eyes I looked recently, oh life: I saw gold gleaming in your night eyes – my heart skipped a beat at this lust [*Wollust*]" (TSZ III, 181). As erotic energy it aims at begetting and procreation. Art releases our natural being, the erotic energy whereby we merge and become in tune with the creative, desiring energy of the earth. This implies that affirming life means affirming ourselves as erotic beings and we achieve this, above all, through art. Such erotic affirmation brings a special sort of freedom not only towards life but also towards death; it is only love that makes it possible to live *freely* in the face of death. The fear of death, by contrast, betrays a nihilism, which is the negation of life and the erotic energy and creativity at its center. Those who are afraid of death are always those who want to live at any price, but without a will to give birth to anything beyond themselves. These are "the parasites" of the earth, and the challenge is that we live our life as dedication to the meaning of the earth, that is, as a gift for that which one should give birth to. And the meaning of the earth is ultimately a human one, the Overhuman; one should live one's life as gift for the Overhuman which one can create from oneself, that is, in the light of the image of the Overhuman. Notice that the Overhuman remains always an image, an image that provokes us to self-overcoming, an image which is nonetheless human, not

⁸ As is well known, *theoria*, in Greek, means "contemplation, looking at, spectating, things spectated".

divine, which is to say that it ultimately belongs to the earth. As such, it replaces the traditional Christian God in the image of which human being is said to be created. In connection with the idea of the Overhuman, we observe Zarathustra's repeated insistence; "man is something that must be overcome". A creative relation to oneself requires that one considers oneself a material, a bridge for the emergence of something higher, i.e. for the Overhuman. The exact opposite of this is live just for oneself, for happiness, as complacent and conformist individuals, as the parasites of the earth ("the last man"). These are the ones who can only exist by exploiting the values already created, and to this end, they need to idolize them (TSZ III, 167). They can sublimate themselves only in the safety of sticking to the past creators and past values. Stuck to the given and the present, this selfishness detaches itself from the live claims of the earth, and is therefore lacking in genuine self-affirmation. This is because it is only in what one creates that one is able to sublimate oneself.

The Platonic-Christian (or Schopenhaurian-Buddhistic) desire for death results from the hate of life, but a correct relationship to death, Nietzsche insinuates, can only arise from the love of life. As suggested, Nietzsche characterizes such love in terms of gift-giving, indeed as "gift-giving virtue" (see, TSZ I, "On the Bestowing Virtue"). The point is this; love is that in which one presents oneself as a gift to the beloved.⁹ Here we are freed of our being, our ego, not in the form of denying or negating it, but rather by bestowing it. And we can affirm our being at most only when we make it into a gift, only through love. The fundamental, the creative meaning of life is *eros*, and as he says in *Beyond Good and Evil*: "Whatever is done out of love takes place beyond good and evil" (BGE, 70).

This virtue brings a certain lightness to the ego (as opposed to the heaviness of spirit, the will to knowledge) by making it into a creative-artistic force, the force of procreative *eros*. When ego is devalued, so is all life and all striving for creation, for ego exists in the work as mother in the child; work springs from ego (as erotic-instinctual energy), is a birth ego accomplishes (TSZ II, 72-74). Ego here is the very energy of life, a will to self-assertion and therefore to self-transcendence. Ego, in this sense, is a quite earthly drive, a drive from the depths of the earth, that means, an erotic drive that seeks satisfaction in begetting and giving birth. A healthy ego then is life-affirming; it possesses power to love (to present itself as gift), to create and consequently to perish itself for the child and for the work. But this, in turn, requires that one go beyond the walls of one's petty individual being. As a result, what Nietzsche conceives of as ego bears absolutely no resemblance to the Cartesian ego, the *res cogitans* or the ego of German idealism. We might perhaps call it erotic ego. The idea of disembodied

⁹ Cf. J. G. Fichte, *The Vocation of Man* (1800), trans. P. Preuss (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987), pp. 24-26.

ego that marks the modern philosophy is a projection of human essence as both the spectator of reality and the master of it. This is, in Nietzsche's eyes, something suicidal; "life that itself cuts into life" (TSZ II, 80). Such a self-understanding on the part of man conceals in itself what Nietzsche calls "the spirit of revenge"; elevating ourselves beyond time and space, we grow unable to affirm the earthly (sensual, finite and temporal) ground of our being.

Nietzsche thinks that the meaning (*Sinn*) of the earth finds ever new expression in ego, more precisely, in the self-overcoming drive of the ego. When one affirms oneself as ego, one affirms the potential Overhuman sleeping in oneself, one casts a glimpse at it. In this way one stands related to oneself as something which should perish and give way to the Overhuman. This is the most creative, most life-affirming action of human existence. And it certainly bears resemblance to the way artist treats its material (see TSZ II, "on the blessed isles").

Antagonism, discordance, suffering and striving are central to the expression of the life energy of the earth. In Heraclitus' words, "Polemos is the father of all things". Nietzsche, therefore, brings this creative (or procreative) desire of the earth together with fighting; to create and to fight are inseparable. The glorification of "blood" in many places of *Zarathustra* may well be understood against this background; the metaphor of blood has the virtue of bringing life and war together. Consider the following:

Let your spirit and your virtue serve the meaning of the earth,
my brothers: and the value of all things will be posited newly by you!
Therefore you shall be fighters! Therefore you shall be creators! (TSZ I,
58).

On a thousand bridges and paths they shall throng to the future,
and ever more war and inequality shall be set between them: thus my
great love commands me to speak!

Inventors of images and ghosts shall they become in their
hostility, and with their images and ghosts they shall yet fight the highest
fight against each other!

Good and evil, and rich and poor, and high and trifling, and all
the names of values: they shall be weapons and clanging signs that life
must overcome itself again and again!

Life itself wants to build itself into the heights with pillars and
steps; it wants to gaze into vast distances and out upon halcyon beauties
– therefore it needs height!

And because it needs height, it needs steps and contradiction
between steps and climbers! Life wants to climb and to overcome itself
by climbing. (TSZ II, 78)

As suggested, it is love that constitutes the kernel of the will to create and love means bestowing virtue, i.e. generosity, above all, the generosity of a mother. To create is to bestow oneself to what one creates. It is in this manner that the creator really lives in the created. If to create is to give birth, every creator, every artist should be able to possess a feminine side. The earth (*die Erde*) is essentially feminine. New values need to be created, values that are faithful, true to the earth, that is, the values *of* the earth. This means that new values need to be born out of the earth. One should be fighter to be the creator of these new values. Only in this way can one serve the meaning of the earth. As will to move upwards, to perfection, life requires an inner discordance and struggle at work. Again, as Heraclitus would have it, *polemos* belongs to the essence of *physis*. The earth is not a perfection, a perfect order, a plenitude, but an endless striving and suffering to transcend itself, to overcome itself through strife and war, through will to power. This implies that desire for final reconciliation, for final peace and harmony is inauthentic, i.e. against the very character of the earthly reality. As indicated, there can be no final values.

Nietzsche's notion of earth has connections with the views Kant sets forth in "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose" and in *The Critique of Judgement*. We desire peace, comfort and accord, but seen from the point of view of the end of the realization of the highest potentials of nature these are by no means desirable things. Nature, to this end, propels us to strife and antagonism, and thus to striving and labour, which in turn provoke human creativity in the service of the species. The endless task of perfecting human nature presupposes this inbuilt antagonism of nature.¹⁰ Besides Kant depicts genius in *The Critique of Judgement* as someone profoundly natural, sitting close to the natural source, "a favorite of nature"; indeed, an inspired person.¹¹ Genius functions, one might say, as the voice of nature "through whom nature gives the rule to art."¹² In this sense, a genius finds himself incapable of reconciling with the prevailing standards and rules of artistic practice; he brings original, new rules of his own from the natural source. Genius is, so to speak, nature burst forth in the human world.

Nietzsche somewhat radicalizes this view of antagonism arising from the earth which itself stands in intimate terms with genius. The future world that Nietzsche dreams would be a chaotic and warlike one, perhaps as it had been once in the ancient Greece. But just because the emergency involved in these extreme conditions provokes and encourages the natural creativity of humans to the highest degree, such a world would be most conducive to the arising of

¹⁰ See I. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose" (1784), 1-4. propositions.

¹¹ I. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (1790), trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), (§ 46, § 47, § 48, § 49, § 50).

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 186.

extraordinary men. Considered from the point of view of the interests of the earth, peace and harmony prove infertile. The extreme conditions of the time not only stimulate the genius towards creative works and deeds through which new values can be created, values which the time needs. They also grant him a special kind of freedom he would not normally enjoy, by way of disburdening him from the unnecessary weight of the past, whereby he becomes free to focus on the most vital thing for the interests of the present. It would be superficial, nonetheless, to interpret Nietzsche's point here as advocating of an adventurous, chaotic, dangerous world without aim and purpose. Given the anarchic, unstable and indeterminate character of the earth as endless striving, the uncertainty and danger actually characterize the very ground of the human life (see "The Dance Song", TSZ II, 83-85). Like "an open sea", stability is just apparent in it (TSZ III, 172). But precisely owing to this fact, life remains open, filled with inexhaustible possibilities. Further there is an aim informing Nietzsche's vision, otherwise a defense of creativity without an aim would easily slide into meaninglessness. What in each case makes this stormy sea meaningful is the aim of arriving in "the land of our children" (TSZ III, 172), which he seems to present as "home", home for the creative, life-affirming person.

Thus the special connection between the earth and the artist that informs Kant's account reappears in Nietzsche (most probably via Schopenhauer). But Nietzsche also follows Kant, in this context, in the way he views the manner and the origin of this creativity, namely concerning the idea of inspiration. Moving with the paradigm of the artistic experience of the world, Nietzsche places a distinctive emphasis on the inspired moment as the flashing up of the earth, hence as the source of value. Nietzsche, the teacher of the doctrine of "the eternal recurrence of the same" (TSZ III, 177), says in *Ecce Homo* that the idea came to him simply as an inspiration.¹³ It is the earth that whispers the artist. This creative moment is the moment of freedom, that is, through which the artist gets free from the bounds of culture and history. It is this immediate relation to the earth concretized in the inspired moment that is liberating. When the attention of the artist is engrossed in the historical and social world, he becomes the servant of the masses, not of the meaning of the earth. Losing touch with the real (the earth) he loses genuine artistic freedom, turns artificial and barren. The fact that true artists cannot be part of any *status quo*, any established

¹³ *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols*, p. 123. Consider also these interesting remarks in *Ecce Homo*: "Does anyone at the end of the nineteenth century have a clear idea of what poets in strong ages called *inspiration*? If not, I will describe it. — If you even have the slightest residue of superstition, you will hardly reject the idea of someone being just an incarnation, mouthpiece or medium of overpowering forces. The idea of revelation in the sense of something suddenly becoming *visible*, and audible with unspeakable assurance and subtlety, something that throws you down and leaves you deeply shaken— this simply describes the facts of the case. You listen, you do not look for anything, you take, you do not ask who is there; a thought lights up in a flash, with necessity, without hesitation as to its form —, I never had any choice." p. 126.

order, any worldview, any system of truths, stems precisely from their loyalty to the earth. That is the reason for Zarathustra's contempt of the false artists (TSZ II, 100- 102).

As already suggested, Nietzsche models the appropriate relation to life on the artistic creation. Only as artists we are creators, for only as artists we directly experience (taste), affirm and transform the earth. In a section called "On Poets" Zarathustra presents himself as a poet. This gives us some idea about the way artist comports himself towards life. As an artist Zarathustra is not bound by the past, not committed to the past; he has nothing to do with rigid beliefs and final judgements, with the universal. This renders him "light", without the weight of the yesterday. Freed from the past he is open to the present, to what presents itself at the moment. Lightness is the condition of flying and creating (more on this below). All judgements we make and all truths we reach are about the earth and originate from the earth. But just for that reason, they are finite and cannot claim final validity. They are bound to remain the creations of the past. And as belonging to the past, they pose the risk of closing us to the present where we are claimed by the concrete reality, by particular things and persons. Being something inexhaustible, the meaning of the earth each time needs to be created anew.

This again brings us to the question of truth. Roughly speaking, truth in Nietzsche's language, signifies a distinctive sort of comporting towards the real in which the perspective of "the universal" and commitment to objectivity are decisive. In this way, the real is reduced to something represented, that is, ultimately to a construction or fiction of our minds. Because such a commitment involves a loss of reality, it leads to nihilism, to a deep alienation to life and reality, to being untrue to the earth. This is the point that seems to underscore what "the shadow" has to say in the section by the same name.

With you I unlearned my faith in words and values and great names. When the devil sheds his skin, does his name not fall off too? For it too is skin. Perhaps the devil himself is – skin.

'Nothing is true, all is permitted': thus I persuaded myself. I plunged into the coldest waters, with head and heart. Oh how often I paid for it by standing there naked as a red crab! ...

Too often, to be sure, I followed on the heels of truth: and it kicked me in the head. Sometimes I believed I was lying and behold – that's where I first hit – the truth.

Too much became clear to me, now it doesn't matter to me anymore. Nothing that I love lives anymore – how am I supposed to still love myself?

'Live as I please or don't live at all' – that's how I want it, and that's how the saintliest person wants it too. But alas, how could I still have – pleasure?

Do I – still have a goal? A harbor toward which my sail turns? A good wind? Indeed, only the one who knows where he's sailing knows also which wind is good and which is his favorable wind.

What did I have left? A heart weary and insolent; a restless will; fluttering wings; a broken backbone.

Ever a visitor, searching for my home, oh Zarathustra, you well know, this visiting was my visitation, and it devours me.

'Where is – my home?' I asked, and I search and searched for it, but I have not found it. Oh eternal everywhere, oh eternal nowhere, oh eternal

– in vain!" (TSZ IV, 221-222)

The fact that it is Nietzsche's "shadow" who speaks here suggests an autobiographical overtone to what is stated. But this shadow is also equally the historical tradition of the west which surely lies in the background of making of Nietzsche as an individual and philosopher. This tradition, Nietzsche claims, is lost in the Apollonian images and grown alien to the unfathomable Dionysian ground, the earth. The earth as concrete reality is foreign to words and names (concepts), all of which remain ultimately finite and perspectival depictions of it. Words, names, values have their ground in our very human attempts to articulate the meaning of the earth, but they inevitably should fail. In this sense, we should always keep in mind their artificial and finite character and learn not to trust in them; what is real is ultimately other than what statements express. The contrary, that is, belief in them, absolutizing them, comes at the cost of loss of reality, of getting alienated to the real (earth). In other words, this ends up with a nihilistic comportment towards life; "Nothing is true, all is permitted". This mandates that one should never exchange what we directly experience, the experience of the particular, with abstract formulae.

Spirit of Revenge

Thus when Nietzsche speaks of truth, he is referring to that which follows from absolutizing abstract formulations destined to be mere fictions in the face of the concrete reality. This is also the key issue of the section named "leech" (TSZ IV, 200-203). Leech here represents this truth-based, moralist-intellectualist orientation to the life that proves life-hollowing. Zarathustra, while running in hurry towards a cry of distress, unintentionally steps on a man and gives him pain. Though in hurry, he talks with this man called "conscientious

of the spirit", who describes himself: "I – go to the ground of things" (TSZ IV, 202). He dwells in swamp, is thus familiar with leeches which meanwhile suck of his blood. He is thus depicted as someone continually losing blood. Again "blood" is clearly a metaphor for life or life energy. Swamp is a loose, muddy, engulfing land, a source of disease and trouble. At issue is the health of human beings. "Conscientious of the spirit" is exclusively interested in the leech's brain; here is *his* realm. Nietzsche, I think, gestures toward a type of scholar who is obsessed to discover the deep grounds of truth by meditating on the human subjectivity in general (which is the average form of human consciousness, say "the last man"), that is, by the study of mind (*Geist*), a tendency characteristic of modern philosophy (from Descartes to Hegel). Notice that mental here is taken as the measure and basis of life and reality.

He associates very deeply this intellectualist attitude with nihilism. This nihilism finds clear pronouncement in the words of the soothsayer (literally "the truth-sayer", *Wahrsager*); "everything is empty, everything is the same, everything was!" (TSZ II, 105). As indicated, a crucial aspect of this nihilism is what Nietzsche calls "the spirit of revenge" (TSZ II, 77, 111), namely an ill-disposed will towards one's impotence and temporality. This comes out in two key sections of the second part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, namely "On the Tarantulas" and "On Redemption". In "on Redemption", Zarathustra addresses a hunchback as the spokesman of group of crippled people who are not easy with their crippled state; they seek redemption, Zarathustra's healing them. Zarathustra, however, directs them to a different sort of redemption, to the liberation of willing, and thereby to a self-overcoming through their *own* power, through the will to power. Striking is Zarathustra's self-description; "A seer, a willer, a creator, a future himself and a bridge to the future – and alas, at the same time a cripple at this bridge: all that is Zarathustra." (TSZ II, 110). We are all crippled beings! Impotence or lack belongs to the very constitution of our being. What makes our life, our crippled state bearable is a vision into "that which must come", into future humanity for which we must view our lives as gift. We notice that Nietzsche presents here the demand for equality and justice as part of the ill-will towards the "it was", towards the given natural imperfections and accidents of our life. But when one takes these inescapable "accidents" (that is, inescapable for an earthly being) as one's material to create out of it something beyond it, one transforms it into "thus I willed". The earth is the realm of accidents, but what gives an earthly being the rope of an "ideal" is what he can create from himself. Suggestion is that this can be done only in view of the future humanity, in view of "the land of our children" (Overhuman). By contrast, insistence on abstract ideals, like equality and justice, alienates us to the earth (and, consequently, to our own earthly being) which does not know such ideals at all.

In the section "On the Tarantulas" (TSZ II, 76-79), tarantula symbolizes this spirit of revenge as desire for eternal truths, for abstract, timeless ideals. This shows itself as grudge against change, becoming and the earth, as is explicit, Nietzsche believes, in Platonism and Christianity. But interesting is the fact that the tarantula bites somehow Zarathustra himself in the finger; Zarathustra is thus poisoned by the desire for eternity. This prepares the coming of the idea, "the eternal recurrence of the same" which, it seems, Zarathustra finds so difficult to embrace (calling it "abysmal thought", TSZ III, 173), but feels nonetheless destined toward (TSZ II, 115-117). It is perhaps under the intoxication of this poison that Zarathustra later in the penultimate section of the fourth part begins singing the song; "all joy wants eternity—wants deep, wants deep eternity". But eternity here, as the ending of the final section ("the sign") implies, should be understood as procreative eternity, as immortalizing oneself through works and children. The idea thus calls to mind Aristotle who, as indicated, thinks that it is through procreation that living beings immortalize themselves (imitate god) and therefore procreation should be seen as the most natural drive for all living beings. That can be the only form of eternity conceivable, if one is to remain loyal to the earth. If so, key to the idea of "eternal recurrence of the same" might be the moment of father's reappearance in the child. Other forms of eternity would be acceptable (i.e. life-serving) only as poetical-artistic fictions ("parables"), as noble lies.

This spirit of revenge is also what Nietzsche calls "the spirit of gravity" or heaviness (*Geist der Schwere*). We here come across the imagery of flying. Zarathustra likens his stomach (taste) to the eagle's stomach and his way (style) to the bird's way. The key skill that characterizes his way of being is flying, and like anything which is able to fly he is light; flying is tied to the precondition of lightness. He presents himself, therefore, as the enemy of heaviness (TSZ III, 153). This heaviness is the result of loading upon oneself "too many foreign words and values" (TSZ III, 154). But foreign to what? To the earth.

Whoever one day teaches humans to fly, will have shifted all boundary stones; for him all boundary stones themselves will fly into the air, he will christen the earth anew – as "the light one." (TSZ III, 154)

Nietzsche's hope is the *birth* of a new consciousness, the consciousness of the earth. The earth is described as "the light one". To fly, that is, to create, one should learn to be light and get free of anything foreign to the earth. This brings art to the fore, as opposed to the rule of the intellectual; the consciousness of the earth is an artistic consciousness. The lightness of the artistic is contrasted with the heaviness of the intellectual. Being faithful to the earth means being light, which implies that only as creative beings, as artists, we cease to become burden upon the earth and thus also upon ourselves. This would grant us with a healthy self-love, that is, a self-love which is not narcissistic. This Nietzsche seems to

associate with an ability of laughter, laughter not only in the face of life but above all, laughter over oneself. The spirit of gravity lacks such an ability. If one is able to laugh at oneself or to ridicule oneself, one affirms oneself as something to be overcome. This is the mark of a strong person, but here also a recognition of one's own impotence is at play. In laughter speaks the heart of the earth. Born of lightness, and therefore purely natural, laughter is, in the supreme sense, a life-affirming act (TSZ IV, 239-240). That is what underlies the call; "And let each truth be false to us which was not greeted by one laugh!" (TSZ III, 169). Nietzsche, in this sense, calls laughter "the heart of the earth" (TSZ II, 105); it marks the affirmative spirit of all creative struggle, all values created for and out of the earth.

Noble Taste

The expression "the spirit of gravity", as suggested, refers to the Western intellectualist life orientation, and more specifically, to the modern mood. This exhibits itself as a reticent, solemn and aloof attunement, as an introverted type of human being. Lightness, by contrast, is presented here as the mood of forgetting artist (creator) disburdened with all that *was*. It is only as Dionysian artists that human beings can achieve reconciliation with what was, for it is only as Dionysian artists that they can turn into practicers of *amor fati*. The Dionysian heart of the earth dissolves all time into eternal now; the Dionysian artist thus experiences the world as "the eternal recurrence of the same".

As the gift of *eros*, of the free self-expression of the natural (the earth), this lightness of ego involves the desire to communicate, to reach the others which is precisely what leads Zarathustra out of his cave towards humans. But this lightness as mood in which earth gains a free, uninhibited self-expression is also a presupposition of good taste (*Geschmack*), assuming that good taste requires a radical freedom towards the natural. Nietzsche also seems to think that there is an intimate connection between mood and taste. As opposed to the intellectual orientation to life, that is, estimation of the worth of things in terms of the universal and the general (the common), Nietzsche defends the supremacy of taste, the individual, the intimate and immediate testing done by taste. When one trusts one's taste, one trusts one's body, one's instincts, thereby one is faithful to the body, the earth. Good taste is the expression of the healthy body which itself, more purely and more honestly than anything else, "speaks of the meaning of the earth" (TSZ I, 22). Nietzsche in the section, "On the Spirit of Gravity", puts it as follows:

But he will have discovered himself who speaks: "This is my good and evil." With this he has silenced the mole and dwarf who says: "Good for all, evil for all."

Indeed, nor do I like those for whom each thing is good and this world seems the very best. Such types I call the all-complacent.

All-complacency that knows how to taste everything – that is not the best taste! I honor the obstinate, choosy tongues and stomachs, which have learned to say “I” and “Yes” and “No.” (TSZ III, 155)

To sum up, we may discern two points upon which Nietzsche's view seems to be premised: (1) The earth, considered in itself, lacks meaning. It is human being that is needed for a creation of meaning, that is, man *is* there precisely to create values, a meaning for the earth. Or, stated otherwise, earth creates its own meaning by means of man. (2) But this creation of meaning (values) possesses an artistic, aesthetical character; we do it at bottom through taste.

Implicit is the idea that behind all valuations, one can detect the workings of taste, whether good or bad. It is bad taste, we might say, that ultimately lies behind unhealthy, life-denying values. Important also is the suggestion that it is taste, this natural, earthly basis that individuates and differentiates people to the utmost degree. As the products of the ordinary, the average taste, universal standards impose and glorify a mediocrity. Nietzsche here portrays the moment of self-discovery as following from an unhesitant trust on one's taste and instincts, on one's body.

In the section named “On the Sublime Ones” (second part), Nietzsche speaks of a type of man (designated as “penitent of the spirit”, *Büsser der Geistes*) describing him as someone “nausea lingers on in his lips” (TSZ II, 91). Here reference is probably to late Wagner and to *the taste of music* at work in his late productions when he returned to Christianity. It is important to note that for Nietzsche (early and late), music is key to taste, since music (being the immediate manifestation of the will, as Schopenhauer would claim) most intimately belongs to the earth.

He returned home from his battle with wild animals; but from his earnestness too a wild animal gazes – an unconquered one!

And he stands there like a tiger that wants to spring; but I don't like these tense souls, my taste is hostile to all these retiring types.

And you tell me, friends, that taste and tasting are nothing to be disputed? But all life is disputing of taste and tasting!

Taste: that is simultaneously weight and scale and weigher, and woe to all that would live without disputing weight and scale and weighers!

If he would tire of his sublimity, this sublime one; only then would his beauty arise – and only then shall I taste him and find him tasteful. (TSZ II, 91)

Zarathustra finds this music distasteful, for it does not “smell of the earth”, but springs from a “contempt for the earth”, from nausea. The significance of taste is especially evident in the fourth part, when the issue of nausea (*Ekel*) assumes a focal function in the work; the word nausea here powerfully brings together mood and taste. In the fourth part, we again come across “the penitent of the spirit”, this time with the name “the magician”. Penitent of the spirit, like “the conscientious of the spirit”, stands at bottom for a type of person ruined by “truth”, by “the spirit of gravity”. “Truth”, i.e. the theoretical orientation to life, Nietzsche might argue, paralyzes and corrupts taste, for it leads to “the anarchic dissolution of the instincts”, as he says in *The Birth of Tragedy*. In the fourth part, called by “a cry of distress” Zarathustra goes down into the depths of jungle which he says is his own territory. He is said to be “seduced” by pity. One of the sort of man he encounters on his path is the magician. Zarathustra finds him in a place “far below himself” “laying on the ground” “trembling with a fixed gaze”. Seemingly an abandoned, senile, old man, he begins at last to wail a song-poem of hatred damning god. But Zarathustra immediately realizes that the man is a liar, a counterfeiter, a wicked magician, and beats him. The old magician is a false artist (Wagner) who pretends to be great. Zarathustra describes nausea as the “single truth” of the old magician (TSZ IV, 207) and this Zarathustra sees nowhere but in his body; not in the verbal content of what his mouth utters, but in the very gesture of his mouth. Body alone is the bearer of truth. The old magician eventually confesses *the truth*:

“Oh Zarathustra, I am weary of and nauseated by my arts, I am not *great*, why do I pretend! But, you know it well – I sought greatness!

I wanted to represent a great human being and I persuaded many; but this lie was beyond my powers. On it I break down.

Oh Zarathustra, everything about me is a lie; but that I am breaking down – this breaking down is *genuine!*” – (TSZ IV, 207)

Note that nausea is a mode of taste; distastefulness! It in its own manner reveals the truth, let us say, the truth of the earth. The rule of nausea is the rule of distastefulness, decadence. This is what Nietzsche above calls “breaking down” (*Zerbrechen*). For Nietzsche, this nihilism embodied and expressed by nausea is the fundamental fact of the modern European culture. This supports Pippin’s claim that nihilism, in Nietzsche’s sense, refers not to a crisis in beliefs, but to a sort of “pathology of human desire”.¹⁴ He presents Zarathustra as

¹⁴ Robert Pippin, *Interanimations: Receiving Modern German Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), p. 181.

someone who has recovered from it and gained great health, great taste through a liberation to the bodily reality, the earth. He has "the mountain preacher" say this:

"This is the man without nausea, this is Zarathustra himself, the one who overcame great nausea, this is the eye, this is the mouth, this is the heart of Zarathustra himself."(TSZ IV, 218).

This again shows us the character of Zarathustra; one who has overcome the strong distaste, nausea, one who possesses great and healthy taste, a taste that can create. Centrality of taste to Nietzsche's idea of overcoming metaphysics can hardly be overestimated. Taste is earth's showing-up, self-assertion in man's world. Where we give the rein to our taste, there we free the body, we affirm the sensuality of our being. Great man is the man of great taste, a healthy desire, hence an awakened man who has freed his body and heart. He creates good and bad (values) by his good, earthly taste. This creation takes place through love, and therefore itself resides "beyond good and evil". Notice that Nietzsche above draws attention to the heart of Zarathustra in connection with his sensuality (the eye and mouth). That is to say, he thinks of sensitivity and sensuality together. Heart here brings together both *eros* and the courage to fight for what one loves, the beautiful. Such a fight, Nietzsche seems to suggest, is ultimately done for and out of one's taste.

This bears crucial ethical implications. What has been created beforehand in the name of good and evil prove inadequate at the moment. Therefore the gravest mistake in our relation to the earth would be conformism (contentment with the received present values). We can trust on nothing other than our own experience, our own creative sources, our own taste. There is no final creation, no final meaning, no final values! Nietzsche puts this as follows:

I disturbed this sleepiness when I taught: what is good and evil no one knows yet – except for the creator!

He, however, is the one who creates a goal for mankind and gives the earth its meaning and its future: This one first creates the possibility that something can be good and evil. (TSZ III, 157)

In a section of the third part of *Zarathustra* called "On Old and New Tablets" Nietzsche attacks this conformism, this parasitic relation to the earth often presented under the guise of morality. His target is a type of people idealized as "the good and the just". Nietzsche's point seems to be the following. The good and the just people in a given society are typically those who are distinguished with continent, docile and commonsensical character traits, with strong adherence to the received values of the society. The good and the just are more specifically those who have internalized the subjection to the values of the cultural and social authority. But precisely because of this internalized

subjection, they are rendered sterile, without power to create, for to create does also mean to destroy; all creators are in a sense at the same time destroyers. Every sort of creativity involves an inevitable confrontation with the present and the given, finds itself compelled to challenge and fight the given values. Therefore every sort of creativity is marked out by audacity and belligerence and takes place in this manner. But this is precisely what the good and the just are incapable of.

Because the good, you see – they *can* not create: they are always the beginning of the end –

– They crucify the one who writes new values on new tablets, they sacrifice the future to *themselves* – they crucify all future humanity! (TSZ III, 171)

Lacking power to say something new, “the good” are compelled to be staunch conservatives, *Pharisees*, the haters of the creators. Creating something new cannot be done on the basis of the present set of values; that would rather lead to reconciliation. The creator necessarily transcends the given values (“old tablets”) and opposes to them. For he does not move with the taken for granted, he acts, in some sense, in a void and therefore what he does is a venture tinged with madness, something irreconcilable with commonsense and prudence. This reminds us what Plato says in *Phaedrus*; “in fact, some of our greatest blessings come from madness, when it is granted to us as a divine gift”¹⁵ (244 a). This is, Nietzsche thinks, the destiny of the creators. These are people taking leave from the safety of the haven and sailing toward the open, stormy seas. The good and the just ones can never leave the haven. What one calls “goodness” then actually proves to be cowardice and conformism. What “the good” are afraid of is ultimately the glowing heart of the earth, the concrete claims of the concrete reality. They prefer to be “good” by fastening to the given standards, by appealing to the approval of the society, or, in Heidegger’s words, to the anonymous They (*das Man*).

Thus this expression, “the good and the just”, is in fact meant to put into question what it means to be a good human being. Nietzsche’s approach can be construed as posing the question; can we really be good human beings without also being risking, creative, fighting and, therefore, non-compliant individuals?¹⁶ There can be no clear, universal formula of acting in a given situation; each situation comes with a uniqueness of its own. And this is due to the very character of the earthly reality of which we are part. Therefore situations that

¹⁵ *Phaedrus*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁶ As you can see, my approach throughout lays a special emphasis on creative individuals. For an important dissenting account, see Julian Young, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 105-120. Julian Young sees a sort of “communitarianism” in Nietzsche’s whole thought including *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

seem to lay moral claims on us, the morally significant situations, require us to transcend the given standards and conceptions. That means that we cannot respond to them appropriately on the basis of the given or the universal. Put otherwise, any given standard fails to meet the demands of the morally significant situation. And we cannot call a human being good who obediently internalizes and acts in accordance with the given norms. Only a human who fights for life, for the future of humanity ("the children") and creates values to this end, values that move life upwards, deserves to be called good. This is a human being who acts in openness to the earth. Furthermore, such an openness is sensitive and affective in character. This is what we typically call "heart". Indeed, it is suggestive that Zarathustra so often and in critical moments speaks to his heart or points toward the condition of his heart. In all languages, heart is the word that signifies emotions and mood, the sensitive and the affective dimension of our being. In Nietzsche's case, it represents our affective openness and receptivity towards the earth. Our heart, in this sense, is the manifestation of the earth through our body. Arguably heart is here related to the earth in much the same way Plato's *nous* is related to the transcendent forms. As the living center of our earthly reality, our true being, heart can rightly be called the seat of "earthly head" Nietzsche speaks of. It then would seem that the meaning of the earth *comes* not through abstract thinking, but through an affective, creative openness to things and persons.

But heart like everything earthly should grow to maturity. In "The Ass Festival", towards the closing of *Zarathustra*, we hear a praise and call for autonomy, an autonomy whose defining goal is to establish sovereignty in the earth. Manhood and power are associated with autonomy, with leaving childhood behind. The metaphor of cave already gives an idea. In *Zarathustra*, cave symbolizes the home, Zarathustra's home, and like all home, a place for not only giving birth but feeding and bringing up the children. The outside is by contrast the site of freedom and autonomy, the open seas. Life is indeed the outside. Grown sufficiently mature and strong Zarathustra at last leaves the cave, home, and goes to life like someone who goes to war; he presents himself as a warrior fighting for the meaning of the earth. He is on the way to "the land of the children", the real home. What is the goal? Nietzsche clearly states that this goal is the sovereignty of the earth. In the section ("the sleepwalker song") the question is pronounced twice; "who will be the master of the earth?" (*Wer soll der Erde Herr sein?*). Thus Nietzsche, in a manner reminiscent of Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, invites the (enlightened) human beings to a challenging task, namely the sovereignty of the earth, *das Erdenreich* (TSZ IV, 257, 260). The kingdom of heaven (*Himmelreich*), with an unmistakable allusion to the Platonic heaven and Augustin's *civitas dei*, is seen as childish and stupid. Will to power is, in the final analysis, a will to be the master of the earth.

However, for Nietzsche (in *Zarathustra*), as distinct from Descartes, key to this objective cannot be science (i.e. rational, intellectual approach to things).

Then, what is it? Here in this paper I tried to show that this is Dionysian, tragic, earthly, wild wisdom and its artistic-creative relation to the earth; the unimpeded, purely natural, authentic taste that hates greed and gluttony; will to power that recognizes its source and ground in the impotence of desiring. But this ideal of sovereignty of the earth, gesturing already towards the Overhuman, remains an infinite goal required for keeping our creative energies at work in the service of ever newer and richer articulation of the inexhaustible meaning of the earth.¹⁷ The genuine sovereign is in a special sense one who serves the interests of the ruled. This projected sovereignty thus cannot be construed in terms of a tyrannic, exploitative or parasitic relation to the earth. It is instead an earth-serving sovereignty, one that is committed to give it more than what it takes from it.

¹⁷ Cf. Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching: An Interpretation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 22, 29, 174-80, 221.

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