



Nietzsche, Edvard Munch, 1906

Nietzsche and Environmental Philosophy

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was a late 19th Century German philosopher whose writings have had a profound influence in our time, impacting developments across a wide spectrum of modern and postmodern culture. His suggestion that art could be its own thing, not limited to representations of reality, opened the door to modern art, influencing many early 20th century visual artists. He influenced many of the giants of modern art, painters such as Munch, Kandinsky, and Picasso, and sculptors Rodin and Giacometti. His critique of the foundations of Western culture and call for a new beginning after a radical break with the past opened up new directions shaping modern literature, poetry, drama, music, and architecture. His explorations into the depths of human consciousness and his recognition of the importance of dreams strongly influenced Freud and Jung and the development of depth psychology. In philosophy he was one of the important thinkers in the development of the 20th century movement known as Existentialism, influencing philosophers such as Martin Heidegger, John-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus. Nietzsche was a huge influence on modernity;

but in recent years he has also been considered something of a postmodern prophet, becoming a decisive influence on what is sometimes referred to a Postmodern Philosophy, a movement that began in France in the 1960s with thinkers such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze.

Nietzsche's pervasive influence can be explained in part by the powerful and provocative nature of his writings, but perhaps even more so because of the sense in which his thought seemed to have anticipated the twentieth century. In a time when European culture was still confident of achieving its Enlightenment ideal of the progress of human society, progress towards unlocking the secrets of nature and progress towards founding society upon universal foundation of reason, Nietzsche's writings anticipated a cataclysmic crisis. One of the key themes in his writings is his anticipation of the "crisis of modernity."

Nietzsche's philosophy is controversial not only for its attack against Christianity—perhaps the most well-known line of his writings is the announcement that "God is dead"—but also for its profound critique of the most fundamental assumptions of Western philosophy. As a result Nietzsche's thought calls into question not only the whole of European morality, but also the very notion of philosophy as it had been understood since Plato. Due in part to the difficulty of that critique, Nietzsche's writings have been widely interpreted throughout the course of the twentieth century, and in some cases quite grossly misinterpreted, as was clearly the case with the attempt by the Nazis to adopt his philosophy. A German by birth, Nietzsche barely set foot in his native land during the last ten years of his active life, never tiring of criticizing the growing anti-Semitism and nationalism in Germany. In January of 1889 Nietzsche collapsed on the streets of Turin Italy, his brilliant mind shattered perhaps by the ravages of tertiary syphilis. He was brought back to Germany and spent most of the last eleven years of his life in the care of his sister, all the while completely unaware that his books were now being widely read.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy is that the very conception of philosophy changes with his writings. In his conception of a "philosophy of the future," philosophers will accept that they are artists. For Plato, philosophers, of course, are far more important than artists. Whereas philosophers have the serious task of climbing out of the cave of *appearance* and discovering the *true world*, artists are stuck in the *dreamworld* playing with fictions that are no more than shadows on the wall of the cave of appearance and three steps removed from *truth*. Descartes too, while toying at first with the thought that he cannot tell the difference from dreaming and waking life, really wants to prove that he is awake and that it is possible to escape the dreamworld and discover the truth about reality. Nietzsche

counters with the thought that the philosophers of the future will recognize that philosophers have always been artists playing with fiction; instead of trying to wake up from the dream these future philosophers will have awakened to the fact that they are dreaming, and in that awareness, like lucid dreamers, will continue to dream. With Nietzsche's writings the traditional idea of the distinction between philosophy and art, or philosophy and literature, begins to break down, and it is with this breakdown that the controversy surrounding so called "postmodern" philosophy begins.

The relevance of Nietzsche's thought for environmental philosophy is often suggested because of his criticism of anthropocentrism and his call to "remain loyal to the earth" expressed by his protagonist Zarathustra in the philosophical novel *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Others have contested considering Nietzsche as an environmental philosopher because of his critique of truth, his *perspectivism* and the notion of the philosopher as artist and lucid dreamer, which some think leads to a nihilistic relativism which would undermine the basis for an environmental ethics. His notion of *will to power* is also considered by some to be incompatible with an environmental ethics. The following selections come from various texts which span the length of Nietzsche's career.

Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense

Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of "world history," but nevertheless, it was only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths, the star cooled and congealed, and the clever beasts had to die. —One might invent such a fable, and yet he still would not have adequately illustrated how miserable, how shadowy and transient, how aimless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature. There were eternities during which it did not exist. And when it is all over with the human intellect, nothing will have happened. For this intellect has no additional mission which would lead it beyond human life. Rather, it is human, and only its possessor and begetter takes it so solemnly—as though the world's axis turned within it. But if we could communicate with the gnat, we would learn that he likewise flies through the air with the same solemnity, that he feels the flying center of the universe within himself. There is nothing so reprehensible and unimportant in nature that it would not immediately swell up like a balloon at the slightest puff of this power of knowing. And just as every porter wants to have an admirer, so even the proudest of men, the philosopher, supposes that he sees on all sides the eyes of the universe telescopically focused upon his action and thought. . . .

As a means for the preserving of the individual, the intellect unfolds its principle powers in dissimulation, which is the means by which weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves—since they have been denied the chance to wage the battle for existence with horns or with the sharp teeth of beasts of prey. This art of dissimulation reaches its peak in man. Deception, flattering, lying, deluding, talking behind the back, putting up a false front, living in borrowed splendor, wearing a mask, hiding behind convention, playing a role for others and for oneself—in short, a continuous fluttering around the solitary flame of vanity—is so much the rule and the law among men that there is almost nothing which is less comprehensible than how an honest and pure drive for truth could have arisen among them. They are deeply immersed in illusions and in dream images; their eyes merely glide over the surface of things and see "forms." Their senses nowhere lead to truth; on the contrary, they are content to receive stimuli and, as it were, to engage in a groping game on the backs of things. Moreover, man permits himself to be deceived in his dreams every night of his life. His moral sentiment does not even make an attempt to prevent this, whereas there are supposed to be men who have stopped snoring through sheer will power. What does man actually know about himself? Is he, indeed, ever able to perceive himself completely, as if laid out in a lighted display case? Does nature not conceal most things from him—even concerning his own body—in

order to confine and lock him within a proud, deceptive consciousness, aloof from the coils of the bowels, the rapid flow of the blood stream, and the intricate quivering of the fibers! She threw away the key. And woe to that fatal curiosity which might one day have the power to peer out and down through a crack in the chamber of consciousness and then suspect that man is sustained in the indifference of his ignorance by that which is pitiless, greedy, insatiable, and murderous—as if hanging in dreams on the back of a tiger. Given this situation, where in the world could the drive for truth have come from?

Insofar as the individual wants to maintain himself against other individuals, he will under natural circumstances employ the intellect mainly for dissimulation. But at the same time, from boredom and necessity, man wishes to exist socially and with the herd; therefore, he needs to make peace and strives accordingly to banish from his world at least the most flagrant *bellum omni contra omnes* [“War of each against all.”] This peace treaty brings in its wake something which appears to be the first step toward acquiring that puzzling truth drive: to wit, *that* which shall count as “truth” from now on is established. That is to say, a uniformly valid and binding designation is invented for things, and this legislation of language likewise establishes the first laws of truth. For the contrast between truth and lie arises here for the first time. The liar is a person who uses the valid designations, the words, in order to make something which is unreal appear to be real. He says, for example, “I am rich,” when the proper designation for his condition would be “poor.” He misuses fixed conventions by means of arbitrary substitutions or even reversals of names. If he does this in a selfish and moreover harmful manner, society will cease to trust him and will thereby exclude him. What men avoid by excluding the liar is not so much being defrauded as it is being harmed by means of fraud. Thus, even at this stage, what they hate is basically not deception itself, but rather the unpleasant, hated consequences of certain sorts of deception. It is in a similarly restricted sense that man now wants nothing but truth: he desires the pleasant, life-preserving consequences of truth. He is indifferent toward pure knowledge which has no consequences; toward those truths which are possibly harmful and destructive he is even hostilely inclined. And besides, what about these linguistic conventions themselves? Are they perhaps products of knowledge, that is, of the sense of truth? Are designations congruent with things? Is language the adequate expression of all realities?

It is only by means of forgetfulness that man can ever reach the point of fancying himself to possess a “truth” of the grade just indicated. If he will not be satisfied with truth in the form of tautology, that is to say, if he will not be content with empty husks, then he will always exchange truths for illusions. . . .

What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins. . . . (*On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense*)

Human Beings and Nature

The Wanderer. — He who has attained to only some degree of freedom of mind cannot feel other than a wanderer on the earth — though not as a traveler *to* a final destination: for this destination does not exist. But he will watch and observe and keep his eyes open to see what is really going on in the world; for this reason he may not let his heart adhere too firmly to any individual thing; within him too there must be something wandering that takes pleasure in change and transience. Such a man will, to be sure, experience bad nights, when he is tired and finds the gate of the town that should offer him rest closed against him; perhaps in addition the desert will, as in the Orient, reach right up to the gate, beasts of prey howl now farther off, now closer to, a strong wind arise, robbers depart with his beasts of burden. Then dreadful night may sink down upon the desert like a second desert, and his heart grow weary of wandering. When

the morning sun then rises, burning like a god of wrath, and the gate of the town opens to him, perhaps he will behold in the faces of those who dwell there even more desert, dirt, deception, insecurity than lie outside the gate — and the day will be almost worse than the night. Thus it may be that the wanderer shall fare; but then, as recompense, there will come the joyful mornings of other days and climes, when he shall see, even before the light has broken, the Muses come dancing by him in the mist of the mountains, when afterwards, if he relaxes quietly beneath the trees in the equanimity of his soul at morning, good and bright things will be thrown down to him from their tops and leafy hiding-places, the gifts of all those free spirits who are at home in mountain, wood and solitude and who, like him, are, in their now joyful, now thoughtful way, wanderers and philosophers. Born out of the mysteries of dawn, they ponder on how, between the tenth and the twelfth stroke of the clock, the day could present a face so pure, so light-filled, so cheerful and transfigured: — they seek the *philosophy of the morning*. (*Human, All Too Human* I, §368)

Man, the comedian of the world. — Let us hope there really are more spiritual beings than men are, so that all the humour shall not go to waste that lies in the fact that man regards himself as the goal and purpose of the existence of the whole universe and that mankind will not seriously rest satisfied with itself as anything less than the accomplisher of a universal mission. If a god created the world then he created men as the *apes of god*, so as always to have on hand something to cheer him up in his all-too- protracted eternities. The music of the spheres encompassing the earth would then no doubt be the mocking laughter of all other creatures encompassing man. That bored immortal tickles his favourite animal with *pain*, so as to take pleasure in the proud and tragic way this vainest of all creatures displays and interprets his sufferings and in his spiritual inventiveness in general — as the inventor of this inventor. For he who devised man for his amusement possessed more spirit than man, and more enjoyment of spirit. Yet even here, where we are for once willing to see our humanity humiliated, our vanity is playing a trick on us, inasmuch as we men would like to be something quite incomparable and miraculous at least in *possessing* this vanity. Our uniqueness in the universe! alas, it is all too improbable an idea! The astronomers, to whom there is sometimes given a horizon that really is free of the earth, give us to understand that the drop of *life* in the universe is without significance for the total character of the tremendous ocean of becoming and passing away: that uncounted stars possess similar conditions for the production of life as the earth does — very many thus do, though they constitute only a handful compared with the limitless number which have never experienced the eruption of life or have long since recovered from it; that measured against the duration of their existence life on each of these stars has been a moment, a sudden flickering up, with long, long spaces of time afterwards — and thus in no sense the goal and ultimate objective of their existence. Perhaps the ant in the forest imagines it is the goal and objective of the forest just as firmly as we do when in our imagination we almost involuntarily associate the destruction of mankind with the destruction of the earth: indeed, we are being modest if we halt at that and do not organize a general twilight of the gods and the universe for the funeral rites of the last man. Even the most unprejudiced astronomer himself can hardly imagine the earth without life other than as the luminous and floating grave-mound of mankind. (*Human, All Too Human* II, §2 14)

Forgotten nature.— We speak of nature and forget to include ourselves: we ourselves are nature, *quand même* [nonetheless]. It follows that nature is something quite different from what we think of when we speak its name. (*Human, All Too Human* II: 2, §327)

Animals and morality. — The practices demanded in polite society: careful avoidance of the ridiculous, the offensive, the presumptuous, the suppression of one's virtues as well as of one's strongest inclinations, self-adaptation, self-deprecation, submission to orders of rank — all this is to be found as social morality in a crude form everywhere, even in the depths of the animal world— and only at this depth do we see the purpose of all these amiable precautions: one wishes to elude one's pursuers and be favoured in the pursuit

of one's prey. For this reason the animals learn to master themselves and alter their form, so that many, for example, adapt their colouring to the colouring of their surroundings (by virtue of the so-called 'chromatic function'), pretend to be dead or assume the forms and colours of another animal or of sand, leaves, lichen, fungus (what English researchers designate 'mimicry'). Thus the individual hides himself in the general concept 'man', or in society, or adapts himself to princes, classes, parties. opinions of his time and place: and all the subtle ways we have of appearing fortunate, grateful, powerful enamoured have their easily discoverable parallels in the animal world. Even the sense for truth, which is really the sense for security, man has in common with the animals: one does not want to let oneself be deceived, does not want to mislead oneself, one hearkens mistrustfully to the promptings of one's own passions, one constrains oneself and lies in wait for oneself; the animal understands all this just as man does, with its too self-control springs from the sense for what is real (from prudence). It likewise assesses the effect it produces upon the perceptions of other animals and from this learns to look back upon itself, to take itself 'objectively', it too has its degree of self-knowledge. The animal assesses the movements of its friends and foes, it learns their peculiarities by heart, it prepares itself for them: it renounces war once and for all against individuals of a certain species, and can likewise divine from the way they approach that certain kinds of animals have peaceful and conciliatory intentions. The beginnings of justice, as of prudence moderation, bravery—in short, of all we designate as the *Socratic virtues*, are *animal*: a consequence of that drive which teaches us to seek food and elude enemies. Now if we consider that even the highest human being has only become more elevated and subtle in the nature of his food and in his conception of what is inimical to him, it is not improper to describe the entire phenomenon of morality as animal. (*Daybreak*, §26)

Pride in the spirit. —The *pride* of mankind, which resists the theory of descent from the animals and establishes the great gulf between man and nature — this pride has its basis in a *prejudice* as to what spirit is: and this prejudice is relatively *young*. During the great prehistoric age of mankind, spirit was presumed to exist everywhere and was not held in honour as a privilege of man. Because, on the contrary, the spiritual (together with all drives, wickedness, inclinations) had been rendered common property, and thus common, one was not ashamed to have descended from animals or trees (the *noble* races thought themselves honoured by such fables), and saw in the spirit that which unites us with nature, not that which sunders us from it. Thus one schooled oneself in *modesty* — and likewise in consequence of a *prejudice*. (*Daybreak*, §31)

Let us beware.— Let us beware of thinking that the world is a living being. Where should it expand? On what should it feed? How could it grow and multiply? We have some notion of the nature of the organic; and we should not reinterpret the exceedingly derivative, rare, accidental, that we perceive only on the crust of the earth and make of it something essential, universal, and eternal, which is what those people do who call the universe an organism. This nauseates me. Let us even beware of believing that the universe is a machine: it is certainly not constructed for one purpose, and calling it a "machine" does it far too much honor.

Let us beware of positing generally and everywhere anything as elegant as the cyclical movements of our neighboring stars; even a glance into the Milky Way raises doubts whether there are not far coarser and more contradictory movements there, as well as stars with eternally linear paths, etc. The astral order in which we live is an exception; this order and the relative duration that depends upon it have again made possible an exception of exceptions: the formation of the organic. The total character of the world, however, is in all eternity chaos—in the sense not of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever other names there are for our aesthetic anthropomorphisms. . . . Let us beware of saying that there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is nobody who commands, nobody who obeys, nobody who trespasses. Once you know that there are no purposes, you also know that there is no accident; for it is only beside a world of purposes that the word

“accident” has meaning. Let us beware of saying that death is opposed to life. The living is merely a type of what is dead, and a very rare type.

Let us beware of thinking that the world eternally creates new things. There are no eternally enduring substances; matter is as much of an error as the God of the Eleatics. But when shall we ever be done with our caution and care? When will all these shadows of God cease to darken our minds? When will we complete our de-deification of nature? When may we begin to “*naturalize*” humanity in terms of a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature? (*The Gay Science*, §109)

Against the slanderers of nature.— I find those people disagreeable in whom every natural inclination immediately becomes a sickness, something that disfigures them or is downright infamous: it is *they* that have seduced us to hold that man’s inclinations and instincts are evil. *They* are the cause of our great injustice against our nature, against all nature. There are enough people who *might well* entrust themselves to their instincts with grace and without care; but they do not, from fear of this imagined “evil character” of nature. That is why we find so little nobility among men; for it will always be the mark of nobility that one feels no fear of oneself, expects nothing infamous of oneself, flies without scruple where we feel like flying, we freeborn birds. Wherever we may come there will always be freedom and sunlight around us. (*The Gay Science*, §294)

Our question mark.— But you do not understand this? Indeed, people will have trouble understanding us. We are looking for words; perhaps we are also looking for ears. Who are we anyway? If we simply called ourselves, using an old expression, godless, or unbelievers, or perhaps immoralists, we do not believe that this would even come close to designating us: We are all three in such an advanced stage that one—that *you*, my curious friends—could never comprehend how we feel at this point. Ours is no longer the bitterness and passion of the person who has torn himself away and still feels compelled to turn his unbelief into a new belief, a purpose, a martyrdom. We have become cold, hard, and tough in the realization that the way of this world is anything but divine; even by human standards it is not rational, merciful, or just. We know it well, the world in which we live is ungodly, immoral, “inhuman”; we have interpreted it far too long in a false and mendacious way, in accordance with the wishes of our reverence, which is to say, according to our *needs*. For man is a reverent animal. But he is also mistrustful; and that the world is *not* worth what we thought it was, that is about as certain as anything of which our mistrust has finally got hold. The more mistrust, the more philosophy.

We are far from claiming that the world is worth *less*; indeed it would seem laughable to us today if man were to insist on inventing values that were supposed to *excel* the value of the actual world. This is precisely what we have turned our backs on as an extravagant aberration of human vanity and unreason that for long time was not recognized as such. It found its final expression in modern pessimism, and a more ancient and stronger expression in the teachings of Buddha; but it is part of Christianity also, if more doubtfully and ambiguously so but not for that reason any less seductive.

The whole pose of “man *against* the world,” of man as a “world-negating” principle, of man as the measure of the value of things, as judge of the world who in the end places existence itself up on his scales and finds it wanting—the monstrous insipidity of this pose has finally come home to us and we are sick of it. We laugh as soon as we encounter the juxtaposition of “man *and* world,” separated by the sublime presumption of the little word “and.” But look, when we laugh like that, have we not simply carried the contempt for man one step further? And thus also pessimism, the contempt for that existence which is knowable by *us*? Have we not exposed ourselves to the suspicion of an opposition—an opposition between the world in which we were at home up to now with our reverences that perhaps made it possible for us to *endure* life, and another world *that consists of us*—an inexorable, fundamental, and deepest suspicion about ourselves that is more and more gaining worse and worse control of us Europeans and that could easily confront coming generations with the terrifying Either/Or: “Either abolish your reverences

or—*yourselves!*” The latter would be nihilism; but would not be the former also be—nihilism?—This is our question mark. (*The Gay Science*, §346)

We have learned differently. We have become more modest in every way. We no longer derive man from "the spirit" or "the deity"; we have placed him back among the animals. We consider him the strongest animal because he is the most cunning: his spirituality is a consequence of this. On the other hand, we oppose the vanity that would raise its head again here too—as if man had been the hidden purpose of the evolution of animals. Man is by no means the crown of creation: every living being stands beside him on the same level of perfection. And even this is saying too much: relatively speaking, man is the most bungled of all the animals, the sickliest, and not one has strayed more dangerously from its instincts. But for all that, he is of course the most *interesting*. (*The Antichrist*, §14)

Philosopher as Artist, Lucid Dreamer

To the Realists. —You sober people who feel well armed against passion and fantasies and would like to turn your emptiness into a matter of pride and an ornament: you call yourselves realists and hint that the world really is the way it appears to you. As if reality stood unveiled before you only, and you yourselves were perhaps the best part of it—O you beloved images of Sais! But in your unveiled state are not even you still very passionate and dark creatures compared to fish, and still far too similar to an artist in love? You are still burdened with those estimates of things that have their origin in the passions and loves of former centuries. Your sobriety still contains a secret and inextinguishable drunkenness. Your love of "reality," for example—oh, that is a primeval "love." Every feeling and sensation contains a piece of this old love; and some fantasy, some prejudice, some unreason, some ignorance, some fear, and ever so much else has contributed to it and worked on it. That mountain there! That cloud there! What is "real" in that? Subtract the phantasm and every human *contribution* from it, my sober friends! If you *can!* If you can forget your descent, your past, your training—all of your humanity and animality. There is no "reality" for us—not for you either, my sober friends. We are not nearly as different as you think, and perhaps our good will to transcend intoxication is as respectable as your faith that you are altogether incapable of intoxication. (*The Gay Science*, §57)

The delusion of the contemplatives. . . he calls his own nature *contemplative* and overlooks that he himself is really the poet who keeps creating this life. . . . We who think and feel at the same time are those who really continually *fashion* something that is not there yet: the whole eternally growing world of valuations, colors, accents, perspectives, scales, affirmations, and negations. This poem that we have invented is continually studied by so-called practical human beings . . . who learn their roles and translate everything into flesh and actuality, into the everyday. Whatever has *value* in our world now does not have value in itself, according to its nature—nature is always value-less, but has been *given* value at some time, as a present—and it was *we* who gave and bestowed it. Only we have created the world *that concerns humanity!* —But precisely this knowledge we lack, and when we occasionally catch it for a fleeting moment we always forget it again immediately; we fail to recognize our best power and underestimate ourselves, the contemplatives, just a little. We are *neither as proud nor as happy* as we might be. (*The Gay Science*, §301)

And as for our future, one will hardly find us again on the paths of those Egyptian youths who endanger temples by night, embrace statues, and want by all means to unveil, uncover, and put into a bright light whatever is kept concealed for good reasons. No, this bad taste, this will to truth, to "truth at any price," this youthful madness in the love of truth have lost their charm for us: for that we are too experienced, too serious, too merry, too burned, too *profound*. We no longer believe that truth remains truth

when the veils are withdrawn; we have lived too much to believe this. Today we consider it a matter of decency not to wish to see everything naked, or to be present at everything, or to understand and "know" everything.

"Is it true that God is present everywhere?" a little girl asked her mother; "I think that's indecent"—a hint for philosophers! One should have more respect for the *modesty* with which nature has hidden behind riddles and iridescent uncertainties. Perhaps truth is a woman who has reasons for not letting us see her reasons? Perhaps her name is to speak Greek *Baubo*?

Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to *live*. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearances. Those Greeks were superficial *out of profundity*. And is not this precisely what we are again coming back to, we daredevils of the spirit who have climbed the highest and most dangerous peak of present thought and looked around from up there we who have looked *down* from there? Are we not, precisely in this respect, Greeks? Adorers of forms, of tones, of words? And therefore—*artists*? (*The Gay Science*, Preface)

The consciousness of appearance.— How wonderful and new and yet how gruesome and ironic I find my position vis-à-vis the whole of existence in the light of my insight! I have discovered for myself that the human and animal past, indeed the whole primal age and past of all sentient being continues in me to invent, to love, to hate, and to infer. I suddenly woke up in the midst of this dream, but only to the consciousness that I am dreaming and that I must go on dreaming lest I perish—as a somnambulist must go on dreaming lest he fall. What is "appearance" for me now? Certainly not the opposite of some essence: what could I say about any essence except to name the attributes of its appearance! Certainly not a dead mask that one could place on an unknown *x* or remove from it!

Appearance is for me that which lives and is effective and goes so far in its self-mockery that it makes me feel that this is appearance and will-o'-wisp and a dance of spirits and nothing more—that among these dreamers, I, too, who "know," am dancing my dance; that the knower is a means for prolonging the earthly dance and thus belongs to the masters of ceremony of existence; and that the sublime consistency and interrelatedness of all knowledge perhaps is and will be the highest means to *preserve* the universality of dreaming and the mutual comprehension of all dreamers and thus also *the continuation of the dream*. (*The Gay Science*, §54)

Alas, what are you after all, my written and painted thoughts! It was not long ago that you were still so colorful, young, and malicious, full of thorns and secret spices—you made me sneeze and laugh—and now? You have already taken off your novelty, and some of you are ready, I fear, to become truths: they already look so immortal, so pathetically decent, so dull! And has it ever been different? What things do we copy, writing and painting, we mandarins with Chinese brushes, we immortalizers of things that *can* be written—what are the only things we are able to paint? Alas, always only what is on the verge of withering and losing its fragrance! Alas, always only storms that are passing, exhausted, and feelings that are autumnal and yellow! Alas, always only birds that grew weary of flying and flew astray and now can be caught by hand—by *our* hand! We immortalize what cannot live and fly much longer—only weary and mellow things! And it is only your *afternoon*, you, my written and painted thoughts, for which alone I have colors, many colors perhaps, many motley caresses and fifty yellows and browns and greens and reds: but nobody will guess from that how you looked in your morning, you sudden sparks and wonders of my solitude, you my beloved—*wicked* thoughts! (*Beyond Good and Evil*, §296)

Perspectivism

. . . How far the perspective character of existence extends or indeed whether existence has any other character than this; whether existence without interpretation, without "sense," does not become "nonsense"; whether, on the other hand, all existence is not essentially actively engaged in *interpretation* that cannot be decided even by the most industrious and most scrupulously conscientious analysis and self-examination of the intellect; for in the course of this analysis the human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its own perspectives, and *only* in these. We cannot look around our own corner: it is a hopeless curiosity that wants to know what other kinds of intellects and perspectives there *might* be . . . But I should think that today we are at least far from the ridiculous immodesty that would be involved in decreeing from our corner that perspectives are permitted only from this corner. Rather has the world become "infinite" for us all over again, inasmuch as we cannot reject the possibility that *it may include infinite interpretations*. (*The Gay Science*, §374)

Supposing truth is a woman—what then? Are there not grounds for the suspicion that all philosophers, insofar as they were dogmatists, have been very inexpert about women? That the gruesome seriousness, the clumsy obtrusiveness with which they have usually approached truth so far have been awkward and very improper methods for winning a woman's heart? What is certain is that she has not allowed herself to be won—and today every kind of dogmatism is left standing dispirited and discouraged. *If* it is left standing at all! For there are scoffers who claim that it has fallen, that all dogmatism lies on the ground—even more, that all dogmatism is dying. . . .

Let us not be ungrateful to it, although it must certainly be conceded that the worst, most durable, and most dangerous of all errors so far was a dogmatist's error—namely, Plato's invention of the pure spirit and the good as such. But now that it is overcome, now that Europe is breathing freely again after this nightmare and at least can enjoy a healthier—sleep, we, *whose task is wakefulness itself*, are the heirs of all that strength which has been fostered by the fight against this error. To be sure, it meant standing truth on her head and denying *perspective*, the basic condition of all life, when one spoke of spirit and the good as Plato did. Indeed, as a physician one might ask: "How could the most beautiful growth of antiquity, Plato, contract such a disease? Did the wicked Socrates corrupt him after all? Could Socrates have been the corrupter of youth after all? And did he deserve his hemlock?" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface)

. . . Forgive me the joke of this gloomy grimace and trope; for I myself have learned long ago to think differently, to estimate differently with regard to deceiving and being deceived, and I keep in reserve at least a couple of jostles for the blind rage with which the philosophers resist being deceived. Why *not*? It is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than mere appearance; it is even the worst proved assumption there is in the world. Let at least this much be admitted: there would be no life at all if not on the basis of perspective estimates and appearances; and if, with the virtuous enthusiasm and clumsiness of some philosophers, one wanted to abolish the "apparent world" altogether well suppose *you* could do that, at least nothing would be left of your "truth" either. Indeed, what forces us at all to suppose that there is an essential opposition of "true" and "false"? Is it not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance different "values," to use the language of painters? Why couldn't the world *that concerns us* be a fiction? (*Beyond Good and Evil*, §34)

Against positivism, which halts at the phenomena—"There are only *facts*"—I would say: No, facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact "in itself": perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing. . . .

In so far as the word "knowledge" has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings.—"Perspectivism." (*The Will to Power*, §481)

The Will to Power

"According to nature" you want to *live*? O you noble Stoics, what deceptive words these are! Imagine a being like nature, wasteful beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without purposes and consideration, without mercy and justice, fertile and desolate and uncertain at the same time; imagine indifference itself as a power—how *could* you live according to this indifference? Living—is that not precisely wanting to be other than this nature? Is not living—estimating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different? And supposing your imperative "live according to nature" meant at bottom as much as "live according to life"—how could you *not* do that? Why make a principle of what you yourselves are and must be?

In truth, the matter is altogether different: while you pretend rapturously to read the canon of your law in nature, you want something opposite, you strange actors and self-deceivers! Your pride wants to impose your morality, your ideal, on nature—even on nature—and incorporate them in her; you demand that she should be nature "according to the Stoa," and you would like all existence to exist only after your own image—as an immense eternal glorification and generalization of Stoicism. For all your love of truth, you have forced yourself so long, so persistently, so rigidly-hypnotically to see nature the wrong way, namely Stoically, that you are no longer able to see her differently. And some abysmal arrogance finally still inspires you with the insane hope that *because* you know how to tyrannize yourselves—Stoicism is self-tyranny—nature, too, lets herself be tyrannized: is not the Stoic—a *piece* of nature? But this is an ancient, eternal story: what formerly happened with the Stoics still happens today, too, as soon as any philosophy begins to believe in itself. It always creates the world in its own image; it cannot do otherwise. Philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the "creation of the world," to the *causa prima* [first cause]. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, §9)

Physiologists should think before putting down the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its strength—life itself is *will to power*; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results.

In short, here as everywhere else, let us beware of *superfluous* teleological principles—one of which is the instinct of self-preservation (we owe it to Spinoza's inconsistency). Thus method, which must be essentially economy of principles, demands it. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, §13)

Suppose nothing else were "given" as real except our world of desires and passions, and we could not get down, or up, to any other "reality" besides the reality of our drives—for thinking is merely a relation of these drives to each other: is it not permitted to make the experiment and to ask the question whether this "given" would not be *sufficient* for also understanding on the basis of this kind of thing the so-called mechanistic (or "material") world? I mean, not as a deception, as "mere appearance," an "idea" (in the sense of Berkeley and Schopenhauer) but as holding the same rank of reality as our affect—as a more primitive form of the world of affects in which everything still lies contained in a powerful unity before it undergoes ramifications and developments in the organic process (and, as is only fair, also becomes tender and weaker)—as a kind of instinctive life in which all organic functions are still synthetically intertwined along with self-regulation, assimilation, nourishment, excretion, and

metabolism—as a *pre-form* of life.

In the end not only is it permitted to make this experiment; the conscience of *method* demands it. Not to assume several kinds of causality until the experiment of making do with a single one has been pushed to its utmost limit (to the point of nonsense, if I may say so)—that is a moral of method which one may not shirk today—it follows “from its definition,” as a mathematician would say. The question is in the end whether we really recognize the will as *efficient*, whether we believe in the causality of the will: if we do—and at bottom our faith in this is nothing less than our faith in causality itself—then we have to make the experiment of positing the causality of the will hypothetically as the only one. “Will,” of course, can affect only “will”—and not “matter” (not “nerves,” for example). In short, one has to risk the hypothesis whether will does not affect will wherever “effects” are recognized—and whether all mechanical occurrences are not, insofar as a force is active in them, will force, effects of will.

Suppose, finally, we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as a development and ramification of *one* basic form of the will—namely, of the will to power, as *my* proposition has it; suppose all organic functions could be traced back to this will to power and one could also find in it the solution of the problem of procreation and nourishment—it is *one* problem—then one would have gained the right to determine *all* efficient force univocally as—*will to power*. The world viewed from inside, the world defined and determined according to its “intelligible character”—it would be “will to power” and nothing else. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, §36)

Refraining from injury, violence, and exploitation and placing one's will on a par with that of someone else—this may become, in a certain rough sense, good manners among individuals if the appropriate conditions are present (namely, if these men are actually similar in strength and value standards and belong together in *one* body). But as soon as this principle is extended, and possibly even accepted as the *fundamental principle of society*, it immediately proves to be what it really is—a will to the denial of life, a principle of disintegration and decay.

Here we must beware of superficiality and get to the bottom of the matter, resisting all sentimental weakness: life itself is essentially appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one's own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation—but why should one always use those words in which a slanderous intent has been imprinted for ages?

Even the body within which individuals treat each other as equals, as suggested before—and this happens in every healthy aristocracy—if it is living and not a dying body, has to do to other bodies what the individuals within it refrain from doing to each other: it will have to be an incarnate will to power, it will strive to grow, spread, seize, become predominant—not from any morality or immorality but because it is *living* and because life simply *is* will to power. But there is no point on which the ordinary consciousness of Europeans resist instruction as on this: everywhere people are now raving, even under scientific disguises about the coming conditions of society in which the “exploitative aspect” will be removed—which sounds to me as if they promised to invent a way of life that would dispense with all organic functions. “Exploitation” does not belong to a corrupt or imperfect and primitive society: it belongs to the essence of what lives as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life. (*Beyond Good and Evil* §259)

And do you know what “the world” is to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror? This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end, a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expend itself but only transforms itself; as a whole, of unalterable size, a household without expenses or losses, but likewise without increase or income; enclosed by “nothingness” as by a boundary; not something blurry or wasted, not something endlessly extended, but set in a definite space as a definite force, and not a space that might be “empty” here or there, but rather as force

throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here and at the same time decreasing there; a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back, with tremendous years of recurrence, with an ebb and a flood of its forms; out of the simplest forms striving toward the most complex, out of the stillest, most rigid, coldest forms toward the hottest, most turbulent, most self-contradictory, and then again returning home to the simple out of this abundance, out of the play of contradictions back to the joy of concord, still affirming itself in this uniformity of its courses and its years, blessing itself as that which must return eternally, as a becoming that knows no satiety, no disgust, no weariness: this, my *Dionysian* world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying, this mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight, my “beyond good and evil,” without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal; without will, unless a ring feels good will toward itself—do you want a *name* for this world? A *solution* for all its riddles? A *light* for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men?—*This world is the will to power—and nothing besides!* And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides! (*The Will to Power* §1067)

Socrates' Last Words

The dying Socrates.—I admire the courage and wisdom of Socrates in everything he did, said—and did not say. This mocking and enamored monster and piper of Athens, who made the most overweening youths tremble and sob, was not only the wisest chatterer of all time: he was equally great in silence. I wish he had remained taciturn also at the last moment of his life; in that case he might still belong to a higher order of spirits. Whether it was death or the poison or piety or malice—something loosened his tongue at that moment and he said: “O Crito, I Owe Asclepius a rooster.” This ridiculous and terrible “last word” means for those who have ears: “O Crito, *life is a disease.*” Is it possible that a man like him, who had lived cheerfully and like a soldier in the sight of everyone, should have been a pessimist? He had merely kept a cheerful mien while concealing all his life long his ultimate judgment, his inmost feeling. Socrates, Socrates *suffered life!* And then he still revenged himself—with his veiled, gruesome, pious, and blasphemous saying. Did a Socrates need such revenge? Did his overrich virtue lack an ounce of magnanimity? —Alas, my friends, we must overcome even the Greeks! (*The Gay Science*, §340)

Amor Fati

For the new year.—I still live, I still think: I still have to live, for I still have to think. *Sum, ergo cogito: cogito, ergo sum.* Today everybody permits himself the expression of his wish and his dearest thought; hence I, too, shall say what it is that I wish from myself today, and what was the first thought to run across my heart this year—what thought shall be for me the reason, warranty, and sweetness of my life henceforth. I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati:* let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. *Looking away* shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer. (*The Gay Science* 276)

The Eternal Recurrence

The greatest weight.—What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!"

Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine." If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, "Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?" would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight. Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to crave nothing more fervently* than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal? (*The Gay Science*, §341)

* * *

Sources

Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s. Edited and translated by Daniel Breazale. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1979.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality.* Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Human, All Too Human.* Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science.* Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, Inc., 1974.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil.* Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Press, 1966.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power.* Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage Press, 1968.