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Nietzsche's Physiological Philosophy of History

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RÉSUMÉ: Il existe une philosophie de l'histoire nietzschéenne qui décrit le phénomène historique. Cette philosophie de l'histoire s'articule en suivant le court de ses lectures en physiologie et en sciences évolutionnistes. Dès le début de sa carrière de philosophe, Nietzsche s'est penché sur la question de la nature de l'histoire et il a su adapter ses connaissances rudimentaires du darwinisme transmises par l'entremise de ses lectures. Cette philosophie se révèle initialement comme une réflexion sur la relation entre l'histoire, la vie et la culture. À la fin des années 1870, il se donne le projet d'une critique historique des valeurs métaphysiques et morales. Cependant, au début des années 1880, il s'affaire à des lectures qui eurent comme effet le rejet de ses espoirs précoces en les possibilités du Darwinisme. Malgré cette déception, il découvrit aussi une description originale des phénomènes physiologiques qui eut une conséquence importante pour sa philosophie de l'histoire. En concevant l'histoire comme un corps, il rejeta l'idée que l'histoire est un être comme les autres en y opposant une conception de l'histoire mettant l'accent sur les traits partagés avec le corps, ce qui eut comme effet de décrire l'histoire comme un tout lié synthétiquement et constamment réinterprété. Par l'entremise de l'accumulation d'interprétations, l'histoire se développe comme un pré-texte à toute nouvelle interprétation qui pluralise le chaos du passé et oriente tout travail interprétatif Par contre, toute addition a cette structure occasionne une restructuration de celle-ci et invite à de nouvelles interprétations.

Mots Clés: Nietzsche, Philosophie, Histoire, Physiologie, Darwinisme.

ABSTRACT: Nietzsche developed an original understanding of history that was strongly influenced by his readings of the nascent evolutionary sciences. During his early period he integrated his rudimentary knowledge of Darwinian evolutionary science into his formal discussion of history. Initially he assimilated what knowledge he had of Darwinian sciences to his discussion of history's cultural significance. In the late 1870s he embarked on a project of tracing the origins of all moral and metaphysically conditioned values that paralleled his interest in Darwinism. But by the early 1880s, he read several works that had a profound effect of his thinking. These readings compelled him to abandon his earlier interest in the possibilities of Darwinian evolutionary history. However, he also discovered a novel understanding of physiological processes that fuelled his reworking of the ideas he had already developed. Nietzsche's philosophy of history is characterized by the rejection of the idea that history is a being. Accordingly, he asserted that history should be understood in the same way as the body, namely as an unstable synthetic whole constantly reinterpreted. Through the historical accumulation of historical interpretations, history develops a pre-text that not only pluralizes the chaos of the past but also beckons future interpretation. However, historical interpretation does more than respond to the call of history but also acts as a new element within history that restructures it and invites further interpretations.

Keywords: Nietzsche, Philosophy, History, Physiology, Darwinism.

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Note on Translations and Abbreviations

When referring to Nietzsche's posthumous notes (*Nachlass*), I have relied on the original German and the French translation edited by Giogio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. When quoting from his *Nachlass* I have done so in English using my own translation based on the French and the German, or, when applicable, I have used the translation of the notes from 1885-1888 found in *Writings from the Late Notebooks* (tr. K. Sturge).

Following the standard French manner of citing these notes I have used the following nomenclature: FP (*Fragments Posthumes*) THE YEAR, THE NOTEBOOK NUMBER[FRAGMENT NUMBER]. (ex. FP 1888, 14[173]) I have then identified the translation as either mine or from the *Writings from the Late Notebooks* (WLN).

Here is a list of all the standard abbreviations used. Full references are available in the bibliography.

KGW: *kritische Gesamtausgabe Werke* (ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari)
KGB: *kritische Gesamtausgabe Briefwechsel* (ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari)
KSA: *kritische Studienausgabe* (ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari)
FP: *Fragments Posthumes* (ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari)
WLN: *Writings from the Late Notebooks*. (tr. K. Sturge. Ed. R. Bittner).
TL: *Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense*. (tr. Daniel Breazeale).
UM I: *First Untimely Meditation: David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer*. (tr. R.J. Hollingdale).
UM II: *Second Untimely Meditation: On the Uses and Disadavantages of History for Life*. (tr. R.J. Hollingdale).
HH: *Human, all too Human*. (tr. R.J. Hollingdale).
HH II: MOM : *Human, all too Human: Assorted Opinions and Maxims*. (tr. R.J. Hollingdale).
D: *Daybreak*. (tr. R. J. Hollingdale).
GS: *The Gay Science*. (tr. Walter Kaufmann).
BGE: *Beyond Good and Evil*. (tr. W. Kaufmann).
GM I-II-III: *On the Genealogy of Morals*. (tr. W. Kaufmann).
TI: *Twilight of the Idols*. (tr. R. J. Hollingdale).
EH: Ecce Homo. (tr. W. Kaufmann).

All references to Wilhelm Roux's *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus* are based on the translation I have produced with my thesis director Bettina Bergo.

Introduction

The importance and audacity of Nietzsche's philosophical writings have overshadowed his talents as a philologist, but his numerous references to historical characters betray the importance of his training in classical philology. One may therefore ask whether there is a *philosophy* of history concealed beneath these references. Obviously, both at the beginning of his philosophical career, and at the end of it, he wrote about history: in 1874 he published *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, and in 1887 he published *On the Genealogy of Morals*. But do these writings amount to a philosophy of history?

The expression 'philosophy of history' easily brings to mind the specter of Hegelianism. Although this is certainly true, the intention here is not to establish a filial connection between Nietzsche and Hegel because Nietzsche *himself* never used the term 'philosophy of history.' Yet, he did briefly argue a typology of history as Hegel did in his *Philosophy of History*, but he did *not* give a philosophical account of historical development akin to that found in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Again, Nietzsche's numerous uses of history indicate that he allotted a philosophical role to his historical knowledge. Thus, if there is a Nietzschean philosophy of history, it exists only in relation to his philosophy proper and not as a particular philosophical specialty. In this sense, his philosophy of history is closely related to his discussion of other subjects, such as culture, morality, and physiology. The first two are easily understandable; both culture and morality have a history and can therefore be interrogated historically, but more importantly, they also transmit their values through their narratives thus linking them to a particular form of historical expression.

Therefore, his philosophy of history pertains to the manner that history is used to express and define such identities and values But, as title of this thesis indicates, what is sought here is a *physiological* philosophy of history. Now, what can that mean?

To answer this question I will now compare physiology to some related terms. First, physiology can be understood in opposition to methodology. Physiology here signifies that Nietzsche's philosophy of history is unconcerned with developing a historical method. Although there are passages in his writings that can be interpreted in such a manner, these passages argue much more for history's methodological importance for philosophy, than for philosophy's importance for history. I will therefore not embark on any extensive discussion of his genealogical method. The importance of this opposition is the implication that history does not represent a being that must be approached in a determined manner, but is a state *of* a being that is historical. Furthermore, physiology can also be contrasted to psychology. Unlike psychology that is concerned with mental states, physiology is directed towards the understanding of corporeal states. Whereas psychology privileges a unique subject that is the cause of its mental states, physiology deals with a multiplicity of interrelated organs that exist only as a state through their interconnected activity in the body. Thus, in this sense, if Nietzsche's philosophy of history is physiological it is not because it forms a unique phenomenon having a unique cause, but rather because it is a certain configuration of multiple elements. This physiological importance of the configuration of elements can then be further contrasted to anatomy. The difference here rests on the object of study. Anatomy studies the structure and shape of the organs that constitute the body, rather than the processes that interrelate these various organs. Anatomically construed, a philosophy of history would be primarily motivated by the identification and circumscription of the various elements intrinsic to history. In contrast to anatomy, however, physiology seeks to understand how the

various elements have come to exist in a distinct state. Thus, the primary meaning of a physiological philosophy of history is the ascertainment of the processes that have come to create a distinct state of the past. History, therefore, is a certain state or configuration of the past that may change.

There is, however, another important element implied in the term physiology that must be discussed before going any further. Physiology is a science and it may accordingly be approached in relation to Nietzsche's knowledge of science. But more precisely, physiology is linked to biology, which itself is connected to history through the evolution of species. Thus, physiology put into relation with history also hints at a historical evolution. Philosophy of history can now be understood as the inquiry into to manner that the past comes to exist as a distinct state manifested by a historical being: the human subject. In the following three chapters, I will therefore examine this configuration of the past using Nietzsche's knowledge of contemporary evolutionary science as a narrative guide.

In the context of nineteenth century biology, linking physiology with natural evolution easily invokes the figure of Charles Darwin. In Anglo-American history of science, Darwin often overshadows other important characters of nineteenth century biology that were just as important, if not more, for the development of modern biology. One need only think of Alfred Russell Wallace who humbly cooperated with Darwin, or Jean-Baptiste Lamarck who was probably the first to present a coherent theory of natural evolution. Darwin's importance is so greatly amplified in the Anglophone world that he is often mentioned in the same breath as Copernicus. Indeed, Walter Kaufmann, in the preface to the first edition of seminal work on Nietzsche (*Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist*), stated that Nietzsche was "*aroused from his dogmatic slumber by Darwin, much as Kant was a century earlier by*

Hume[.]"[1] Kant's "Copernican revolution" is thus implicitly linked to a supposed "Darwinian revolution" in Nietzsche's thought. Aside for such rhetorical flourishes, there are good reasons to believe that Nietzsche was influenced to some degree by Darwin's theory of the evolution of species through natural selection. At the beginning of the twentieth century, this link between Nietzsche and Darwin was much discussed.[2] Following Heidegger's monumental study, however, the Darwinian reading was largely abandoned and fell out of style.[3] It was not until Walter Kaufmann's rehabilitation of Nietzsche after the Second World War that Darwinism became important for English commentators. In the last decades, this reading has gained tremendous importance.[4] More often than not, though, this Anglo-American reading has attempted to identify a biology in Nietzsche's works with varying degrees of success.[5] However, there is a second group of readings that also touches upon Nietzsche's relation to Darwin but does not have its source in Kaufmann's work. Heidegger's comments have led to a French reading of Nietzsche and Darwin that attempts to overcome the idea there is a biology in Nietzsche's writings.[6] These readings owe much to Heidegger's comments because they adopt his opposition to a biological reduction of Nietzsche's ideas and integrate them into a framework that

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[1] Walter Kaufmann, "Preface to the First Edition (1950)" in *Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist Antichrist.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. xiii.

[2] For an example, see Claire Richter, *Nietzsche et les théories biologiques contemporaines.* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1911).

[3] See Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsche's Alleged Biologism" in *Nietzsche vol. III.* tr. David Farell Krell (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1979), pp. 39-47. See also vol. 1, p. 60.

[4] See for example John Richardson, *Nietzsche's New Darwinism.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) and Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). This is not exclusive to philosophy; see Daniel C. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life.* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), pp. 461-466.

[5] This has led Gregory Moore to describe Nietzsche's "physiology of power," and John Richardson to argue for a "power biology."

[6] See for example, Barbara Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la Biologie.* (Paris: PUF, 2001); Barbara Stiegler, "Nietzsche lecteur de Darwin" in *Revue philosophique de France et de l'étranger*, vol. 123, no. 2 (1998), pp. 377-395; Patrick Wotling, "La morale sans métaphysique. «Vitalisme» et psychologie de la morale chez Darwin, Spencer et Nietzsche," in *Lectures de Nietzsche* eds. J-F Balaudé et P. Wotling (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2000), pp. 351-396.

emphasizes his radical critique of science and modernity. Although they do not always agree with Heidegger's reading, he remains, more often than not, as the instigator and source of their reflections.

It is therefore at the intersection of these two different readings that my thesis will develop. I have chosen to speak of a physiological philosophy, rather than a Darwinian philosophy for two reasons. First, Nietzsche did not consider himself Darwinian. The efforts that have been made to prove or disprove his allegiance to this scientific theory obscure the radical propositions contained within his writings and fly in the face of Nietzsche's own comments about himself.[7] Second, Nietzsche never read Darwin, which is *very* important. Any attempt to portray Nietzsche as a Darwinist must always work around this important fact. Nevertheless, he did read the English social-Darwinist Herbert Spencer who is generally regarded as the instigator for his criticism of Darwinism. Thus, any discussion of Nietzsche's Darwinism must invariably take into account the fact that other writers mediated his appraisal of Darwin. I therefore take his use of the terms 'Darwin' and 'Darwinism' as a shorthand designation for the English inspired sources that transmitted Darwinian ideas to him.[8] Although he did not read Darwin, he *did* read many contemporary German biologists. I have chosen to discuss Wilhelm Roux who was a young and not well-known biologist at the time but later entered the history of biology as the founder of developmental mechanics. It was Roux, through his book *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus*,[9] who probably had the greatest influence on Nietzsche's understanding of physiology.

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[7] See for example Nietzsche's disdainful comment in *Ecce Homo*: "*scholarly oxen have suspected me of Darwinism*[.]" *Ecce Homo* (EH), "Why I write such Good Books" §1.

[8] For a chronological list of Nietzsche's texts on Darwinism see Pieter Moster, "Nietzsche's Reception of Darwinism" in *Bijdragen tot de Dierkunde*, vol. 49, no. 2 (1979), p. 246.

[9] Wilhelm Roux. *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus: ein Beitrag zur Vervollständigung der Mechanischen Zweckmässigkeitslehre.* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1881). All discussion of this book will be

Discussing his philosophy of history in the context of the developing evolutionary sciences adds important layer of meaning to physiology. The reason for this thesis's focus on the evolutionary sciences, rather than traditional human history, aside its regained prominence in the literature, is that his philosophy of history, or his philosophical discussion of history, is related to his readings in the life sciences. The Darwinian theory of evolution through natural selection stripped of any reference to metaphysics from natural history. Since Darwin had removed all evolutionary agency aside the organismic struggle for resources, natural history no longer needed any outside agent to explain its content.[10] This agonistic understanding of natural selection is the unique element of Darwin's theory that Nietzsche preserved throughout his writings.[11] History, therefore, was liberated from any explanation of its relation to an outside agent, conceived theologically or metaphysically. Thus, understood in relation to Darwinism, history became imbued with a value that it did not have before, especially because it could now pretend to explain phenomena that had previously been relegated to religion and metaphysics. Moreover, the importance of evolutionary theory for Nietzsche's philosophy of history is not limited to natural history itself. By liberating natural history from previous metaphysical and theological interpretations, Darwin also removed the barrier that had divided natural from human history. Darwin himself had done more than imply this new perspective and wrote impressively on human origins in *The Descent of Man*. Nietzsche, although he did not

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done with using the translation I prepared with the aid of Prof. Bettina Bergo, see bibliography for details.

[10] Stephen Jay Gould, *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 59-60.

[11] One should note that the first German translation of *The Origin of Species* translated the famous "survival of the fittest" as *Kampf um's Dasein* (struggle for existence). Many readers of popular science, a genre that gained great importance in the second half of the nineteenth century, understood this expression as meaning "Life is war". This caused considerable worry for Darwin who eventually pushed for a new German translation. (Alfred, Kelly *The Descent of Darwin: the popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860-1914*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp.30-31.

read Darwin's second important work, willingly utilized this new historical. History became associated not only with the written word, but as he deepened his knowledge of evolution by reading Herbert Spencer, he extended its scope to include both forms of history that had previously been discussed separately.

Now, before explicating the structure of the following thesis, I wish to make one methodological comment. The following thesis will not describe and interpret important Nietzschean expressions such as 'will to power,' 'eternal recurrence,' 'genealogy' and the '*Uebermensch.* ' Although all four of these important Nietzschean terms can be related to his discussion of history, they exceed the scope of this thesis. These terms would also overshadow the contents of my argumentation by virtue of being easily recognizable expressions heavily laden with numerous interpretations. Furthermore, the endeavor here is not to produce a systematic interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy and the space required to thread all of the expression together with his discussion of history would far exceed the room allotted here. That said, I recognize their importance and when I am imperiously constrained in mentioning them I will do so, although not to the full extent they deserve. In a more spacious text and at a more propitious time, I hope to discuss at greater lengths how his physiological philosophy of history relates to these four important expressions.

This now brings me to the structure of my argumentation. I have chosen to divide my thesis into three chapters. The reason for this is simple: there are three main elements to Nietzsche's philosophy of history. First, his philosophy of history proper linking history with life and the human subject; second, his reading and discussion of Darwinian thinkers that influenced his understanding of the distinction

between human and animal history; and third, the development of the physiological metaphor that translated his understanding of the body to history.

The first chapter deals exclusively with his early period (1868-1874) and will serve as the premise of my argumentation. I will argue that Nietzsche initially understood history as a creative and retrospective interpretation of the past. In so doing, this chapter will develop two important points. First, in discussing the concept of teleology through his unfinished Ph.D. thesis (1868) and the posthumous essay *On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense* (1873), I will show that any discussion of historical purposes pertains much more to the evolution of the human subject than to the object itself. This will then be further developed in his only book completely devoted to history: *Second Untimely Meditation: On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* (1874). In it, Nietzsche argued against certain historians' scientific pretensions and elaborated his tripartite typology of history (monumental, antiquarian and critical). He also identified three powers (*Mächt*) that are present in all forms history, both authentic and inauthentic; these are the historical, unhistorical and suprahistorical powers, which are usually overshadowed by his historical typology. This chapter will allow me to show that Nietzsche initially understood history as a state of the past that depends on the beings that assimilate it, rather than being a objective account of past events, peoples and places.

The second chapter discusses Nietzsche's exposure to, and reading of, English moral historians starting with *Human, all too Human* (1878-1880); then *Daybreak* (1881), and *The Gay Science* (1882), and finishing with *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887). These moral historians are what he called varyingly Darwinists as I have already stated, but also English Utilitarians[12] and

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[12] *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr. W. Kaufmann, §228. Henceforth referred to as BGE

English psychologists.[13] I will focus my attention on two of these: Paul Rée and Herbert Spencer. The reason for this is simple: they are the recognized source for Nietzsche's knowledge of Darwinian ideas, a fact he makes himself in *On the Genealogy of Morals.*[14] Moreover, they are narratively important because they mark two distinct phases in Nietzsche's appraisal of Darwinism. Paul Rée is contemporaneous to Nietzsche's "positive" period of the late 1870s, during which Nietzsche expressed his interest for English styled moral history that was, at the very least, partly responsible for his project for a historical philosophy begun in 1878. By the early 1880s, however, Nietzsche moved away from Rée and read Herbert Spencer's *The Data of Ethics.* In it he found a moral evolution, rather than a evolutionary history of morality, which led him to renounce the value he had previously given to Darwinism, and assert the importance of interpretation for history. This second chapter, therefore, follows the progression of Nietzsche's knowledge of Darwinism and shows how his criticism of this influential movement was the precondition for a physiological philosophy of history.

The third chapter develops Nietzsche's arguments for the importance of physiology and applies them to history. This chapter will extensively use his *Nachlass* where much of his discussion of physiology was first stated, but it will also supplement his arguments found in his posthumous fragments with passages from *Beyond Good and Evil* and *On the Genealogy of Morals*. These sources will allow a thorough explanation of his reading of Wilhelm Roux, which explains why Nietzsche argued that evolutionary history was not only the product of the *milieu*, but also of inner processes that purposively structure the body. Following this insight, I show how Nietzsche used Roux's ideas to understand the complicated relation between the

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[13] *On the Genealogy of Morals*, tr. W. Kaufmann, First Essay, §1. Henceforth referred to a GM.
[14] GM I, §3-4.

body and the intellect, soul, mind, consciousness, etc. His interpretation of the body and consciousness is then extended to include history. The end result of this is an understanding of history that neither affirms the active creation of the past nor the passive reception of it. Through Nietzsche's understanding of the body, history becomes the active reception and assimilation of the past that implicitly conditions its future interpretations. More importantly, this means that history is an unstable state never equal to itself that must continuously be re-interpreted and re-actualized.

Chapter One: Nietzsche and History

Part 1: Purposes

1.1.1 Dysteleology

One of the most important intellectual currents of the middle of the nineteenth century springs from the work of Charles Darwin. The effect of his theory of the evolution of species by natural selection was felt throughout Germany where it influenced both popular culture and, to a lesser extent, philosophy.[15] It was in this context that, in the late 1860s, Nietzsche developed an interest for this new scientific paradigm. Darwinism's attraction was its denial of any inherent purpose to nature and its implication that human history was irrevocably intertwined with its physiological development. In this first chapter, I will endeavor to discern both the role played by Darwinian ideas in his writings preceding *Human, all too Human* and understand how they conditioned Nietzsche's treatment of history in his *Untimely Meditations*.

Nietzsche became interested in Darwinism through the latter's dysteleological and de-deified description of the evolution of species. His knowledge of Darwinian ideas in the late 1860s and early 1870s was not extensive however. He read the neo-Kantian Friedrich-Albert Lange, who devoted a whole chapter of his 1866 opus, *History of Materialism* (*Geschichte der Materialismus*), to the subject of Darwin and

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[15] Many different groups in Imperial Germany and not only in the scientific establishment adopted Darwinian evolution as their own. In the political arena, both progressive and conservative movements used Darwin's ideas extensively. See Alfred, Kelly. *The Descent of Darwin: the popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860-1914*, p. 5-7; Paul Weindling. "Theories of the Cell State in Imperial Germany" in *Biology, Medicine and Society 1840-1940*. ed. C. Webster (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 99-155.

Teleology.[16] He was also exposed to certain Darwinian ideas through his friendship with his Basle colleague, Ludwig Rutimeyer.[17] This meant that these and other commentators invariably mediated what knowledge he did have at the time. Like many of his German contemporaries, Nietzsche understood natural selection as the product of a competition between individuals for resources and not as the effect of a transcendental purpose.[18]

Such a competition would have been discernible in both natural and human history, thus linking human existence with biological life as a whole.[19] Essentially, the relation between natural history and human history rests on the mode of explanation used by both types of historian. Both may appeal to a chronological description and to efficient causes in their explanations, but these are usually insufficient. Fundamentally, what is sought in both cases is the explanation for the purpose or meaning expressed by the historical agent. In evolutionary science, the organ is explained by its adaptive purpose, which expresses its meaning.[20] In human history, the historian must explain the purposive and meaningful actions of human

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[16] Friedrich-Albert Lange, "Chap. IV: Darwinism et la Teleology" in *Histoire du Matérialisme vol. II, part. 2*. 2nd ed. tr. B. Pommerol (Paris: Coda, 2004), pp. 579-622.

[17] Rütimeyer was a professor of zoology and comparative anatomy. He was not Darwinian, but rather a follower of Karl von Baer, who did not dispute Natural Selection and Adaptation but limited their scope. Baer rejected the idea that distinct classes of animals (Fish, Reptiles, Birds, and Mammals) were related. For more on Darwin and von Baer see Timothy Lenoir, "Chap. VI: Teleomechanism and Darwin's Theory" in *The Strategy of Life: Teleology and Mechanics in nineteenth century German Biology*. (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing co. 1982), pp. 246-275; Thomas Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Reading and Knowledge of Natural Science: an Overview" in *Nietzsche and Science*. G. Moore and T. Brobjer ed. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), p. 31; Charles Andler, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée vol. I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), pp. 469-470; Claire Richter, *Nietzsche et les théories biologiques contemporaines*. (Paris: Mercure de France, 1911), p. 14.

[18] *First Untimely Meditation: David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer*. tr. R.J. Hollingdale, §7, pp. 30-31. Henceforth referred to as UM 1.

[19] Dirk Robert Johnson, "Nietzsche's Early Darwinism: the David Strauss Essay of 1873" in *Nietzsche-Studien*. vol. 30 (2001), p. 68.

[20] On should note that Natural Selection does display a degree of purposefulness. Inasmuch as Adaptation is a corollary of Natural Selection, species may be described etiologically as displaying purpose through their adaptation. Robert N. Brandon, "Biological Teleology: Questions and Explanations" in *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*. vol. 12 no. 2 (1981) pp. 91-105; see also Francisco J. Ayala, "Teleological Explanations in Evolutionary Biology" in *Philosophy of Science*. March 1970, pp. 1-15.

agents both collectively and individually. Thus, both types of historians are faced with the problem of teleology inasmuch as an appeal to the concept of purpose is necessary for any discussion of history.

The complex relationship between natural and human history will be the guiding thread of this chapter, which will trace the origins of Nietzsche's exposure to the Darwinian movement. In so doing, the chapter will be divided into two parts. In the first part I will discuss two unpublished projects. First, his aborted doctoral dissertation of 1868 where he explicitly, albeit summarily, discusses teleology. This will be followed by the unpublished essay *On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense* (1873), which will introduce the evolutionary and physiological aspects of language and concepts, and frame Nietzsche's discussion of history. The purpose of this discussion is not only to situate the young Nietzsche's ideas on evolution, but more importantly to illustrate how he used his scarce knowledge of evolution to promote a philosophy of history that was unconcerned with purposes and final causes. In the second part of the chapter, I will move on to examine his *Untimely Meditations*. My reading will be centered on the second of these entitled *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* (1874), which expands some of Nietzsche's discussion of Darwin already sketched in the *First Untimely Meditation, David Strauss: Apostle and Author* (1873). This second part will serve to explicate how Nietzsche's philosophy of history was not so much concerned with describing and analyzing the past, as it was in nurturing the historian's creative retrospective gaze. Now, these two parts aim to show how Nietzsche understood Darwin as dissolving the pertinence of circumscribing and identifying any purpose *inherent* to history, which enabled him to argue against the scientific and teleological treatment prevalent in his contemporaries' writings.

1.1.2 "Teleology since Kant"

Describing the early Nietzsche as a young scholar interested in the new scientific theories is neither apocryphal nor artificial. In 1884, as he was looking back on the development of his thought, Nietzsche identified himself with a tradition that was partially sympathetic to the new Darwinian ideas. In a note from this period, he wrote that the anti-teleological movement had influenced his philosophical development.[21] This early interest in teleology is clearly shown by his aborted doctoral dissertation. Throughout the spring of 1868, Nietzsche worked on plans that would have been the foundation of a dissertation on the concept of teleology. Although this project was never completed, traces of it are left in the notebooks from that spring.[22] The dissertation would have been entitled either "Teleology since Kant"[23] or "The concept of the organic since Kant."[24] He described this project in a letter to Paul Deussen as "*half-way between philosophy and the natural sciences.*"[25] This project marks the beginning of his serious interest in biology and dysteleological materialism.[26] Within these notes he presents what is the beginning of his philosophical position marked by a renunciation of traditional metaphysics and teleology, as well as the affirmation of the creative nature of our knowledge. These

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[21] FP 1884, 26 [432].

[22] KGW I/4, 62 [3-58]. These notes have yet to be translated into English or French and are not found in the KSA. I have relied mainly on the discussion in the literature. See Christian Emden, *Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness, and the Body.* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), p. 38, p. 138. Kevin R. Hill, *Nietzsche's Critiques: the Kantian Foundation of his Thought.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), pp. 84-94; Jean-Luc Nancy, "La thèse de Nietzsche sur la téléologie" in *Nietzsche Aujourd'hui? vol. 1 : Intensités.* (Paris: Union Générale d'éditions, 1973), pp. 57-89; Paul Swift, "Nietzsche on Teleology and the Concept of the Organic" in *International Studies in Philosophy*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 29-41.

[23] KGW I/4, 62[6].

[24] *Correspondance vol. I: Juin 1850- Avril 1869.* eds. Gorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, tr. H-A Baatsch, J Bréjoux et M de Gandillac. (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), §568, p. 556. Henceforth referred to as *Correspondance.*

[25] *Correspondance*, §568, p. 556.

[26] Nietzsche, in the series of notes pertaining to this project, gives several reading lists. The longest one (KGW I/4, 62[48]) lists several contemporary biologists such as Rudolph Virchow, Gotthelf Reinhold Treviranus, and Xavier Bichat.

characteristics are the direct result of his reading of the neo-Kantian Friedrich-Albert Lange's *History of Materialism* that had offered a naturalized version of Kant's influential position on teleology.

The importance of Nietzsche's reference to Kant in the tentative titles for his projected dissertation lay in the latter's reformulation of teleology. Kant had been unable to remove teleology from the study of nature and his discussion of this question influenced much of the pre-Darwinian nineteenth century German biological debates.[27] In his first two critiques, Kant had discussed the determinate type of judgment that encompasses both theoretical and moral judgments. In the third Critique (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 1790), Kant discussed the reflective type of judgment, which includes both aesthetic and teleological judgments. Kant had concluded that, unlike the theoretical and moral judgments, aesthetic and teleological judgments could not be grounded *a priori*. In a determinate judgment, the particular may be subsumed under the universal (law, principle, or rule) that is given *a priori*. In the reflective judgment however, the universal is never given *a priori*.[28] This is the case for aesthetic and teleological judgments where the universal is only given *a posteriori* in the subject (aesthetic judgment) or in the object (teleological judgment).[29] The importance of Kant's discussion lies therefore in the removal of the

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[27] Timothy Lenoir (*The Strategy of Life: Teleology and Mechanics in nineteenth century German Biology*, p. 22) argues that Kant was *only* responsible for clearly *circumscribing* this problem, which had already entered the biological community. Although the reigning *Naturphilosophie* most often characterizes pre-Darwinian nineteenth century biology, there was another significant intellectual current that animated the academic biology community called Teleomechanism (*The Strategy of Life*, p. 12.). This movement developed from Johann Friedrich Blumenbach to Karl Ernst von Baer, and subsequently affected the development of cell theory through the figures of Rudolph Virchow and Carl Vogt (*The Strategy of Life*, p. 14). Lenoir points to Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, who developed the theory of the *Bildungstrieb*, as one of the main influences on Kant's arguments.

[28] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. tr. P. Guyer and E. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Intro, § IV. Henceforth referred to as CJ.

[29] CJ, Intro, § VIII

a priori concept of purpose in nature and its transfer to the realm of the Kantian subject as creator of concepts.

The reason why teleology could not be grounded *a priori* in the theoretical laws of nature was that the laws of causality alone could not explain the development of organisms, and their parts. Causality can only describe the interrelation of the organism's various organic parts without explaining its seemingly purposive behavior. This is important for understanding both the development and growth of the organism, but also the organs' functions once the organism has reached maturity. According to Kant, an organism is both the cause and the effect of its actions and therefore has no useless parts because, inasmuch as it organizes itself as a living whole, it is composed of parts that are all functions of this whole.[30] Kant gave the example of the morphological structure of birds, which is particularly well suited for flight.[31] Although this structure could have arisen independently of any final cause, says Kant, it nevertheless suggests that birds are made for flight. But this supposed purpose is not contained in any laws of nature known *a priori*. Rather, birds' purposefulness is caused by the subject's concept of bird. Because birds are flying animals, any understanding of their physiology is mediated by this concept. Fundamentally, the subject seeks the accord between its concepts and particular experiences.[32] The parts of an organism have their end not in some law given *a priori*, but as purposeful agents in the organism given *a posteriori*. Thus, although it is impossible to ground the existence of an organic purpose in an *a priori* concept, teleology can be said to exist *heuristically* because it describes a situation where the parts of an organism seem to act "as-if" they were imbued with purpose.[33] A purpose

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[30] CJ, §65-66.
[31] CJ, §61.
[32] CJ, Intro, §III.
[33] This is still the standard manner of understanding the organic. Although teleology has been largely removed from modern biological explanation, in the case of adaptation through Natural Selection

can only be deduced from the observation of the organism rather than from the laws of nature.

However, this is not only a problem in biology, it is also important for other forms of knowledge pertaining to life. In history there exists an opposition between the individual who acts purposively, and the historian's tendency to ascribe an individual's actions to the mediation of external causes (economics, culture, etc.).[34] In both biology and history there exists an opposition between the demonstration of the causal chain that has resulted in the development of the organism, or custom, and the explanation of its purposeful existence. This stimulated the young Nietzsche to investigate the existence of organic teleology. But, because he began to endorse the perspective that conditioned the perception of a whole on the evolution of physiology, he gradually broke with the influential Kantian position.

Although Kant was explicitly present in the tentative titles for his dissertation, the most important influence that marked Nietzsche's 1868 doctoral dissertation was the German neo-Kantian Friedrich-Albert Lange. Nietzsche encountered Lange's imposing book *The History of Materialism* in 1866 the same year that he discovered Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and as Representation.*[35] Nietzsche referred to Lange's book in a letter from the end of 1866 to Hermann Mushacke as the "*most significant philosophical work to have appeared in the last ten years.*"[36] He wrote of

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teleological judgments very similar to Kant's are still necessary. See Robert N. Brandon, "Biological Teleology: Questions and Explanations" in *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science.* vol. 12 no. 2 (1981), pp. 91-105; Francisco J. Ayala, "Teleological Explanations in Evolutionary Biology" in *Philosophy of Science.* March 1970, pp. 1-15.

[34] Catherine Zuckert, "Nature, History and the Self: Friedrich Nietzsche's Untimely Considerations" in *Nietzsche-Studien.* vol. 5 (1976), p. 70-71.

[35] George Stack, *Nietzsche and Lange.* (New York: DeGruyter, 1983), p. 10.

[36] *Correspondance,* §526, p. 480-481. Stack's translation and it should be noted that he says the most important in the last "*hundred years*" whereas in the Colli and Montinari *Correspondance* it is translated as "*ces dernières dizaines d'années*".

it again in a letter to Carl von Gersdorff in the spring of 1868 where he called it a "*treasure house*" of information about Darwinism and English materialism. [37]

Lange's importance for Nietzsche's dissertation lies primarily in the former's biological rendering of the Kantian subject and in the parallels he drew between ancient and modern materialism. Lange argued that the physiological organization of the human subject is the basis for all experience.[38] While this might not seem philosophically sophisticated, a letter Nietzsche wrote to Carl von Gersdorff summarizes Nietzsche's reading of Lange.[39] In it, Nietzsche described Lange's position to Gersdorff with the following three propositions.[40] First, the "*sensible world is the product of our organism.*" Second, "*our visible (bodily) organs are, like all other parts of the phenomenal world, only images of an unknown object.*" Third, "*our real organization is, therefore, as much unknown to us as are real external things. We continually have before us nothing but the product of both.*" Nietzsche drew the following conclusion. The thing-in-itself and its concept are the product of an opposition conditioned by our organism. From this he made an opaque conclusion: "*art is free, even in the domain of concepts.*"[41] Because the sensible world, along with our organs, is the product of our organism, there is no empirical ground for justifying any particular concept. The concepts that are used to understand the world, both causally and teleologicaly, are not empirically justified and can therefore be artistically produced by the subject. These comments are significant because they sum up Nietzsche's recognition and philosophical reworking of the conditioned nature of

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[37] Correspondance, §562, p. 545.

[38] Lange, *Histoire du Matérialisme*, p. 372-373. However, as Barbara Stiegler argues, Lange always maintained the *a priori* nature of causality. See Barbara Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la Biologie.* (Paris: PUF, 2001), p. 11.

[39] *Correspondance*, §517 p. 459.

[40] The translation is from Stack (*Nietzsche and Lange*, p. 10 n2). He uses this passage as an introduction to Nietzsche's exposure to Darwinism through Lange's book.

[41] My translation from the French.

our empirical experience, and introduced a connection between human physiology and art.

In a note from 1867-68,[42] Nietzsche equated Empedocles' thought with the Darwinian arguments found in Lange's book. Essentially their correspondence rests on three points.[43] There is an absence of teleology, nothing is created or destroyed, and all beings come into existence through chance combinations. This triad of themes is consistent with the three propositions that he had enthusiastically described in his letter to Gersdorff in 1866. In the absence of any immediately known natural teleology, the purported existence of organic purposefulness can only be explained by the subject's introduction of this concept into its perception of nature. Later, Nietzsche explicitly linked Empedocles with Darwin in his lectures on the Presocratics given in 1872.[44] Although the comment is a minor moment in the lecture, it is significant because it ties his work as a philologist together with his reading of Lange and demonstrates how his initial understanding of Darwinism was mediated by his knowledge of early Greek materialism. Thus, the dysteleological view of nature associated with Darwin that Nietzsche encountered in Lange's book was initially understood by him as a modern version of a perspective he had already espoused through his philological exploration of Presocratic philosophy.

In the preparatory notes for his dissertation, Nietzsche rejected outright the idea that there might be finality or a purpose in nature. Yet, as Jean-Luc Nancy has pointed out, this does not so much stem from his reading of Kant, as from the influence of Kuno Fischer, who interpreted Kant as having defended an "objective"

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[42] KGW 1/4, 57[26].

[43] Stack, *Nietzsche and Lange*, p. 165.

[44] *Les philosophes préplatoniciens*. ed. Paolo D'Iorio, tr. Nathalie Ferrand (Paris: Éditions de L' éclat, 1994), p. 210. Understanding Empedocles as a precursor of Darwin was not particular to Nietzsche or to Lange. It was quite common at the time see for example Wilhelm Roux. *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus: ein Beitrag zur Vervollständigung der Mechanischen Zweckmässigkeitslehre*. (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1881), pp. 2-3. Roux will be discussed in the third chapter.

finality to experience.[45] But he also rejected the idea that finality might be found outside of nature because of the metaphysical and theological implications of such a position.[46] Instead, Nietzsche adopted an Empedoclean position mediated, and updated by his reading of Lange. This position rests on the central claim that what we call purposefulness is inferred from our organism's organization.[47] Although similar to Kant's conclusion, it rendered biologically the transcendental Kantian subject. Under the influence of Lange and Empedocles, Nietzsche argued that apparent purposefulness is nothing but a reflection of our organism's physiology.[48] However, it is not only the appearance of a purpose or end that Nietzsche ascribed to our organization. As Kant had pointed out, judgment is nothing other than the subsuming of the particular under the universal. The idea that there is an end presupposes parts and a whole under which they are subsumed. According to Nietzsche, the existence of a purpose, deduced through the relation of parts to the whole, is the result of an *aesthetic* judgment inserted by the subject, rather than a property of the object itself.[49] The judgment as to the existence of a purpose does not result from the subsumption of the observed part under the objectified whole, but rather from its subsumption under the *perception* of a whole. Because the concept of the whole is the condition for an end, and because Nietzsche rejected the idea that there is an immanent or transcendent purpose in the object itself, he also rejected the idea that there are objective things that necessarily constitute wholes. Instead, the parts act "as-if" they were directed by some purpose contained within a conglomerate that likewise acts

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[45] Jean-Luc Nancy, "La thèse de Nietzsche sur la téléologie," p. 75.

[46] KGW I/4, 62[4].

[47] It is interesting to note that both Jean-Luc Nancy ("La thèse de Nietzsche sur la téléologie," p. 67) and Kevin Hill (*Nietzsche's Critiques*, p. 87) read this passage as a reference to Darwin despite there being no direct reference to Darwin in any of the notes pertaining to his dissertation. The link between the Empedoclean and the Darwinian positions may be deduced, as we have seen, from his reading of Lange.

[48] KGW I/4, 62[28]. See Kevin Hill, *Nietzsche's Critiques*, p. 89.

[49] Paul Swift, "Nietzsche on Teleology and the Concept of the Organic," p. 34.

"as-if" it were a whole. This "as-if" responds simply to a physiological requirement, namely conservation and survival, which have made the idea of a relation between parts and wholes necessary to our understanding of nature.

The planned dissertation was never brought to fruition because he was uncertain of the intrinsic value of his arguments. In a letter to Edwin Rohde in early May 1868, he said that despite the work that he had done, he feared that he could only produce something superficial, which would not accord with the importance of the themes.[50] Nancy argues that the project failed because it was marked by his realization of the limits of the project caught between philosophical discourse and scientific method.[51] Both philosophy and science share a common form of conceptual representation, but science is caught in an empirical snare from which it cannot free itself. As his project was "*half-way between philosophy and the natural sciences,*"[52] he was able to utilize philosophical language, but he struggled to express his ideas' scientific content. Nancy believes this was the result of his general lack of scientific knowledge. This not only limited his understanding of the natural world, but also limited the philosophical uses that Nietzsche could make of the natural sciences of his time. Certainly his ignorance created limits but it was also a powerful impetus for Nietzsche's later reading and reflections on biology and cosmology. Although the dissertation was aborted, he maintained his interest in the question, an interest that he had to put on hold until the mid-1870s.[53]

We have now seen that there are two significant elements that characterize his early thought as it pertains to his philosophy of history. First and most obviously, it

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[50] *Correspondance*, §569, p. 561.

[51] Jean-Luc Nancy, "La thèse de Nietzsche sur la téléologie," p.74.

[52] *Correspondance*, §568, p. 556.

[53] Thomas Brobjer argues that these readings were put off because of his teaching requirements, but by the mid 1870's he had enough time to return to them. See Thomas Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Reading of the Natural Sciences," p. 34.

shows a Nietzsche not only narrowly concerned with philological and artistic questions, but one who had a profound interest in science as well. This interest, mediated by his reading of Lange and classical philosophy, evidences Nietzsche's early appraisal of some Darwinian ideas, namely the presence of evolving complexity, adaptation, and the absence of any natural purpose. Secondly, and more importantly, Nietzsche's notes are evidence that in this period, he began to understand our knowledge of nature as conditioned by human physiology itself. I will now show that the importance of human physiology for the philosophy of science was re-worked and combined with social factors in an unpublished essay written in 1873 (*On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense*), one year after the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, which will be the basis for his philosophy of history developed in his *Untimely Meditations*.

1.1.3 "On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral sense"

Although Nietzsche never wrote his dissertation, he never abandoned the prospect of better understanding the relationship between our knowledge of the natural world and physiology. In 1873 he wrote an essay, *On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense*, which, although never published in his lifetime, described how our organization, both social and biological, accounts for our knowledge of nature. In it, his heuristic understanding of purposefulness became a metaphoric one.

According to Nietzsche's views at this time, the concepts with which we describe nature stem from the tropic nature of language. Language does not contain essences, but rather is composed of conventions that contain "*nothing but metaphors for things.*"[54] The stimuli that we receive through our senses do not produce representations of the essence of things. "Truth" originates in the metaphorical

[54] *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense.* tr. Daniel Breazeale, p. 83. Henceforth referenced as TL.

transfer of the stimulus into an image, and this image into sound. The translation of stimuli into language is a response to the stimuli that excite the sensory organ and compel it to respond. It is therefore only on the basis of it being excited by a stimulus that the eye can "see."[55] Excitation is only then "metaphorically" translated into images, sounds and speech.[56] This physiological basis of language implies much more than nominalism: it argues that language is more than a rhetorical matter because it ascribes an important role to physiology, which has the capacity of being affected by its environment.[57] By extension, our physiological requirements contribute to shaping language inasmuch as language is the response and metaphorical translation of neural stimuli. From this, Nietzsche reasoned that had our neurology and sense perception been different, our knowledge of the world would have been likewise dissimilar.[58] It is not only the organs themselves that condition the formation of language, but it is also their ability to be affected and respond to excitations that marks physiology as having a foundational importance. Indispensable to the study of nature and history, language is conditioned by human physiology.

Physiology does not determine the content or structure of language however. This is evidenced, wrote Nietzsche,[59] by the fact that there exists a multiplicity of languages. Had languages been solely determined by the physiology shared by all members of the species, there should not have arisen different languages. Yet, as there are many languages, all of which are able to represent the same objects, Nietzsche argued that there is no essential equation between a language and its objects. But

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[55] FP 1872-1873, 19[209].

[56] FP 1872-1873, 19[227].

[57] TL, p. 82. According to Christian Emden: "*What is at stake here is not only a rhetorical issue but a more fundamental physiological problem that had a lasting impact on Nietzsche's philosophical project.*" (*Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness, and the Body,* p. 57). For more on physiological excitation and Nietzsche, see Barbara Stiegler. *Nietzsche et la biologie*, pp. 30-36.

[58] TL, p. 87.

[59] TL, p. 82.

language is neither fully reducible to physiology, nor should it claim to represent the essence of an object. The word and the concept, with which the object is designated, are creative constructions that result from not only physiological influences, but from social influences as well.

Although language is conditioned by physiology, it is also the product of human social interaction. Language is shared by several individuals and is evolved as a means for the self-preservation in the *bellum omni contra omnes*.[60] Weaker individuals, faced with the dangers of stronger individuals, invent language to enable their cooperation and self-preservation. Social conventions are established to further regulate this cooperation.[61] What we call truth reflects this conventional construction of language and is defined by Nietzsche as "*the duty to lie according to fixed conventions.*"[62] Language is therefore not only the metaphorical transfer of stimuli into sound; it is also the product of a utilitarian need to seek safety and the preservation of individuals through dissimulation. That said, language does not preserve its metaphorical character. Over time, the metaphors that had inaugurated language are gradually forgotten as metaphors. Moreover, truths' conventional origins are forgotten and endowed with progressively greater value. "*Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force*[.]"[63] The constant use of language distances it from its origins in metaphor. The artistic nature of these tropes is lost through their frequent use and universalization. The force of the original metaphorical expression fades away, and an equation with the object is established through sedimented habit.

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[60] TL, p. 81.
[61] TL, p. 81
[62] TL, p. 84.
[63] TL, p. 84

This ultimately constrains the human subject to a world fully determined by the contents of language.

The transfer from metaphoric construction to rigid forms of expression can be seen, says Nietzsche, when the old metaphors have lost their luster and a "*rigid new world is constructed as* [their] *prison from* [their] *own ephemeral products, the concepts.*"[64] In this sense the concepts of whole and part indispensable to any human knowledge of organic phenomena, gradually become the proper way of expressing the seemingly purposeful nature of the organic. Yet the constraint of language is not permanent. According to Nietzsche, "*the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive*" and cannot be dispensed with.[65] When the power of the metaphor no longer allows for adequate expression, but only states what is already known and obvious, there develops again a need to overcome what has already been understood and to create a new understanding, a new world, with the aid of new metaphors.[66] However important the needs of expression may be, the primary element in this account of the origin of language is its response to the excitation of external stimuli. This led Nietzsche to a third conclusion. Although the metaphorical reflection of physiology and social interactions form the functional basis of language and truth,

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[64] TL, p. 89.

[65] TL, p. 88. One of the main undercurrents of nineteenth century German biology was the postulating of a vitalistic force that acted like an artistic drive that created new forms. This force was called *Kunsttrieb*. This was related to Blumenbach's *Bildungstrieb* (see note above). According to Nietzsche, in both the formation of the organic world, and in the human creation of a world of meaning, forms and meanings are fundamentally artistic (see FP 1872-1873, 19[50] and FP 1872-1873, 19[52] respectively). This implies a connection between physiology and philosophy. In both cases the organization of the world is the result of an artistic forces. In biology the formation of life-forms, both animal and vegetal, are the result of a primordial *Kunsttrieb*. In philosophy the formation of concepts is the result of a *Metaphertrieb*. In this sense, an aesthetic conception of the world always underlies the scientific understanding of historical purposes. See Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 90ff.

[66] This, argues Christian Emden (*Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness, and the Body*, p. 63), is a reflection of the linguistic paradigm of the nineteenth century. He gives the example of Herder who in the *On the New German Literature* (*Über die neue deutsche Literatur*) schematizes the lifespan of languages as follows 1) emotive expression; 2) poetic and musical expression; 3) prose; and 4) culminates in a logical set of rules. Although it is unclear whether Nietzsche gave any importance to this pattern, it seems nonetheless to fit the description he gave in this essay.

these are not the ultimate source from which language springs. Language is the product of a desire, or will, to express the world in new liberating ways. When language is unable to act as a stimulus for intellectual activities, it loses its power to affect individuals and it is in such cases that a new language is developed.

Had Nietzsche simply stated that language was the result of external pressures on individuals, he would not have been formulating an original thesis. Earlier thinkers such as Hobbes and Rousseau had given similar accounts of the origin of language. What distinguishes Nietzsche from this earlier tradition is the fact that the formation of metaphors does not only explain the origin of language. Nietzsche's account of the origin of language is not simply a linear one whereby the dangers of the "state of nature" led to the development of language. Although he did not dispute this evolution, he significantly implied a necessary and continuous reinvention of language through the formation of metaphors. The history of language does not culminate in the production of modern grammar. Eventually, as a language becomes cumbersome, it will be transformed or discarded in favor of some other convention that will itself also eventually become old and unsatisfactory. Thus Nietzsche, in 1873, was already rejecting the idea of linear structure to history because he favored neither a determinate origin nor an ultimate end.

We have now seen that prior to his overt discussion of history and evolution in his *Untimely Meditations*, Nietzsche had already developed an interest in this subject in light of the mechanism of self-overcoming in language. Under Lange's influence, he had naturalized Kant's position by arguing that teleological judgments could only be the product of our perception of our world conditioned by our physiology. This transformed the teleological judgment into an aesthetic judgment by making empirical knowledge conditional on physiological evolution and thereby bringing the creation of concepts closer to artistic creation. The importance of physiology was then further

affirmed in *On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense* where language was described as the metaphorical transfer of physiological stimuli into words. And, as we saw, the importance of physiology was conditioned by both the utilitarian need for preservation of the individual and, more fundamentally, by the creative impulse to create new metaphors. Now, through my reading of his *Untimely Meditations*, I will show that Nietzsche extended the physiological condition to historical knowledge but allotted it a distinctly secondary role behind that of creative drives, which returned under the guise of a suprahistorical power. All of these ideas were then applied to a Darwinian dysteleological nature, which, because it removed ultimate meaning from nature, justified a philosophy of history unconcerned with establishing historical truths or *a priori* laws.

Part 2: "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life"

1.2.1 The Historical Disease

Nietzsche wrote the *Second Untimely Meditation: On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* in reaction both to the scientific pretensions of some historians and to the historical pretensions of some scientists of his time. He claimed that the rise of scientific methodologies and the celebrated "historical sense" were causing the hypertrophism of history.[67] The horizons of historical knowledge had outgrown the confines of tradition and had extended their scope to include not only all human phenomena, but also those of natural history. Nietzsche never disputed the validity of this widened scope, but he was cautious not to ascribe too great a value to it. He was wary of both the rationalist current, which attempted to subsume

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[67] *Second Untimely Meditation: On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life.* in *Untimely Meditations.* tr. R.J. Hollingdale, "Preface," p. 60. Henceforth referenced as UM II.

particular historical events and peoples under historical laws modeled on those of science, and the realist current, which strove to describe historical periods exactly "as they were." Nietzsche's objection was that history is a retrospective construction that does not necessarily imply any empirical methodology.[68] In what follows, I will show that Nietzsche's interest in organic teleology led him to a philosophy of history that was primarily aesthetic, and only secondarily scientific.

Nietzsche never overtly disputed the validity of history's widened scope because he presumed that the new scientific theories, notably Darwinism, asserted a form of radical becoming.

> "[T]*he doctrines of sovereign becoming, of the fluidity of all concepts, types, and species, of the lack of the cardinal distinction between man and animal* -- doctrines that I consider true *but deadly...*"[69] (my emphasis).

At the very least, this illustrates Nietzsche's endorsement of the fluidity of the natural world. But it also indicates his tacit endorsement of the value of Darwinism, which he perceived as naturalizing life.[70] To be sure, it does not refer directly to Darwin or to his supporters, so one can only infer that Darwin lay behind this comment.[71] The fundamental insight that Nietzsche thought he could draw from Darwin's theory was the "*complete overhaul of traditional metaphysics and ethics*" using "*Darwin's naturalist-materialist paradigm.*"[72] As such, Darwinism became a weapon in his *untimely* attacks against his contemporaries.[73]

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[68] Robert Doran, "Nietzsche: Utility, Aesthetics, History" in *Comparative Literature Studies*. vol. 37, no. 3 (2000), p. 326.
[69] UM II, §9, p. 112.
[70] John Richardson, "Nietzsche contra Darwin" in *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research.* vol. 65, no. 3 (nov. 2002), p. 539.
[71] In a note from the period, Nietzsche makes a similar comment, but refers explicitly to Darwin. See FP 1872-1873, 19[132].
[72] Dirk Robert Johnson, "Nietzsche's Early Darwinism," p. 68.
[73] "*in the hopes of finding a hermeneutical theory of development and change that would be free from the kind of historical prejudices and perspectival distortions of human self-interest he deplored* [.]"

What Nietzsche criticized in his contemporaries' discussion of history was their attempts to develop a realistic representation of history by amassing a great amount of information from which they would extrapolate causal laws with which to explain historical development. This realism became a goal in itself. To Nietzsche these historians were "*pure thinkers that only looked on at life.*"[74] These were spectators of history who sought only the accumulation of information, regardless of its value and disassociated themselves from their subject in an attempt to preserve their objectivity. This amassing of information made everything seem worthy of the historian's attention and is "*set before the tired palates of the history-hungry as the latest delicacy.*"[75] This resulted in a great appetite for historical "facts," which permitted a reconstruction of the past. Moreover, this curious gourmandise transformed frivolous trivialities into important information only to be fed to the avidly awaiting reader. Ardent collecting and excessive consumption of historical information thus overburdened memory,[76] and led to what Nietzsche called the "historical disease."[77]

The "historical disease" is the result of an excessive accumulation of "*cold, ineffectual*"[78] historical knowledge. The precondition for this pathos is a hypertrophied memory heavily solicited by myriad bits of information. Since emphasis is placed on the quantity of information, memory attempts to let everything through.[79] This flood of information cannot be *assimilated* properly and it transforms

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(Margot Norris, "Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka, and the Problem of Mimesis" in *Comparative Literature.* vol. 95, no. 5 (Dec. 1980) p. 1234.

[74] UM II, §4, p. 77.

[75] UM II, §5, p. 83.

[76] UM II, §4, p. 78.

[77] UM II, §10, p. 120.

[78] UM II, §5, p. 83; §6, p. 88.

[79] UM II, §4, p. 78.

both historian and student into "*walking encyclopedias.*"[80] Since historical events, peoples and places have been transformed into a series of equally prized facts, they are equally valued as parts of a chronological and causal chain that has led to the present.

The excessive accumulation of the past implies the problem of organizing all this diverse information. If historical research is not conditioned or subordinated to some principle, it must seek the justification and explanation for its knowledge within the knowledge itself. Meaning is therefore induced from the available material. Nietzsche objected to this tendency on the grounds that it did not necessarily provide a better understanding of nature or history.[81] This is demonstrated by the historian's tendency to infer meaning through the description of a causal or chronological chain.[82] This fosters the impression that the present is the "*true meaning and goal of all previous events*[.]"[83]

> "[A]*nd justifies the course of history, indeed the entire evolution of the world, in a manner especially adapted to the use of modern man* [...]

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[80] UM II, §4, p. 79. See Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, his philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradiction of his Philosophy.* tr. David J. Parent (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 1999), pp. 24-25.

[81] In this passage (§6, pp. 92-93) Nietzsche refers to Friedrich Zöllner, a German physicist who refused this inductionist approach to science. Zöllner entered in a very public debate with Hermann von Helmholtz over the epistemological foundation of German science. He disputed the fact that factual experience could necessarily constitute objective knowledge. Nietzsche intervened publicly in defense of Zöllner and wrote a piece in his defense in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt.* See FP 1873, 29[24]; Christian Emden, *Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness, and the Body,* pp. 85-86; Robin Small, "What Nietzsche did during the Science Wars" in *Nietzsche and Science.* eds. G. Moore and T. Brobjer (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), pp. 157-158.

[82] Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and the Untimely.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 114; Müller-Lauter, Wolfgang. *Nietzsche: his philosophy of contradictions and the contradictions of his philosophy,* p.26.

[83] UM II, §8, p. 104. Hegelian philosophy of history is one of these. Nietzsche characteristically described the Hegel's attitude as thinking that "*the climax and terminus of the world-process coincided with his own existence in Berlin.*" (§8, pp. 146-147) For more on Nietzsche's appraisal and interaction with Hegelianism on this point see Pierre Chassard, *Nietzsche: finalisme et Histoire.* (Paris: Editions Copernic, 1977), pp. 22-30; Deleuze, Gilles. *Nietzsche et la philosophie.* (Paris: PUF Quadrige, 1962), pp. 180-183; Daniel Breazeale, "The Hegel-Nietzsche Problem" in *Nietzsche-Studien.* vol. 4 (1975), pp. 146-164.

> *as things are they had to be, as men now are they were bound to become, none may resist this inevitability."*[84]

He did not, however, limit this comment to human history.

> "[T]*he history of mankind is only the continuation of the history of animals and plants; even in the profoundest depths of the sea the universal historian still finds traces of himself as living slime* [...] *He stands high and proud upon the pyramid of the world-process*[.] "[85]

Although Nietzsche did not overtly dispute the validity of relating human history to natural history, what he found noxious was the subordination of natural history to human history, which implied that humans are the meaning behind the evolution of the natural world.

It was in this perspective that he had attacked David Strauss's book *The Old and the New Faith* (*Der alte und der neue Glaube*, 1872) in his *First Untimely Meditation*. Strauss's aim had been to develop an ethic on Darwinian grounds.[86] Whereas Strauss attempted to deduce a moral code from the process of biological evolution, he was unable, according to Nietzsche, to abandon traditional moral beliefs. What Strauss produced was a justification of actual morality derived from the new Darwinian scientific paradigm. Nietzsche, for his part, thought that this theory should have justified a completely *new* perspective on morality.

> "[H]*is task was much rather to take the phenomena of human goodness, compassion, love and self-abnegation, which do in fact exist, and derive and explain them from his Darwinist presuppositions: while he preferred by a leap into the imperative to flee from the task of* explanation. *In making this leap he is even able to elude, with an easy and frivolous hop, Darwin's fundamental proposition."*[87]

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[84] UM II, §9, p. 107.
[85] UM II, §9, pp. 107-108.
[86] Richard Weikart, "The Origins of Social Darwinism in Germany, 1859-1895" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*. vol. 54, no. 3 (1993), p. 483.
[87] UM I, §7, p. 30.

By stressing the importance of "*the phenomena of human goodness, compassion, love and self-abnegation,*" all of which are traditional Christian values, Strauss, or so Nietzsche read him, neglected the importance of the differences between Christianity and Darwinism. How, asked Nietzsche, underlining the incongruity of Strauss's position, can one presume to deduce the principles of Christian morality from a process that is the result of conflict and distinction between individuals? Yet, Nietzsche did not endorse an ethic based on his understanding of Darwinian competition. He simply stated that although he endorsed the doctrine of sovereign becoming he believed it to be "*true* but deadly[.]"[88] If Darwin's ideas were to be adopted as an ethic, said Nietzsche, there would appear "*systems of individualist egoism* [...] *and similar creations of utilitarian vulgarity*[.]"[89] Rather than understanding Darwinism ethically, he saw it as liberating moral concepts from the fetters of tradition, thus allowing art to freely ascribe meaning to a meaningless nature. A Darwinian inspired ethic was a grave danger, to Nietzsche's mind, which compounded his contemporaries' tendency to accumulate and disseminate knowledge with no regard to the consequences.[90] This led him to oppose his contemporaries with his own views on the uses of history, which stressed the propaedeutical importance of the study of history.[91]

1.2.2 The Uses of History

We have now seen that the "historical disease" was a diagnosis of his contemporaries' inapt assimilation of the past. Because memory cannot properly

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[88] UM II, §9, p. 112.
[89] UM II, §9, p. 113.
[90] UM II, §9, p. 113.
[91] UM II, §5, p. 83. However, Nietzsche was not alone in thinking this. Jacob Burckhardt wrote approvingly of Nietzsche's position: "*j'ai enseigné l'histoire non pour l'amour de ce que l'on appelle pathétiquement Histoire universelle, mais essentiellement comme une branche de la propédeutique*[.]" Qtd. in Karl Schlechta, *Le Cas Nietzshe.* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 68.

assimilate the past, it acts as a weight and overburdens the present.[92] From this I will now show that according to Nietzsche, history should be "*dominated and directed by a higher force* [that it] *does not itself dominate and direct.*"[93] The past must be understood and treated as something useful to the present.

> "*If you are to venture to interpret the past you can do so only out of the fullest exertion of the vigor of the present.* [...] *When the past speaks it always speaks as an oracle: only if you are the architect of the future and know the present will you understand it.*"[94]

Because history is an assessment of the past, it should be produced not as an intellectual curiosity, but as an impetus for growth and development. Its only value is the use that the present can make of it and not its justification for the *status quo*.

> "[W]*hen the study of history serves the life of the past in such a way that it undermines continuing and especially higher life, when the historical sense no longer conserves life but mummifies it, then the tree gradually dies unnaturally from the top downwards to the roots*[.]"[95]

If the present is dominated by a thirst for vestiges of its past, it cannot properly make use of its past. The avid collection of historical information that treats everything equally does not distinguish between what is beneficial and what is not. Nietzsche argued that history should be subordinated to be advantageous. As the title of the *Second Untimely Meditation* indicates (*On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*), history may either be useful or disadvantageous. His discussion of the proper treatment of history was therefore intended to return history's affective strength lost in the scientific pretensions to historical truth.

Thus, the difficulties pertaining to the study of history lie neither in assessing the proper methodological treatment of the past, nor in the resolution of distinct

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[92] UM II, §1, p. 61.
[93] UM II, §1, p. 67.
[94] UM II, §6, p. 94.
[95] UM II, §3, p. 75.

epistemological problems, but rather in its subordination to the needs of life, which allows the past to be affective. This subordination can be accomplished in three ways, which collectively constitute the temporality of life.[96] Life also needs history inasmuch as life "*acts and strives.*"[97] This is what Nietzsche calls monumental history. History can act as a repository for myths and ideals that can be drawn upon to inspire greatness. Life also needs history because it "*preserves and reveres,*"[98] which is the antiquarian type of history. Life needs to piously conserve its treasures, as well as venerate and conserve its past to remind it from whence it has come. Finally, life needs history because it "*suffers and seeks deliverance.*"[99] This is critical history. Life, because it is turned towards the possibilities of the future, needs to be able to reinvent itself by liberating itself from the constraints of the past. Accordingly, history can be subordinated to life in three ways. History serves life in the present tense through the development of inspiring myths; it serves life in the past tense by venerating and collecting the objects and ideas that carry the past with them; and it also serves life in the future tense as a critical reevaluation of itself and of the goals, ideals, and principles that form the basis of its temporality.

1.2.3 The Historical and the Unhistorical

Having argued that history must be subordinated to the needs of life, I will now explain the process that makes this possible. In so doing, the relation between Nietzsche's earlier work and his views developed in his *Second Untimely Meditation* will gradually begin to emerge. Following his comments about the need to adequately

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[96] Heidegger, in discussing Nietzsche's views on history in *Being and Time*, described the proper uses of history as authentic historicality. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Collins, 1962), p. 448.
[97] UM II, §2, p. 67.
[98] UM II, §2, p. 67.
[99] UM II, §2, p. 67.

assimilate the past, he stated that history is the production of the past and not its reproduction. It is "*an attempt to give oneself, as it were* a posteriori, *a past in which one would like to originate*[.]"[100] History is a creative act that contributes to the development and culture of an individual or a people. Such a creative act entails the ability to transform the past, and oneself, to better assimilate it. This requires what Nietzsche called a *plastic power* (*plastische kraft*).[101] Such a power allows one to be affected by the past, by permitting one to "*transform and incorporate into oneself what is past and foreign*[.]"[102] The inheritance that the past has bequeathed to us must be transformed and incorporated into ourselves. The past must be actualized in the present through which it acquires meaning.[103] However, since this assimilation is predicated on the plasticity of the subject, it implies that this plasticity must be shaped by something.

According to Nietzsche, three powers shape this plasticity. These powers are the historical power (memory), the non-historical (forgetting), and the suprahistorical power (*Überhistorische Mächt*). Both memory and forgetting are the most obvious and most prevalent uses of history. I will now review their importance and keep the third for later.

It is evident that history requires memory. History, inasmuch as it pertains to the past, requires the ability to preserve and remember it. But, as we have seen, the essence of the "historical disease" is an over-reliance on memory. His introduction of the three proper uses of history resolved this problem by identifying the proper ways that memory should be employed. Monumental and antiquarian history are dependent on memory inasmuch as they are respectively concerned with inspiring future

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[100] UM II, §3, p. 76.
[101] UM II, §1, p. 62.
[102] UM II, §1, p. 62
[103] Gianni Vattimo, *Dialogue with Nietzsche*. tr. William McGraig (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 22.

greatness through the memory of past greatness, and conserving the inheritance of the past. Critical history is related to memory insofar as its liberating function implies the existence of a memory from which one wishes to be emancipated. The three uses of history were thus three different manifestations of historical memory.

Nonetheless, historical memory implies a choice between what parts of the past should be preserved and allowed to affect us, and what parts should be discarded or ignored. A historian must therefore perpetuate the memory of some things and forget others. It is because of this that "*the unhistorical and the historical are necessary in equal measure for the health of an individual, of a people and of a culture.*"[104] A balance must be established between memory and forgetting. A historian must be historical because he must sustain a memory, and because of this historicality, the historian must paradoxically act non-historically as well. The act of remembering presupposes its opposite insofar as memory ascribes a higher value to some things that are remembered, and devalues others that are forgotten. This forgetting is the non-historical power. Nietzsche is here arguing for the importance of clearly circumscribing a horizon,[105] which distinguishes between what is to be remembered and kept within the horizon –what is visible and allowed to affect us– and what has a lesser value and should be excluded from the horizon –what is obscured and rendered ineffectual. It is only within such a horizon that history can exist in subordination to life in the form of the three uses already enumerated. Thus history requires memory, but it also implies creative forgetting.

However, forgetting is not only the negative implication of memory; it also has its own singular importance. In fact, as Nietzsche argued, forgetting has a primordial importance over memory.

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[104] UM II, §1, p. 63.

[105] UM II, §1, p. 63. See Daniel Gold, "The Horizon of History and the Production of the 'Strong Personality'" in *International Studies in Philosophy*. vol. 31, no. 3, p. 140.

> "[I]*t is possible to live almost without memory, and to live happily moreover, as the animal demonstrates; but it is altogether impossible to* live *at all without forgetting."*[106]

Life as Nietzsche understood it requires the ability to forget. Forgetting does not only mean ignoring and discarding past events and peoples in favor of others. It can also mean disregarding differences allowing abstractions and general statements.[107] The differences that distinguish separate entities and objects are discarded to allow for a general concept. Similarly, when something is given historical importance, the differences that separate it from the present are discarded. This allows the inclusion of a diversity of foreign elements in a history. The plasticity that characterizes the subject's assimilation of the past must be able to draw into itself a disparate set of elements that are reshaped and given meaning as to define its temporality.

1.2.4 The Suprahistorical

We now have a better understanding of the process by which history is assimilated. The circumscription of a historical horizon is the result of a combination of memory and forgetting that operate through the three types of history. Events, places, and peoples are integrated into the horizon by memory, and displaced and assimilated into the horizon by forgetting. It also implies an initial similarity with his earlier comments on teleology and physiology. The existence of a historical horizon populated by memory and forgetting signifies that history is essentially produced by the subject's perception of its past, rather than a scientific task directed towards

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[106] UM II, §1, p. 62. A good example of this can be found in Jorge Luis Borges' short story *Funes, the Memorious*. See Jorge Luis Borges, "Funes, the Memorious" in *Ficciones*. tr. Emecé Editiones (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1962), pp. 107-115.

[107] Alexander Nehamas, "The Genealogy of Genealogy: interpretation in Nietzsche's Second Untimely Meditation and in On the Genealogy of Morals" in Richard Schacht ed. *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: essays on Nietzsche Genealogy of Morals*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 271.

discerning a truth about the past. There is a third important element, however, to which I will now turn, that will ultimately allow me to relate Nietzsche's philosophy of history with his early interest in the consequences of the nascent evolutionary sciences.

The uses of history shaped by memory and forgetting, are imbued with meaning by the suprahistorical power. History's purpose is "*disclosing in the original theme a whole world of profundity, power and beauty.*"[108] This suprahistorical power is not based on any particular temporality itself, but rather assigns value to the elements contained within the historical horizon.

> "[T]*he past and the present are one, that is to say, with all their diversity identical in all that is typical and, as the omnipresence of imperishable types, a motionless structure of a value that cannot alter and a significance that is always the same.*"[109]
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> "*I call 'suprahistorical' the powers which lead the eye away from the becoming towards that which bestows upon existence the character of the eternal and stable*[.]"[110]

Although humans are constrained by their physiology to infer the existence of distinct successive moments, Nietzsche did not think this sufficient reason to infer the existence of temporality in itself. There is a perspective that can escape this constraint, to which Nietzsche imputes wisdom.[111] Shaped by the suprahistorical power, this wisdom turns away, out of disgust, from the succession of events in favor of a timeless perspective.[112] Despite the obvious dynamic structure of nature and existence, Nietzsche here still clung to the belief that there could exist, within this apparent flux, a meaning and purpose that was neither associated to any distinct temporality nor intrinsic to any object. This is the opposition between becoming and

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[108] UM II, § 6, p. 93.
[109] UM II, §1, p. 66.
[110] UM II, §10, p. 120
[111] UM II, §1, pp. 66.
[112] UM II, §1, pp. 66.

being.[113] Although history is fundamentally characterized by a succession of states and events, it is given purpose or explanation independently from any succession of events or any distinct temporal perspective. History as a becoming is transformed into a being.

Although he did not reject the contingent nature of events that could be described mechanistically by science, Nietzsche predicated this knowledge on something stable and eternal that finds its truth in religion and art.[114]

> "[T]*he significance of history will not be thought to lie in its general propositions* [...] *but that its value will be seen to consist in its taking a familiar theme* [...] *and composing inspired variations on it*[.]"[115]

The study of history does not have its purpose in the subsumption of a particular event under history conceived as a whole, but in the meaning the history has for life. Yet, neither memory nor forgetting can explain why something is retained within the historical horizon. Obviously, forgetting does have a role to play insofar as it discards differences and allows for the creation of general concepts, but this does not amount to giving objects meaning. It is the suprahistorical that gives meaning to history. With the suprahistorical, Nietzsche underlined a very important fact about the past, namely that it does not exist separately from its use by an individual subject, or culture. In discussing critical history, he made the comment that the critical reevaluation of history, which results in a new rendering of the past, must be undertaken with the caveat that this new construction will itself eventually become old and used.[116] That is the meaning of "*composing a inspired variation*[.]" History, as a function of life,

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[113] Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, his philosophy of contradictions and the contradictions of his philosophy*, p. 27, 30. As Giusseppe Tassone argues the supra-historical force is the "*metaphysical description of the ontological configuration of the universe.*" This ontological interpretation may explain why, unlike memory and forgetting, the suprahistorical is absent from his later discussion of history. Giusseppe Tassone, *A Study on the Idea of Progress in Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Critical Theory*. (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), p. 74.

[114] UM II, §10, p. 120.

[115] UM II, §6, p. 92-93.

[116] UM II, §3, p. 77.

changes as life grows and varies with time. The purpose that can be ascribed to history cannot reflect history taken as a whole, nor can it be derived from a unique temporal perspective. Historical purposes always accompany the life to which they are subordinated. History can only culminate in an "*exalted spirit-dialogue.*"[117] These higher types[118] are the purpose of history and are produced by the pedagogical and propaedeutical function of historical education. Therefore, history inasmuch as it is a judgment on the past, is not a teleological judgment that has its reason in the subject's observation of the past, but an *aesthetic* judgment, because the subsumption of the particular under the whole is not objective but subjective. The whole lies in the subject's historical horizon populated by memory and forgetting and given meaning independently from its temporality. Therefore, the past does not act "as-if" it had a purpose; but because it is creatively created and determined by the requirements of life, history necessarily has a purpose expressed through the three types of history.

1.2.5 Conclusion

We can now better understand the pertinence of beginning this chapter with Nietzsche's discussion of organic teleology and his evolutionary account of the formation of language. I have argued that under the influence of his reading of Lange, and his knowledge of Empedocles, through whom he understood Darwinism, Nietzsche argued that a purpose could only be the result of *our* organization both social and physiological. In the case of his aborted dissertation, this expressed the human physiological organization that made purposes necessary for any understanding of the natural world. I returned to this theme in my discussion of *On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense*, where truths were described as pertaining to

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[117] UM II, §9, p. 111.
[118] UM II, §9, p. 111.

the aesthetic realm by virtue of being metaphoric translations of stimuli that had lost their original tropic nature. Moreover, Nietzsche's discussion there also argued that such tropes were not only the result of a utilitarian need for preservation, but also the product of the human drive to the formation of metaphors. Thus, in both these texts, meaning was always instantiated from a perspective that was not linked to any objective viewpoint.

I revisited these arguments in *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, where Nietzsche argued for the important relation of history to life. This was argued in opposition to the then prevalent perspective that attempted to incorporate the features of the natural sciences into history. Nietzsche diagnosed this attitude as the result of the incapacity to properly assimilate the past. And, in response to his contemporaries, I read Nietzsche as asserting that history is not *discovered* in the traditional sense. The writing of history involves the artistic interpretation of the past that follows the delimitation of a historical horizon by memory and forgetting. This horizon is then conditioned by a suprahistorical power that ascribes a meaning independently of any temporality. History is therefore an artistic creation that finds its meaning not in the description of a process contained in the object of study, but in the subject's creative ability to interpret and give meaning to the past.

More importantly, the creative importance that Nietzsche ascribed to the subject integrates it into the world. Whereas Kant had understood the subject transcendentally, Nietzsche's comments from this period described it as immersed in the world. Despite the importance of physiology, however, this immersion is not a biological reduction of the subject. Through his discussions of teleology, truth and history, I have shown how Nietzsche expressed the world as the construction of the subject. Such a view could hardly be a biological reduction in the usual sense, because this horizon is not only the result of the physiology of the senses, but also of

the interpretation and creative use of these organs. Just as in *On Truth and Lying in an Extramoral Sense*, and in the notes from the same year, where the sense's interpretation of external stimuli was conditioned on the manner that these stimuli could affect the organ, historical interpretation is conditioned by the subject being able to create a historical world that can affect it by inspiring growth. One must note, as you may have already done, that Nietzsche did not explicitly reject the hypothesis that there might exist a world existing in-itself independently of the subject. Although the creation of meaning is active, the reception of external stimuli, both historical and physiological, remained uniquely passive. Therefore his discussion implied the existence of an unconditioned world that has the capacity to affect the subject.

This important consideration will lead us into his later discussion of history. The existence of an unconditioned world that remains empirically unknown spurred Nietzsche to continue his work on history and led him to embark on a critical and historical search for the intellectual origin of this hypothetical world. In the next chapter I will therefore undertake an explication of this project. This critical approach to the history of values characterizes much of his later reflections on the subject.[119] It was this historical endeavor that brought him away from his earlier interests in art and philology and spurred him to resume his earlier desire to develop a greater knowledge of evolutionary science.[120] This all lends credence to both Wolfgang Müller-Lauter and Karl Schlecta,[121] who have both argued that Nietzsche's earlier reluctance to give philosophical importance to history was replaced after the *Untimely Meditations* by a

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[119] Daniel Breazeale argues that Critical History was a late addition to the text and that Nietzsche was a practitioner of this type of history throughout his career. Daniel Breazeale, "Nietzsche, Critical History, and 'Das Pathos der Richtertum' " in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, vol. 1, no. 211 (2000), pp. 57-76; p. 59 n4.

[120] Thomas Brobjer, "Nietzsche's View of the Value of Historical Studies and Methods" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 65, no. 2 (2004), p. 304.

[121] Karl Schlechta, *Le Cas Nietzsche*, p. 67 and Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, his philosophy of contradictions and the contradictions of his philosophy*, p. 39 n73.

desire to integrate history to philosophical inquiry. This new attitude did not spare any unconditioned perspective including the suprahistorical one we have just examined. The new project began with the writing of *Human, all too Human* where he described his intention of undermining all metaphysical and artistic values by interrogating their origin. This will lead us to Nietzsche's overt and highly critical discussion of English moralists who he labeled Darwinists and will culminate in his renunciation of Darwinism. Ultimately, however, I will show in the third and final chapter that if Nietzsche here tacitly endorsed an unconditional world, by the end of his career this understanding of history was replaced with a physiological philosophy of history that repudiated his earlier acceptance of Kantian themes.

Chapter Two: Nietzsche and Evolutionary History

Part 1: *"Réealism"*

2.1.1. Historical Philosophy

In the first chapter, we saw Nietzsche argue the historical importance of creative retrospection. I will now argue that beginning with *Human, all too Human* (1878-80) his discussion of history became mainly concerned with its critical possibilities. Already, in his *Second Untimely Meditation: On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* (1874), he had described the critical importance of historically exposing how every "*first nature was once a second nature and that every victorious second nature will become a first.*"[122] Critical history offered the possibility of transforming philosophical inquiry by exposing the conditional nature of all evaluations thus dispelling any pretension to absolute truth.[123]

Now, the similarity between the critical project discussed in the previous chapter and the one begun in *Human, all too Human* is valid only up to a certain extent. Previously, Nietzsche had described history as dependent on the suprahistorical power that determined the meaning of the elements contained within the historical horizon. His use of this power had tacitly recognized the existence of a super-sensible reality. Yet, with *Human, all too Human*, his critical inquiry was broadened to include all unconditioned forces, which were now considered suspect and subject to historical criticism. At the most, therefore, the critical type of history adumbrated the project he undertook in *Human, all too Human.*

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[122] UM II, §3, p. 77.

[123] Karl Schlechta, "Les rapports de Nietzsche à l'histoire" in *Le Cas Nietzsche.* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) p. 67.

Whereas his opposition to the then-prevalent 'scientific' approach to history had dominated Nietzsche's early discussion of history in his *Untimely Meditations*, starting with *Human, all too Human* (1878-1880) his comments were largely directed towards the metaphysical tradition. History was opposed to this tradition, which emphasized "*a miraculous source in the very kernel and being of the 'thing-in-itself'*."[124] He here understood the philosophical tradition's affirmation of the timeless character of its concepts as the result of its rather short history.[125] Because philosophy had existed for a limited amount of time and human phenomena had changed very little during this time, philosophy had been unable to perceive the extent and the importance of its debt to evolutionary history. Philosophy had yet to realize that "*there are* no eternal facts, *just as there are no absolute truths.*"[126] He described the process that gave birth to philosophical concepts as akin to painting where the "*human intellect* [...] *transported its erroneous basic conceptions into things*" themselves.[127] The reality of sense experience is nothing less than "*the world spun out of intellectual errors we have inherited,*" rather than an apparent world conditional on super-sensible essences.[128] Consequently, to expose this creation, Nietzsche proposed a historical philosophy he called a "*chemistry of concepts,*" which purported to explicate the combinations of baser elements that had combined to create higher ones.[129] Inasmuch as it is the result of combinations of elements, knowledge has a

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[124] *Human, all too Human.* tr. R.J. Hollingdale, §1 (henceforth referred to as HH I).
[125] HH I, §2.
[126] HH I, §2.
[127] HH I, §16.
[128] HH I, §16. See also FP 1877, 23 [125]. Nietzsche's rejection of a conditional world stems in part from his reading of Afrikan Spir. For more on Nietzsche and Spir see Robin Small, "Chap. 1: Spir and Time" in *Nietzsche in Context.* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), pp. 1-20; see also Paolo D'Iorio, "La superstition des philosophes critiques: Nietzsche et Afrikan Spir" in *Nietzsche-Studien*, vol. 22 (1993), pp. 270-276.
[129] HH I, §1. For more on this idea and the presence of chemistry in Nietzsche's readings and writings see Duncan Large, "Nietzsche's Conceptual Chemistry" in *Nietzsche and Science.* eds. Gregory Moore and Thomas Brobjer (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), pp. 189-196.

history and may invariably be interrogated historically.[130] It is for this reason that Nietzsche came to claim that "*the whole of philosophy is henceforth forfeit to history.*"[131] Philosophical inquiry thus became necessarily linked to history.

2.1.2. English Moral History

As I will now argue, Nietzsche's inquiry into the historical origins of knowledge ran parallel to his reading and discussion of moral history, which was the context in which he became closely acquainted with evolution. In the 1870s and 1880s, human and moral evolution was associated with the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) because they traced the origins of morality and human physiology to our prehistoric 'animality.' But there is very little evidence that Nietzsche read any of Darwin's books and none that justified the claim that he read either of the two works just mentioned.[132] Nonetheless, in a letter written in the summer of 1877 (August 3/4 1877) he wrote enthusiastically

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[130] This marks a change in Nietzsche's thought. Whereas the supra-historical power had dominated history in his early period, the recognition and affirmation of the historical character of knowledge, liberates history from an atemporal perspective. See Gregory Moore, "Nietzsche, Spencer, and the Ethics of Evolution" in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 23 (2002), p. 3; Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 59; Thomas Brobjer, "Nietzsche's View of the Value of Historical Studies and Methods" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 65, no. 2 (2004), p. 304.

[131] *Human, all too Human: Assorted Opinions and Maxims*. tr. R.J. Hollingdale. §10 (Henceforth referred to as HH II: MOM).

[132] Claire Richter argued that Nietzsche had read Darwin during his friendship with Ludwig Rütimeyer during his Basel years. However she does not give any textual evidence for this, which makes such a claim problematic. See Claire Richter, *Nietzsche et les théories biologiques contemporaines*. (Paris: Mercure de France, 1911), pp. 8, 14, 195. Nietzsche did, however, read Darwin's essay *A Biographical Sketch of an Infant* presented to him by George Croom Robertson, the editor of the prestigious English periodical *Mind*, during the summer of 1877 ("A Biographical Sketch of an Infant". *Mind*, vol. 2, no. 7 [July 1877], pp. 285-294). However it is unclear whether Nietzsche actually read the article. Robin Small (Robin Small, *Nietzsche and Rée: a Star Friendship*. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], p. 88-89) argues that Robertson's German was better than Nietzsche's English and concludes from this that Robertson probably summarized the article for Nietzsche. Jean Gayon ("Nietzsche and Darwin" in *Biology and the Foundation of Ethics*. eds. J. Maienschein and M. Ruse [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], p. 160), on the other hand, assumes that Nietzsche actually read the article. This is relatively unimportant because the article contains very little information pertaining to Darwin's theory of evolution through Natural Selection.

about English evolutionism.[133] In this letter, he described this school of thought as the only intellectual current that was then worth pondering.[134] Nietzsche's initial interest in English evolutionary thought in *Human, all too Human* developed not only from an appreciation of its eschewal of traditional teleologies, which had dominated his early period, but also from that of its rejection of metaphysics in general. However, and more importantly, this rejection of metaphysics was accomplished through the use of utility as its core explanatory principle.[135] His early enthusiasm for the Darwinian use of utility did not last until the end of his career because it was from this concept that he derived his criticism of Darwinism.

This chapter will therefore follow the transformation of Nietzsche's appraisal of the concept of utility as he read English moral historians. But here it suffices to say that through his reading of English moralists, Nietzsche progressively discarded utility as the origin of moral evaluations. Because he did not accept the premise of a purposeful history, the postulate of an original utility that gave meaning to moral evaluations was unmasked as the English evolutionists' *moral* interpretation of evolutionary history. It was precisely Nietzsche's reading of Herbert Spencer's *The Data of Ethics* in 1880 and 1881 that convinced him of the weakness of the English conception of evolutionary history. It is his gradual rejection of the explanatory use of utility that eventually led him to also reject the search for historical origins altogether and replace it with an interpretive understanding of history.

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[133] Letter to Paul Rée, August 3/4 1877. KGB II/5, pp.264-265. Translated in *Friedrich Nietzsche, Paul Rée, Lou von Salome Correspondance.* ed. E. Pfeiffer, tr. O. Hansen-Love and J. Lacoste (Paris: PUF, 1979), p. 34.

[134] Dirk Robert Johnson argues that Darwinism was enticing for Nietzsche because it offered "*a denial of a transcendent moral universe and the relativity of values* [and an] *emphasis on scientific naturalism and historical origins.*" "On the Way to the 'Anti-Darwin'; Nietzsche's Darwinian Meditations in the Middle Period" in *Tijdschrift voor filosofie.* 65: 4 (2003), p. 666.

[135] Patrick Wotling, "La morale sans métaphysique. «Vitalisme» et psychologie de la morale chez Darwin, Spencer et Nietzsche" in *Lectures de Nietzsche.* eds. J-F Balaudé et P. Wotling (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2000) p. 374.

In this chapter I will therefore follow the change in his reception of the English type of moral history, using the concept of utility as my guide. This will be done in two parts. The first part will detail Nietzsche's friendship with Paul Rée, which led him to embark on a specifically historical criticism of the origin of morality. This ended with him refuting Rée's claim that morality necessarily developed out of the utility of altruism. The second part begins by discussing Spencer and his evolutionary history of morality. This will lead me to describe how Nietzsche's progressive grasp of the problems inherent to English evolutionary theory brought him to argue against the Spencerian emphasis on the expediency of morality. This ultimately resulted in his assertion that history is fundamentally an *interpretive* activity, and that the evolutionary importance of utility was simply the result of Spencer's *moral* interpretation of evolutionary history. I will then close this chapter by showing how his reading of Spencer and Rée led him to renounce the philosophical significance he previously gave to Darwinism.

2.1.3. Nietzsche and "Réealism"

Nietzsche's interest for the English type of moral history coincided with the beginning of his friendship with Paul Rée. In 1878, Nietzsche wrote to Rée that *Human, all too Human "belongs to you -- to others it is only given."*[136] The actual extent of Rée's influence is uncertain however.[137] Nonetheless, it is Rée who is generally identified as the source of Nietzsche's knowledge of English evolutionary ideas during this period.[138] Rée may have introduced Nietzsche to English

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[136] Letter of 24 April 1878, KGB II/5, p. 324. Translated in *Friedrich Nietzsche, Paul Rée, Lou von Salome Correspondance*. ed. E. Pfeiffer, tr. O. Hansen-Love and J. Lacoste (Paris: PUF, 1979), p. 42.

[137] For example, Karl Jaspers claims that "*Nietzsche learned hardly anything from Rée.*" qtd. in Small, *Basic Writings Paul Rée*, p. xxxiv.

[138] Robin Small, *Nietzsche and Rée: a Star Friendship*, pp. 72, 83-84; Brendan Donnellan, "Friedrich Nietzsche and Paul Rée: Cooperation and Conflict" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*. vol. 43 (1982) pp. 597-598; Patrick Wotling "Moral sans métaphysique" p. 351; Charles Andler *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa*

evolutionary thought through his two published works: *Psychological Observations* (*Psychologische Beobachtungen,* 1875) and *The Origin of Moral Sensations* (*Der Ursprung der moralische Empfindungen,* 1877).[139] Certainly these books had an influence on the historical perspective of *Human, all too Human,* but Nietzsche never expressly equated his ideas with those of Rée.[140] It may therefore be more judicious to speak of Nietzsche's "Réealism"[141] as an intellectual dalliance that he quickly overcame, but which had a lasting effect on his reading and writings.

Nietzsche's "Réealism" developed from his reappraisal of the relationship between history and philosophy, introduced in the first part of volume I of *Human, all too Human.* However, unlike his previous arguments about history, Nietzsche here explicitly acknowledged the importance of the natural sciences for history. If the philosophical tradition had long been ignorant of the historical contingency of its concepts, then the traditional temporal horizons of concern to philosophy must be broadened.

> "[E]*verything essential in the development of mankind took place in primeval times, long before the four thousand years we more or less know about; during these years mankind may well not have altered very much.*"[142]

This claim shows clearly that Nietzsche's understanding of history had already surpassed his earlier conceptions of it as the object of written accounts and debates. It also implies an extension of the *scope* of what he calls history. Thus construed,

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pensée, tome II. (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), p. 305. On the relation between Nietzsche, Rée and English thought see Dirk Robert Johnson, "On the Way to the 'Anti-Darwin,'" pp. 662-666. Claire Richter argued that Rée introduced Nietzsche to Spencerianism (*Nietzsche et les théories biologiques contemporaines*, p. 28).

[139] Nietzsche recognized the importance of Rée's *Origin of Moral Sensation* in the preface of *On the Genealogy of Moral* (GM, Preface, §4).

[140] Nietzsche later defended himself against accusations that *Human, all too Human* was a continuation of Rée's work (EH, "Human, all too Human" §5).

[141] This is the word Nietzsche uses to describe Rée's thought in *Ecce Homo* ("Human, all too Human", §6).

[142] HH I, §2.

history "*cannot be separated from natural science*[.]"[143] Science's newfound importance led Nietzsche to relinquish the question of origins and beginnings to "*the physiology and history of the evolution of organisms and concepts.*"[144] Now, while that does not necessarily mean that Nietzsche *supplanted* metaphysics with science,[145] both history and science had to inform philosophy and any understanding of the combinations that led to the successive metaphysical divisions of knowledge had to be understood through the historical conditions for such combinations.[146] Thus, his "chemistry of concepts" had to identify the original elements that combined to produce the concepts of metaphysics, but it also had to elucidate the *process* by which such combinations came about.

Paul Rée's influence can be perceived in Nietzsche's critical history of morality. An essential starting point that both men shared was the claim that "[m]*oral man* [...] *stands no closer to the intelligible (metaphysical) world than does physical man.*"[147] Just as the species human has evolved, so has the *concept* of human. Just as there is no unconditioned reality, there is no unconditioned morality. 'Man', as philosophical concept, came into existence just as 'Man' the species had, and, as such, it can no longer be understood as the stable notion to which previous moralists had subscribed.[148] The history of the concepts man, soul etc. is the history of an error that was once useful, but whose original utility has been gradually forgotten and transformed into a metaphysical concept. With this, Nietzsche sought to undertake the "*always avoided investigation of the origin and history of moral sensations.*"[149]

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[143] HH I, §1.
[144] HH I, §10.
[145] Steven Galt Crowell, "Nietzsche among the Neo-Kantians; or, the Relation between Science and Philosophy" in *Nietzsche and the Sciences vol. I.* ed. Babette Babich (Boston : Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), p. 79.
[146] HH I, §20.
[147] HH I, §37.
[148] HH I, §2.
[149] HH I, §37.

Although Rée may not have been the primary instigator of Nietzsche's project, the two certainly agreed on the value and proper method of such an investigation.[150] This is demonstrated by the transformation in the role played by utility in Nietzsche's work. Starting in the late 1870s, it was crucial to Nietzsche who adapted to his own uses. By the early 1880s, however, it led him away from his own "Réealism," because he broke with Rée's analysis of the evolutionary utility of *altruistic actions*.

Now, Rée had read Darwin and he accordingly stressed the importance of the utility of evolved customs for an understanding of their origin.[151] Rée argued that the fundamental moral concept of "good" could be traced back to some time where "good" meant the same as "good-for" something.[152] Eventually, according to Rée,[153] this original utility became custom and habit, and its primeval utility was forgotten. Finally, through the work of moralists such as those Rée praised, this habit, which had been elevated to a metaphysical principle (The Good), could be demonstrated to be an error based on an initial utilitarian evaluation.

Similarly, *Human, all too Human* identified the utility of moral evaluations as their evolutionary *raison d'être*. Fundamentally, utility is the ability of an act or an object to secure pleasure and eschew displeasure.[154] "[O]*ne calls individual actions good or bad* [...] *solely on account of their useful or harmful consequences.*"[155] Something is said to be good only insofar as it is "*good for something, as useful* [.]"[156] Thus, something is valued as good because its consequences secure pleasure or prevent displeasure. Moral evaluations are simply appraisals of consequences

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[150] For example, Rée claimed that "*the nature of any* [moral] *sensation is clear only to the extent that the history of its origin is also clear.*" (Rée, Paul. *The Origins of Morals Sensations* in *Basic Writings Paul Rée*, p. 92).
[151] Rée, *The Origin of Moral Sensations*, p. 87.
[152] Rée, *The Origin of Moral Sensations*, p. 121.
[153] Rée, *The Origin of Moral Sensations*, p. 98.
[154] HH I, §34.
[155] HH I, §39.
[156] HH I, §96.

conditioned by the desire to secure pleasure and avoid displeasure, which, to Nietzsche, was nothing other than *drive to self-preservation.*[157] Thus in this period, Nietzsche ascribed to utility the same moral and evolutionary significance as Rée.

2.1.4. Morality as Constraint

We have now seen that Rée and Nietzsche shared a common interest in the origins of moral evaluations assayed through their utility. I will now show that Nietzsche did not agree that there was a strict equation between the drive to self-preservation and the *origin* of morality. Although morality may be associated to this drive, it is not originally synonymous with *individual* preservation because it does not confer any immediate evolutionary advantage. According to Nietzsche, morality is the consequence of organized societies and states prior to which there are no specifically moral evaluations.[158] The development of morality is characterized by the transition from a state, marked by the momentary search for sustenance and security, to a state marked by the "*collective-individual*" that seeks the most general and enduring well being.[159] In such a state, the primitive utility determined by immediate pleasurable and harmful consequences is replaced, through a gradual forgetting of its origin, by a consideration of the motives and the nature of man.[160] It is only when individuals have moved away from the consideration of the immediate consequences of their actions that the ground is prepared for morality.

The transition from a state of 'natural' competition to the collective-individual is thus marked by the transformation of utility from an immediate and personal use to a general and collective one. However, according to Nietzsche, this implies that the

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[157] HH I, §99.
[158] HH I, §99.
[159] HH I, §94.
[160] HH I, §39.

individual is henceforth sacrificed to the collective inasmuch as "*the enduring advantage of the community is to take precedence over the advantage of the individual* [...] *even over his survival.*"[161] But this also suggests that morality did *not* develop out of altruistic drives that conferred an evolutionary advantage.[162] Although he conceded that the formation of groups promoted personal or filial safety, he did *not* derive *morality* from such alliances.[163] Morality then developed only when these groups took the form of a collective-individuality or, were dominated by some more powerful person, and exerted a constraint or compulsion over particular individuals.[164]

> "*Morality is preceded by* compulsion, *indeed it is for a time itself still compulsion, to which one accommodates oneself for the avoidance of what one regards as unpleasurable. Later it becomes custom, later still voluntary obedience, finally almost instinct: then like all that has for a long time been habitual and natural, it is associated with pleasure*[.]"[165]

Morality thus emerges out of the compulsion that orders individuals within a collective. Through its subsumption by an organized society, the moral value of an individual is determined by its conformity with the moral code. That moral code is directed towards the preservation of the community, however, and not toward the preservation of the individual.[166] Consequently, morality is conformity with "*a law or tradition established from of old* [...] *a long inheritance* [.]"[167] The predicates

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[161] HH II: MOM, §89.
[162] Rée argued for the individual evolutionary advantage of the social-instincts (altruism) (see Rée *The Origin of Moral Sensations*, p. 92-93). This was not particular to Rée, Darwin himself had defended the utility of morality conceived as the "*general good or welfare of the community*" (*The Descent of Man and Selection in to Relation to Sex*. [New York: Modern Library, 1871], p. 490). Morality in this case is an individual evolutionary advantage in the competition with other communities inasmuch as the safety of the community implies the safety of the individual (*Descent*, p. 498).
[163] HH I, §98.
[164] HH I, §99.
[165] HH I, §99.
[166] HH I, §96.
[167] HH I, §96.

"good" and "evil" reflect the needs of the group as sanctified over time. Utility is moral, then, only when there is an established tradition to which it can relate. Therefore, unlike Rée, Nietzsche did not predicate the development of morality on an individual evolutionary advantage, but rather on the compulsion and constraint of something greater, which transforms individuals into collective-individuals.

The importance of compulsion and constraint for morality is the fundamental characteristic of Nietzsche's elucidation of morality. It was later discussed and refined in *Daybreak* (1881), where he famously described what he called the morality of custom.[168] "[M]*orality is nothing other (therefore no more!) than obedience to customs* [which are] *the traditional way of behaving and evaluating.*"[169] The meaning of a moral act lies in obedience to the tradition and not in rational calculation. Conformity with the tradition is paramount. Although "*custom represents the experiences of men of earlier times as to what they supposed useful and harmful* "[170] it is not these experiences that render conformity necessary. "[T]*he sense of custom (morality) applies, not to these experiences as such, but to the age, the sanctity, the indiscussability of the custom.*"[171] Even the act that conforms to tradition but is performed for its personal usefulness, or motives similar to those that founded the tradition, is immoral to Nietzsche. Morality, inasmuch as it is custom, is the same thing as tradition, that "*higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands what is useful to us, but because it commands.*"[172] As the regulator of conduct within societies, morality is linked to no utility other than that of the group, even if this is to the detriment of the individual.

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[168] *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality.* tr. R.J. Hollingdale, §9. Henceforth referred to as D.
[169] D, § 9.
[170] D, §19.
[171] D, §19.
[172] D, § 9.

Moreover, the *constraint* of morality is not always experienced as such. Adherence and conformity to custom is the animal need for safety transferred to human societies. "[I]*t is not improper to describe the entire phenomenon of morality as animal.*"[173] Obviously, the behavior demanded by custom is not the same as that required for survival in nature, but adherence to tradition is, according to Nietzsche, functionally analogous to seeking safety in nature. In nature danger tends to come from outside the group; in an evolved community, the greatest danger comes from *within*.

> "*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, enamored have their easily discoverable parallels in the animal world.*"[174]

It is in adhering to custom that an individual finds safety. Just as animal adaptation is the result of the need to "*elude one's pursuers and be favored in the pursuit of one's prey,*"[175] the human individual seeks safety in conformity and adapts to society.[176] Nietzsche's description of the origins of morality is, in this respect, similar to Rée's position. However, the similarity extends to the sole consideration of utility. Morality is useful to the individual inasmuch as it offers safety from danger. But Nietzsche refused to infer from this that morality and membership in a community constituted an *evolutionary advantage*. Since the moral imperative, as Nietzsche reconceived it, is fundamentally that of obedience to custom, the greatest danger lies in the deviation from the norm and not in any threat posed by outside forces. Individuals initially experienced morality, and its concomitant valuing of altruism, as a constraint and not

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[173] D, §26.
[174] D, §26.
[175] D, §26.
[176] This was reformulated in BGE §198, §201, where Nietzsche described the importance of fear for morality.

as an advantage whether social or 'evolutionary.' Furthermore, rather than describe morality as advantageous for adapting to external conditions, Nietzsche preferred to conceive morality as *forcing* the adaptation of the individual to the group.

2.1.5. The "Strong" and the "Weak"

We can now see how Nietzsche disagreed with Rée as to the origin of morality's utility. I will now briefly return to *Human, all too Human* and use the constraint of morality embedded in tradition to explain how it becomes the means by which instincts and evaluations are reinforced and perpetuated, which will grant me the right to claim that Nietzsche broke with Rée as to evolutionary importance of altruism. At first glance it may appear that Nietzsche remained close to Rée, who argued for the importance of habit in the evolution of behaviors.[177] The use of an organ, or an evaluation, is strengthened by habituation over several generations. However, in one passage from *Human, all too Human* Nietzsche differed with Rée: "*the celebrated struggle for existence does not seem to me to be the only theory by which the progress or strengthening of a man or race can be explained.*"[178] This is in opposition to Darwin inspired perspectives that held that the strongest and best adapted individuals transmit the best traits. Nietzsche undermined this idea by arguing that the survival of the fittest in no way guarantees evolutionary progress. The

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[177] Paul Rée, *Psychological Observations.* in *Basic Writings,* p. 76. See also *The Origin of Moral Sensations* in *Basic Writings,* p. 132. The importance of habituation does not originate with Rée, but he probably influenced Nietzsche in this regard. See Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*, p. 62-63.

[178] HH I, §224, see also FP 1875, 12 [22]. This passage is generally considered as the beginning of Nietzsche's "Anti-Darwinism" because it downplays the importance of natural selection. On this see Jean Gayon, "Nietzsche and Darwin" pp. 162-163; John Richardson, "Nietzsche Contra Darwin" in *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 65, no. 3 (2002), p. 540 n12; Pieter Mostert, "Nietzsche's Reception of Darwinism" in *Bijdragen tot de Dierkunde.* vol. 49, no. 2 (1979), pp. 240-241; Barbara Stiegler, "Nietzsche lecteur de Darwin" in *Revue philosophique de France et de l'étranger*, vol. 123, no. 2 (1998), p. 386, 389; Barbara Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie* (Paris: PUF, 2001), p. 100.

strong types, which are the best adapted individuals and therefore superior in the struggle for resources, simply maintain the customs already present in the group because they are also the best adapted to the *constraint* of tradition. Therefore, for Nietzsche, morality was "*a hindrance to the creation of new and better customs*[.]"[179] Morality is conservative, maintains values and does not willingly accept change. The strengthening of these traits is but the affirmation of already established evaluations and consequently, it is not conducive to evolutionary change.

On the other hand, weaker individuals can well be the source of change and even progress. "*The strongest natures* preserve *the type, the weaker help it to* evolve."[180] Whereas the "strong" affirm the hereditary selected evaluations, the "weak" bring *new* traits to the community.[181] The strong individuals are a stabilizing force, but it is the ability to incorporate the newer and weaker individuals that marks a group as being able to change. It is therefore the potential weakening of the whole that simultaneously denotes an evolutionary potential.

> "*A people that becomes somewhere weak and fragile but is as a whole still strong and healthy is capable of absorbing the infection of the new and incorporating it to its advantage.*"[182]

It was the capacity to assimilate the "infection" of novelty that Nietzsche understood as the most important evolutionary quality, and not the continual affirmation of already-selected traits. Moreover, this curious passage affirms the idea that change is not necessarily produced by outside factors. Change is not an adaptation to external forces, but an adaptation to *internal* ones that leads to decline or to evolutionary change.

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[179] D, §19.
[180] HH I, §224. One should note that by the mid-1880s he inverted this vocabulary.
[181] HH I, §224.
[182] HH I, §224.

It should now be clear that Nietzsche was progressively moving away from Rée's evolutionary hypothesis. First, he denied Rée's claim that morality was predicated on altruistic drives that, through the formation of social groups, conferred an evolutionary advantage. This was because he did not believe that altruism led to morality; rather it was morality that led to altruism. Second, Nietzsche disputed Rée's claim that morality was useful to the individual because he understood morality as a constraint, frequently detrimental to individuals. It was only in relation to the constraint of tradition that Nietzsche thought morality could be considered useful. Third, Nietzsche moved past Rée and the English evolutionists by claiming that the gradual assertion of selected traits neither manifested nor was conducive to evolutionary change.

Although Nietzsche did not yet reject the importance of utility for understanding the history of the origin of morality, he could not accept Rée's explanation of such an origin. Rée's account of the origin of morality was circular: it demonstrated its utility viewed from the perspective of modernity, but did not explain its inception. The demonstration of morality's utility, does not necessarily explain its origin because it does not make its existence *necessary*.[183] Morality, like many other things is useful, but that hardly explain why it exists. Nietzsche used the example of the eye to illustrate this point. The eye is a useful organ for the body, but does that imply that its origin lies in its utility? Hardly, the eye appeared only "*after chance had put the apparatus together.*"[184] The utility of the eye did not precede, but *followed* its origination. It is in this context that Nietzsche turned to Herbert Spencer's *The Data of Ethics*. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Spencer's position is contrasted to Rée's historically untenable and absurd use of utility, and his explanation is described as

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[183] D, §37.
[184] D, §122.

"*reasonable and psychologically tenable.*"[185] Nietzsche did not, however, adopt Spencer's evolutionary explanation for the importance of altruism as his own. I will now turn to his *reading* of Spencer and use it in the remainder of the chapter to explain Nietzsche's ultimate rejection of Darwinism.

Part 2: *"Against the English"*

2.2.1. Herbert Spencer's *The Data of Ethics*

As I have already remarked, there is little evidence to suggest that Nietzsche ever read any of Darwin's major works. He did, however, read Spencer's *The Data of Ethics*[186] in 1880 and 1881, which is probably the closest he ever got to English evolutionism.[187] Spencer is therefore generally regarded as the source of much of his criticisms of Darwin and Darwinism.[188] This reading is important because it is in *The Data of Ethics* that he discovered a moralization of evolution that led him to reject Darwinism and its evolutionary history.

Herbert Spencer rivaled Hegel in British 19th century philosophical debates, yet he is today most often remembered as coining Darwin's infamous dictum

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[185] GM I, §3

[186] Herbert Spencer, *Data of Ethics* in *Principles of Ethics vol. I.* (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1978).

[187] This is testified by the fact that the first reference to Spencer can be found in the notebook from the winter of 1879-1880 (NV I; KSA 9, 1). Nietzsche reread Spencer in the Summer and Fall of 1881 (M III; KSA 9, 11). One should note, however, that the French translation of the notes from 1881, found in vol. 5 of G. Colli and M. Montinari's *Oeuvres philosophique completes* (tr. P. Klossowski [Paris: Gallimard, 1967]), do not have the same entry numbers as in the KSA. Furthermore, numerous notes found in the KSA are absent from the French translation (most notably KSA 9, 11[343] "Gegen Spencer"). I will the concordance between the *Fragments Posthumes* and the KSA where applicable.

[188] Barbara Stiegler describes Darwin and Spencer as part of "*le même front*" (*Nietzsche et la Biologie*, p. 95). See also Robin Small, *Nietzsche and Rée,* p. 169; Jean Gayon, "Nietzsche and Darwin," p. 160; John Richardson, *Nietzsche's New Darwinism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 139; John Richardson "Nietzsche contra Darwin" in *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research.* vol. 65, no. 3 (2002), p. 542; Gregory Moore *Nietzsche Biology and Metaphor,* p. 61; Gregory Moore, "Nietzsche, Spencer, and the Ethics of Evolution," pp. 3-4, 19; Thomas Brobjer "Nietzsche's Reading of Natural Science," p. 36; Patrick Wotling, "La morale sans métaphysique," p. 352.

"*survival of the fittest.*"[189] However, unlike Darwin, Spencer's account of the evolution of species was not predicated on natural selection as much as it was on neo-Lamarckian adaptation. According to Spencer, evolutionary change unfolds through adaptation to the changing external conditions. In *The Data of Ethics*, Spencer presented ethical conduct precisely as the *product* of evolutionary adaptation.[190] "[T]*he leading contrasts of character between the savage and civilized, are just to be expected from the process of adaptation.*"[191] Spencer's argument was that if everything in the world evolved from low and "simple organisms" (unicellular), to high and "complex organisms" (civilized humans), then mental phenomena, which include ethics and morality, must have evolved in like manner.[192] Therein lay Nietzsche's interest in Spencerianism. Spencerianism attempted to demonstrate the link between animal and human behavior and Nietzsche could then explain morality, ethics and evaluations in general, independently of any metaphysical principle by exploiting the new discoveries of the evolutionary sciences. In this context, morality became a product of evolutionary adaptation like any physiological organ.

In construing ethical conduct in relation to adaptation, Spencer distinguished good from bad conduct by the degree to which it was adjusted to the ends of life.[193] Something is considered good because it is good for some finality. This finalist good

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[189] Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection of the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life.* (New York: Signet Classic, 1958), p. 75. It should be noted that it is inaccurate to identify Spencer as Darwinian. Spencer's ideas were probably closer to Lamarck's functional adaptation than to Darwin's Natural Selection (see Peter Bowler, *Evolutionism: the History of an Idea* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983], pp. 149, 253.) Whereas Darwin stressed the anonymous action of Natural Selection, Spencer was much closer to a form of vitalism that owed much to Lamarck's functional adaptation and the to English Utilitarian moral theory (see Patrick Wotling, "La morale sans métaphysique," p. 361). This led many early commentators to describe Nietzsche's position as Lamarckian. See, for example, Charles Andler. *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée, tome III.* pp.113, 193, 449; Claire Richter, *Nietzsche et les théories biologiques contemporaines*, pp. 8, 9, 43, 233.

[190] Herbert Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, pp. 37-335. Henceforth referred to as DE.

[191] DE, p. 214.

[192] DE, p. 96-97.

[193] DE, p. 58.

is defined by the "*processes of life as carried on under established conditions of existence.*"[194] Good conduct is therefore the adequation of acts to ends determined by the conditions of existence. The sensations of pleasure and pain evince the degree of adaptation to the conditions of existence insofar as pleasure accompanies well-adapted conduct, and pain accompanies ill adapted conduct, which threatens extinction if it is irremediably deficient.[195] Thus, pleasure is related to adaptation and pain to misadaptation.

According to Spencer, happiness is another element of the evolution of conduct. By way of explaining this happiness, Spencer distinguished three types of conduct, each of which reflect variations in the conditions of existence.[196] The first is conduct that is adapted to the requirements of individual life. This described most forms of animal conduct. The second is conduct adapted to life in family groups such as is the case for some greater primates and "primitive" humans. Finally, the third form of conduct was adapted to life in society. The conduct of simple organisms, which exist independently of family or social groups, was considered good if it was well adapted to the requirements of their singular existence, notably their ability to secure nourishment and safety. Organisms that live in family groups were judged in a like manner, but the evaluation of their conduct was extended to include the safety and nourishment of the filial group. Civil conduct was judged good or bad in function of how effectively it meets the requirements of life in societies. It is these requirements that determined the content of morality. Ethics and morality, which characterize civilized life and are absent from the "savage," are the forms "*which universal conduct assumes during the last stages of its evolution.*"[197] This reflects the

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[194] DE, p. 94.
[195] DE, p. 133.
[196] DE, p. 3.
[197] DE, p. 54.

conditions of existence in societies that "*do not necessitate mutual injury and hindrance*" but require "*cooperation and mutual aid.*"[198] Moral and ethical conduct secure greater degrees of happiness than misery inasmuch as they promote "*cooperation and mutual aid.*" Thus morality, which according to Spencer is present only in *bona fide* social groups, was a product of adaptation to life in society; it also implied a degree of purposefulness.

The purposefulness of moral conduct can be deduced from Spencer's utilitarianism. Spencer's account of moral conduct is utilitarian because conduct is always determined by what is useful or detrimental to the individual. However, he explicitly differentiated himself from previous Utilitarians by deducing his ethical principles from evolution itself.[199] Moral faculties are adaptations to life and societies. This established an equation between the good, the evolved, and the adapted.[200] As creatures become increasingly complex they develop correspondingly more evolved conduct, which is increasingly described as good as it reaches an ever-higher level of *adaptation* with the established conditions of existence. "[S]*ince evolution has been, and is still, working towards the highest life, it follows that conforming to those principles by which the highest life is achieved, is furthering that aim.*"[201] This is reached through the perfect adjustment of acts to ends displayed by virtue, which Spencer called "happiness."[202] Thus "*conduciveness to happiness is the ultimate test of perfection in a man's nature.*"[203] Spencer therefore introduced

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198 DE, p. 55.

199 DE, p. 94. He is quoted by Darwin as saying that "*I believe that the experiences of utility organized and consolidated through all past generations* [...] *have become in us certain faculties of moral intuitions* [...] *which have no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility.*" ("Letter to Mr. Mill in Bain's 'Mental and Moral Science'" qtd. in Charles Darwin *The Descent of Man and Selection in to Relation to Sex*, p. 492).

200 Patrick Wotling, "La morale sans métaphysique," p. 361.

201 DE, p. 203.

202 DE, p. 69.

203 DE, p. 69.

progress into evolution inasmuch as moral development parallels the biological development of humans. Progressively human evolution will reach a state of equilibrium, which will be characterized by "*permanently peaceful societies*,"[204] where "*happiness special* [of the individual] *and general* [of the group]"[205] can coexist. This coexistence is the ultimate form that ethical conduct can espouse because it is able to assimilate both the egoism of the individual and the altruism required for a good life in society. Spencerianism thus necessarily implied a goal: the reconciliation of these egoistic and altruistic drives normally at odds in social groups, which is embodied in the happiness of the virtuous man. The adaptations that constitute morality are progressive steps that will eventually lead to the ultimate goal of evolution: happy humans perfectly adapted to life in society. Thus, according to Spencer, there is a goal to evolution, namely human happiness, which is incrementally reached through an asymptomatic series of adaptations that have a purpose only in relation to this goal. Actual morality, therefore, is the culmination of this adaptive process, and constitutes the most evolved, best adapted and most estimable and beneficial form of conduct.

2.2.2. Moral Evolution

Having explicated Spencer's account of the evolution of morality and shown that it implied that moral conduct is purposeful; I will now turn to Nietzsche's discussion and ultimate rejection of Spencerianism. Prior to his reading of Spencer the possibilities of English evolutionary history were alluring in his efforts at undermining the foundations of metaphysics and established morality. In *The Gay*

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[204] DE, p. 53.
[205] DE, p. 204.

Science (1882),[206] Nietzsche reiterated his commitment to a dysteleological and meaningless world, which had initially been the basis for his appreciation of Darwinism.[207] What did change, however, was his opinion of Darwinian evolutionary history. The reason for this reappraisal can be linked to Spencer. In his reading of *The Data of Ethics*, Nietzsche found, to his dismay, a *moral* evolution. His reaction to this moral evolution exploited arguments he had previously developed. Indeed, his discussion of Rée's theses prefigured his criticism of Spencer insofar as he again argued against the original utility of altruism and the expeditiousness of already selected traits. However, and this is important, through his criticism of Spencer, Nietzsche developed a significant conclusion, which reduced all moral phenomena to moral *interpretations* of phenomena.

Nietzsche clearly stated his opposition to Spencer in the beginning of *The Gay Science*. The following passage is much more than an introduction to his criticism of Spencer, it also contains the very essence of Nietzsche's position, as I will show.

> "*Nowadays there is a profoundly erroneous moral doctrine that is celebrated especially in England: this holds that judgments of "good" and "evil" sum up experiences of what is "expedient" and "inexpedient." One holds that what is called good preserves the species, while what is called evil harms the species.*"[208]

A close examination of this passage will reveal its importance in the development of Nietzsche's philosophy of history. This passage is significant because it is the earliest published instance of Nietzsche describing English moral theory as "erroneous," and therefore marks a transition in his relation to this theory. The passage was written following his reading of *The Data of Ethics*, and the erroneous quality identified here

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[206] *Gay Science* tr. Walter Kaufmann. Henceforth referred to as GS.
[207] GS, §109.
[208] GS, §4.

was the expediency of moral evaluations; both these elements point to Spencer.[209] It was Spencer, and not Rée, that explained the evolution of conduct by appealing to the purposefulness of moral evaluations predicated on an evolutionary goal. Therefore, Nietzsche's criticism of the English moralists, begun here, can be imputed to his reading of *The Data of Ethics*, which amalgamated utility, morality and evolutionary expediency. It also implied that the world, rather than being bereft of any intrinsic qualities and purposes, was fully determined by a moral evolution.

As the passage indicates, Nietzsche here opposed Spencer's use of the moral attribute "good" to describe evolutionary expedient processes; this connects Spencer with his previous discussion of Rée. As we have already seen, Nietzsche did not think that "good" and "evil" are inherently moral. As I have shown in my discussion of *Human, all to Human*, "good," although useful, is determined by its conformity with tradition, which made it unconducive to evolutionary progress. Nietzsche restated this point in the same aphorism as the passage quoted above albeit in different terms. "[T]*he evil instincts are expedient, species-preserving, and indispensable to as high a degree as the good ones; their action is merely different.*"[210] "Evil" does not represent what truly harms the species.[211] The opposition between "good" and "evil" is not determined by their supposed evolutionary purposefulness,[212] but rather by their age. "*What is new* [...] *is always evil* [...] *and only what is old is good.*"[213] Values, such as those discussed here, gain importance over time; "[u]*sually by force of arms* [...] *but also by means of new religions and moralities.*"[214] "Good" and "Evil" are moral, and

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[209] Spencer is not named in the quoted passage, but Nietzsche makes a similar comment in a preparatory note unambiguously addressed to Spencer. "*The apologists of utilitarian selection (such as Spencer) think they know what are the favorable circumstances for evolution, but they do not acknowledge the importance of Evil!*" (FP 1881, 11[67] = KSA 9, 11[43]. [Author's translation]).
[210] GS, §4.
[211] GS, §1.
[212] FP 1881, 6[456].
[213] GS, §4.
[214] GS, §4.

should therefore be treated in a like manner. As I have already demonstrated, in Nietzsche's view, the creation of new values, which are not originally determined to be "good," is most often accompanied by harmful behavior required to instill new habits and evaluations though compulsion and constraint. Consequently, the present value of altruism does not necessarily imply that it was originally useful and it is probable that it was not first experienced as useful and expedient, but rather as harmful and inexpedient.[215] Spencer's moral doctrine was "erroneous" because through his ideas' one-sided affirmation of tradition displayed in his preference for altruistic conduct, he had confused morality's present utility with its origin.[216] Nietzsche had been discussing the role and value of altruism since *Human, all too Human*, and as I have shown, he was unable to equate altruism with any original utility. Here, in reading Spencer, he further entrenched his position. However, he did not limit his criticism to the moral predicates themselves as he had previously, he now extended it to encompass all the evolutionary edifice Spencer had built and, in so doing, started to distance himself from Darwinism.

The extension of Nietzsche's criticism beyond the scope of morality is testified to by his reappraisal of the importance of pleasure and displeasure. As we have seen, he had previously endorsed the idea that the opposition between pleasure and displeasure was of cardinal importance for evolution. Now, after reading *The Data of Ethics*, he makes the argument that the appearance of something new, interpreted as "evil," has its equivalent in the feeling of displeasure. Novelty is first experienced as an impediment to pleasure before becoming pleasurable.[217] This displeasure, says Nietzsche as he was further distancing himself from Spencer, does

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[215] A point that Nietzsche made in *Human, all too human.* See section 2.1.5. above..
[216] FP 1879-1880, 1[106].
[217] FP 1881, 12[158].

not necessarily indicate a misadaptation.[218] Although the emergence of something new is initially interpreted as displeasurable, over time it may become pleasurable.[219] Consequently, one may either seek "*as little displeasure as possible* [...] *or as much displeasure as possible as the price for the growth of an abundance of subtle pleasures and joys that have rarely been relished.*"[220] Since pain and displeasure are not necessarily a danger for the species, they may become beneficial over time.[221] A new stimulus may be interpreted either as pleasure or displeasure because these attributes are not inherent to the object itself but depend solely on their *interpretation.*[222] These sensations are therefore no longer the brute *datum* of evolution. Evolution is no longer understood as a unique scientific theory but, in Spencer's wake, has now become *moral.* By refusing the expediency of pleasurable experiences, Nietzsche undermined Spencer's account of moral evolution, and led him to understand the latter's evolutionary adaptation as a historical interpretation conditioned by a moral perspective.

2.2.3. Utility as a Moral Interpretation

We are now in a position to better understand Spencer's importance for Nietzsche's philosophy of history. His discussion of the origin of morality, influenced by Rée, had led him to read *The Data of Ethics*, and in it he found an explanation for moral evolution that ran contrary to the position he had already developed in *Human, all too Human* and *Daybreak.* Spencer's arguments for the expediency of altruism woke Nietzsche from his slumber and until the end of his career he unceasingly

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[218] GS, §318.
[219] GS, §334.
[220] GS, §12.
[221] GS, §318.
[222] GS, §127.

underlined the moral presuppositions implied in the English type of moral history. Spencer's importance for the development of Nietzsche's philosophy lay therefore in his disavowal of the Darwinian understanding of natural history. The history of evolution, as Nietzsche found it in *The Data of Ethics*, was not its explanation but a moral distortion of nature.[223] The adequation between the good, the evolved and the adapted implied that the natural world was teleologically determined by traditional moral values. Because of Spencer's evolutionary goal of "*permanently peaceful societies,*" the expediency of altruistic behavior exemplified the "*shadow of God*"[224] lingering in nature after it had been removed by science and justified the madman's cry: "*I have come too early.*"[225] Moreover, it was not only moral phenomena that Spencer had described as expedient and teleological, but all organic life determined by the sensations of pleasure and displeasure also implied that the entire organic world was once again moral. This amalgamated morality and epistemology. "*All experiences are moral experiences, even in the realm of sense perception.*"[226] Tradition trains humans to behave in a determined manner and to perceive the world within the confines of an imposed perspective. Spencer, therefore, had simply reformulated the traditional understanding of humanity's relation to nature, and whereas Nietzsche had previously endorsed the Darwinian naturalization of life, his

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[223] Nietzsche's equation between the English evolutionists and traditional morality is one of the most commonly cited arguments explaining Nietzsche's rejection of Spencer. See for example Jean Gayon, "Nietzsche and Darwin," p. 165; Dirk Robert Johnson "On the way to the 'Anti-Darwin'," p. 667-669; Lewis Call "Anti-Darwin, Anti-Spencer: Friedrich Nietzsche's Critique of Darwin and 'Darwinism'" in *History of Science.* vol. 36 (1998), pp. 15-17; Barbara Stiegler. "Nietzsche lecteur de Darwin" p. 389; Paul J. M. van Tongeren "Nietzsche's Naturalism" in *Nietzsche and the German Tradition.* Nicholas Martin ed. (Peter Lang: New York, 2003), p. 209; Christoph Cox, *Nietzshe, Naturalism and Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of Californai Press, 1999), pp. 223-229; Gregory Moore, "Nietzsche, Spencer, and the Ethics of Evolution," pp. 3-4. Patrick Wotling adds that Spencer and Darwin's apology for traditional Christian values was in part the result of the latters' minimal knowledge of non-Christian moralities ("La morale sans métaphysique," pp. 384-386).

[224] GS, §108.

[225] GS, §125.

[226] GS, §114.

reading of Spencer led him to reject any significance he had previously given to Darwinism.

Following this reading, Nietzsche understood evolutionary utilitarianism as the affirmation of "herd" morality that was already prevalent throughout Europe.[227] "*These historians of morality (mostly Englishmen) do not amount to much. Usually they themselves are quite unusually obedient to one particular morality* [.]"[228] As apologists of traditional morality, English moral historians defended the meek and average individuals that incorporate their evolutionary "ideal" of altruism.[229] In this respect, Darwinism, as Nietzsche understood it, could not profess that evolution worked towards the advancement and progress of humanity because the herd does not contribute to the advancement of the species but to the preservation of already established values.[230] Already in *Human, all too* Human, he had argued that the affirmation of existing values was not conducive to evolution. The progressive development of a species passes through its weakest elements, a point he found important to restate in *On the Genealogy of Morals.*[231] Therefore, what Nietzsche found in English evolutionary history was a reflection of the power of established morality and "*certainly the very opposite of an examination, analysis, questioning, and vivisection of this faith.*"[232] The English use of utility as an explanatory principle for their origin of morality exemplifies how history is always revealed within the

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[227] BGE, §201-202.

[228] GS, §345. See also FP 1887, 10[7]: "*'Darwinism'* [...] *is still the Christian presupposition and interpretation, living out its afterlife.*" (WLN)

[229] Note the change in vocabulary. In HH §224, these meek individuals well adapted to societies were labeled as strong.

[230] FP 1886-1887, 7[25]; 1888, 14[133]; 1888, 14[123]; Twilight of the Idols. tr. R.J. Hollingdale. "Expeditions of an Untimely Man" §14. (Henceforth referred to as TI). See also the discussion of HH I, § 224, section 2.1.5.

[231] GM II, §12.

[232] BGE, §186.

confines of an already existing interpretation. Spencer had read Christian morality into evolution because that was the context of his knowledge of morality and history.

We have now seen Nietzsche's hopes dashed by Spencer's moral evolution, and I can presently turn to his final comments about utility. His final rejection of moral utility was stated in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, where he warned against the temptation of developing a history of morality after the English fashion.[233] He claimed that the "*English type*" of evolutionary history was "*upside-down and perverse*"[234] because both Spencer and Rée had used utility to "*seek out some 'purpose'* [...] *then guilelessly place*[d] *this purpose at the beginning as* causa fiendi."[235] Their explanatory inversion had little to do with the historical origin of morality.

> "*However well one has understood the* utility *of any physiological organ (or of a legal institution, a social custom, a political usage, a form in art or in a religious cult), this means nothing regarding its origin* [.]"[236]

Instead of being the explanation for morality's origin, their treatment of utility reflects *their* use and manipulation of the concept. "[W]*hatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends*[.]"[237] The ascription of a use is not related to any historical goal or purpose and it may change independently of the object. Since utility was now merely purposive, rather than purposeful, Nietzsche could assert that "*the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility* [...] *lie worlds apart* [.]"[238] There is no necessary relation between something's utility and its origin. The opposition described here between origin and purpose had already been

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[233] GM, Preface, §7.
[234] GM, Preface, §4.
[235] GM II, §12.
[236] GM II, §12; FP 1886-87, 7[25].
[237] GM II, §12.
[238] GM II, §12; FP 1886-1887, 7[25].

adumbrated in his comments about the origin of altruism discussed in the first part of this chapter. As we saw there, altruism was described as the *consequence* of the formation of social groups, rather than their origin. Here, Nietzsche's opposition to the explanatory use of utility exceeded the bounds of moral history. Spencer had gone one step further than Rée and drawn this idea to its logical consequence by deriving *all* of evolution from it.

Therefore, the identification of an evolutionary moral purpose does not describe anything about the object itself; it is a symptom of a particular morality. "*There are no moral phenomena at all, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena.*"[239] As such, moral history does not expose the origins of morality as much as it assigns moral value to historical phenomena. The possibility of establishing a factual moral history is therefore doubtful. If Nietzsche is right, then all attempts to develop a history, no matter the subject, are doomed to reveal more about the author than the subject. Yet, this is not necessarily original. Already in his *Second Untimely Meditation*, Nietzsche had rejected the idea of developing a history methodologically similar to any other science because history was there related to life rather than truth. What is significant *here* is his complete rejection of the existence of historical facts. These had previously existed in his *Second Untimely Meditation*. His interrelation of historical and unhistorical forces did not create facts, but determined what should be included in the historical horizon and what should be discarded. This implicitly recognized the existence of historical phenomena. Here, in the late 1880s, Nietzsche clearly made the point that all phenomena are interpretations. The assimilation of the past, therefore, does not necessitate any falsification. The absence of any necessary causal or chronological relation implies that there is nothing to be

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[239] BGE, §108.

falsified.[240] History is here an even greater creative construction than previously because even the material for the construction must be created. This is *very* important because he makes a break with his previous position that will be the foundation of his physiological philosophy of history.

2.2.4. Conclusion

We have now seen that Nietzsche's project, begun in *Human, all too Human*, of developing a historical philosophy modeled on the English evolutionary historians, failed. Although Darwinism offered an alluring perspective on evolutionary history, which had first caught his eye in the late 1860s, his reading of Spencer demonstrated that this theory maintained moral presuppositions that were antithetical to his ambition. It was not, however, only these presuppositions that he rejected, but more importantly evolution's absurd pretension to truth. This can be drawn from a *reductio* argument he made in *Beyond Good and Evil*. The argument goes as follows: if our body is understood as part of the world by virtue of its materiality, then our sense organs as parts of the body and through which we know the world, would also be parts of the world. These organs would therefore be their own cause. And, if we reject the notion of *causa sui*, we must also reject the idea that the organs cause the world. Therefore, these organs cannot serve as the foundation for our understanding of the world in the idealist sense because they themselves are subject to the same conditions as our knowledge of the world.[241] All that we "know" is the product of the sense's interpretation of external stimuli.

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[240] Alexander, Nehamas. "The Genealogy of Genealogy: Interpretation in Nietzsche's Second *Untimely Meditation* and in *On the Genealogy of Morals*." in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche's* Genealogy of Morals. Richard Schacht ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 275, 282.

[241] BGE, §15.

Now, in the perspective we have been examining, the same argument applies to the theory of evolution. If all moral evaluations are the product of evolution, and if, as I have read Nietzsche, English evolutionary theory is a moral evaluation, then this theory of evolution is the product of evolution. This is obviously the same circular argument as above, and therefore we can conclude that the theory of evolution is, according to Nietzsche, incapable of fully accounting for the development of the world. We may, however, draw a further conclusion from this: there is no all-encompassing theory of history that can completely account for every phenomenon. This is the sense that Michel Foucault gave to Nietzsche's philosophy of history in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.*[242] In it, he argued that the tension in Nietzsche's discussion of history between *Human, all too Human* and *On the Genealogy of Morals* stems from his progressive rejection of a "*meta-historical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies,*"[243] which eventually led him to the rejection of the "*search for 'origins'.*"[244] The existence of origins had been a tempting prospect because they would have allowed reducing particular phenomena to their original manifestation, thus dispelling metaphysics' inflated esteem of itself. However, what Nietzsche discovered in his reading of Spencer was that there are no unequivocal origins, but rather a disparity that is transformed into an origin through the interpretation of this disparity.[245] The search for origins is always historically conditioned and cannot serve as the basis for a historical philosophy nor for a philosophy of history.

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[242] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in *Nietzsche: Critical Assessments vol. III. On Morality and the Order of Rank.* ed. Daniel W. Conway and Peter S. Groff. (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 61-78.
[243] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," p. 61.
[244] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," p. 61.
[245] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," p. 63.

We may therefore conclude from this that Nietzsche was not Darwinian. As I have shown in this chapter, his reading of Rée and Spencer led him to renounce the English type of moral history. However, this was not done because it had any particular logical or scientific flaw, which he attempted to remedy with his own theory of evolution as some have suggested.[246] Nietzsche's reading of Spencer led him to develop a physiological philosophy of history that did not pretend to describe anything about the nature of organic evolution or make a metaphysical comment about the past. As I will show in the next chapter, the importance of the historical disparity that Foucault mentioned, and the absence of any historical facts, led him to interpret history through the body and develop a physiological philosophy of history.

[246] See for example John Richardson, *Nietzsche New Darwinism*. (Oxford: Oxford Universty Press, 2004), pp. 64-65.

Chapter Three: Physiology and History

Part 1: *Physiology*

3.1.1 Inner Processes and the *Milieu*

In the two previous chapters, we have followed the gradual development of Nietzsche's philosophy of history, which was associated to his exposure and reading of the nascent evolutionary sciences. In the first chapter, we saw how F. A. Lange influenced Nietzsche's dysteleological understanding of the world that was integrated into his formal discussion of history, and which allowed him to define history, in opposition to science, as a creative retrospection. In the second chapter, we saw that Nietzsche's exposure to Darwinism through Paul Rée and Herbert Spencer led him to argue that Darwinian evolutionary history was a moral interpretation of the natural world and I deduced from this that Nietzsche did not favor an understanding of history that left any room for all-encompassing explanations and relegated historical facts to a secondary role. I will now explicate the development of Nietzsche's *physiological* interpretation of history through his reading of the German biologist Wilhelm Roux.

During the late 1880s, Nietzsche wrote a series of notes criticizing the Darwinian explanation for human and animal evolution.[247] In the note entitled

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[247] See FP 1886-1887, 7[25] "Against Darwinism"; FP 1888, 14[123] "Anti-Darwin"; FP 1888, 14[133] "Anti-Darwin" and TI, "Expeditions of an Untimely Man" §14.

"Against Darwinism,"[248] he contested the importance that he thought Darwin and his supporters gave to external circumstances.

> "*Darwin absurdly* overestimates *the influence of 'external circumstances'; the essential thing about the life process is precisely the tremendous force which shapes, creates forms from within, which utilizes and* exploits *'external circumstances'* [.]"[249]

Stressing the importance of the organism's adaptation to its environment, one "*overlooks the essential priority of the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces that give new interpretations and directions*[.]"[250] Rather than understanding the formation of organisms through a series of selections carried out by forces operating on it from the outside, he argued for the preeminence of inner processes over external circumstances. Yet, "*the 'external world' consists in a sum of valuations* [and] *must stand in some kind of relation to the conditions of existence, but by no means that of being* true, *or* exact."[251] Nietzsche was arguing that an organism's environment is not alone in determining its survival: the organism's relation with its *milieu* is itself determined by the former's ability to let the latter affect it. Therefore, he did not dispute the validity of ascribing importance to external

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[248] FP 1886-1887, 7[25].

[249] FP 1886-1187, 7[25] (WLN). It is worth noting that Barbara Stiegler (*Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 96) argues that it was Haeckel that was targeted in this passage. She traces the confusion between Haeckel and Darwin to Nietzsche's reading of Carl von Nägeli who would have misunderstood Darwin and equated him with Haeckel (*Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 96 n1). However, she also claims that Nietzsche never actually read Haeckel, but due to his prominence in the biological and social debates of Imperial Germany it is most probable that Nietzsche was well acquainted with the ideas and arguments of this important disseminator of Darwinian ideas. (*Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 58). For more on Haeckel and Darwinism see Alfred Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin: the Popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860-1914*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 22-35; Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche Biology and Metaphor*, pp. 40-42; Judy Johns Schloegel and Henning Schmidgen, "General Physiology, Experimental Psychology, and Evolutionism: Unicellular Organisms as objects of Psychophysiological Research, 1877-1918." in *Isis*. vol. 93, no. 4 (2002), pp. 622-624; Paul Weindling "Theories of the Cell State in Imperial Germany" in Charles Webster ed. *Biology, Medicine and Society 1840-1940*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 99-155.

[250] GM II, §12.

[251] FP 1885, 34[247]. (WLN)

factors, but argued for the *primacy* of the processes that operate from within the organism.

As I will now argue in this chapter, this appreciation of inner processes, or of physiological mediation, served as the basis for Nietzsche's physiological philosophy of history. This chapter will therefore explicate how, in the mid-1880s, Nietzsche's reading of Wilhelm Roux led him to use the body physiological (*Leib*) as a metaphor for the intellect, which I will exploit and extend to history. This extension will allow me to demonstrate how history mediates the past and allows a determined number of events, peoples and places to act on the subject and incite their interpretation. However, this assimilation will not be predicated on a passive reception of the past but will be shown to be conditional on past interpretations. I will understand this as meaning that history is not a passive retrospective interpretation, but rather an active appropriation of the past, which is the condition of future interpretations. To demonstrate history's physiological mediation of the past, I will divide this chapter into two parts. This first part will discuss the preeminent influence on Nietzsche's understanding of physiology: the German embryologist Wilhelm Roux. I will then put his reception of Roux into context and give an account of his reading using his notes. In the second part, I will argue that the most important effect that Roux had on Nietzsche was in the latter's metaphorical understanding of the body, which I will use to explain why his understanding of history is philosophically determined by physiology.

3.1.2 Wilhelm Roux's Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus

It was in the early 1880s that Nietzsche read Wilhelm Roux's (1850-1934) *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus* (1881).[252] In it, Roux argued that the development of organic bodies, and their apparent purposefulness, had not been adequately explained by Darwin's theory. He argued that Darwin had only stressed the importance of organisms' interaction with external conditions through the mechanics of inter-individual competition.[253] Roux's avowed intention in writing *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus* was not to replace Darwin's theory, but to supplement the work of previous evolutionary scientists by describing the self-formation of the purposeful (*Selbstgestaltung des Zweckmässigen*).[254] He sought to explain the development of purposeful physiological components of the body without having recourse to any form of teleology.[255] His theory described the important causal relations between cells, organs and tissues, which he came to call developmental mechanics (*Entwicklungsmechanik*). He defined the mechanics as "*the ascertainment of the formative forces or energies.*"[256] The term itself was absent from his first book, *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus*, but it was in it that he first investigated the

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[252] Wilhelm Roux. *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus: ein Beitrag zur Vervollständigung der Mechanischen Zweckmässigkeitslehre*. Leipzig: Engelmann (1881). Henceforth referred to *Kampf der Theile*. All references to Roux are based on the translation I prepared with Bettina Bergo.

[253] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, p. 236.

[254] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, p. 27, 236. Barbara Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, pp. 49-51. After the publication of *Kampf der Theile*, a copy was sent to Darwin who reacted quite positively to it. "*As far as I can imperfectly judge, it is the most important book on Evolution which has appeared for some time.*" (Charles Darwin, *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin, including a biographical chapter, vol. 3*. ed. Francis Darwin (London: John Murray, 1887), p. 244.

[255] Christian J Emden, *Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness, and the Body*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), p. 139. One should note however that Wolfgang Müller-Lauter describes how one Roux's colleagues, Hans Driesch, claimed that Roux's account of the development of the organism *was* teleological. See Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, philosophy of Contradictions and Contradictions of his Philosophy*, pp. 173-174.

[256] Wilhelm Roux. "The Problems, Methods, and Scope of Developmental Mechanics" in Jane Maienschen ed. *Defining Biology: Lectures from the 1890s*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 108.

"*trophic effects of functional stimuli,*"[257] which are the strengthening of a cell, tissue, or organ through functional excitation that incites an overcompensation of expended material and fortifies the organism's capacity to assimilate nutrients. It was these effects that were important for Nietzsche's philosophy.

According to Roux, organic purposefulness is the result of an inner struggle between the various parts (*Theile*) of the body caused, in both the embryonic and post-embryonic stages of development, by the continual appearance of small organic variations that struggle for survival against older and already established parts.[258] As a part grows, it consumes nutrients and occupies space to the detriment of the other parts of the organism. It is the parts that can assimilate the most material and regenerate the fastest that are victorious and are able to survive and grow. The strengthening of one part at the expense of another is the result of its increasing capacity to assimilate nourishment. This ultimately leads to one part dominating another part and ascribing a function to it, which regulates the organism allowing the emergence of purposive behavior. Roux's understanding of organisms therefore develops two important characteristics, namely assimilation and self-regulation.

The first essential property of the organic described by Roux is the overcompensatory assimilation of expended material (*Uebercompensation des Verbrauchen*).[259] The assimilation of nutrients is provoked by functional excitations or stimuli (*functionellen Reiz*) exterior to the cell or organ that act as incitements to assimilation.[260] The excitations' effect is pre-determined by the cell's inner state, which amounts to there being no passive feeding.[261] It is only once excited that the part expends its accumulated energy, which is then replenished by assimilating

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[257] Roux, "Development Mechanics", p. 112.
[258] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, p. 237.
[259] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, p. 238.
[260] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, pp. 160-161.
[261] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, p. 163.

nutrients. However, the assimilation and replacement of expended energy is not proportional to the expenditure; a cell, tissue, or organ does not simply compensate losses incurred when functionally excited, but assimilates more than required to regenerate itself. When a part thus overcompensates its losses, its growth and spatial expansion progresses.[262] However, functional stimuli are more than the cause of assimilation, they also fortify the part's ability to assimilate material.[263] An increase in functional stimulation is accompanied by an increase in the ability to assimilate. Consequently, a highly stimulated part grows faster than a less stimulated part because it assimilates (or intussuscepts) more material. Thus, as a part's ability to be excited increases, its size increases accordingly. Therefore there is an important relation between a part's ability to be affected and its ability to grow.

The second essential property of the organic is self-regulation (*Selbstregulation*) through the struggle of parts.[264] The expansion and strengthening of a part leads to a struggle between the various organic components of the body. It is this struggle that regulates and organizes the organism. When a part of the organism grows by overcompensation it consumes assimilable material at the expense of its neighbors and a competition then ensues for what resources are available. Struggle, therefore, is the consequence of an inequality between the various parts of the organism.[265] However, this struggle works not only towards the elimination of weaker elements, but more importantly, to an inner harmony and morphological equilibrium, which gives physiological significance to the various parts of the body.[266] Essentially, self-regulation is the result of a weaker part being transformed into the function of a

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[262] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, p. 161. See also Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, philosophy of Contradictions and Contradictions of his Philosophy*, p. 169.
[263] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, p. 160.
[264] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, pp. 239-240.
[265] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, p.69.
[266] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, p. 237.

stronger part,[267] which produces struggle-processes (*Processen der Kampf*) that are only then selected in the struggle with external circumstances.[268] Thus, Roux's counter-intuitive account of the unequal and agonistic relation between parts leads not to extinction and destruction, but to harmony and strength by working towards the formation of the body's purposeful structure.[269]

Roux's supplement to the already existing biological theories of evolution is therefore based on the instability of the struggle between the parts of the organism. Functional excitation incites the part to assimilate nutrients and overcompensate the incurred loss, which fortifies a part's ability to assimilate material and propels its growth. Consequently, a highly stimulated part grows faster than a less stimulated one. Furthermore, as one part gets stronger, another is weakened and a competition between the various organic components of the body for resources and space then ensues. Through this struggle, there develops an equilibrium resulting from one part subordinating another that structures and determines the organism's morphology. Thus, Roux was able to describe without recourse to any extraneous teleology how the organism structures and determines itself through the inequality of its components.

3.1.3 Nietzsche and the Importance of Physiology

Having now described the essential elements of Roux's theory on the development of organic purposefulness, I will now turn my attention to Nietzsche's

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[267] It is relatively unclear how Roux imagined this consequence of the struggle of parts. Barbara Stiegler (*Nietzsche et la biologie*. [Paris: PUF, 2001], p. 56) argues that the resulting auto-regulation of the organism points not to the destruction and negation of the other, but rather to the affirmation of the differences within the body. Wolfgang Müller-Lauter (*Nietzsche: his Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*, p. 169) argues that in Roux's accounts of the direct struggle "*newly appearing qualities win out over old ones by destroying and assimilating them.*" Unfortunately, neither gives any textual reference to substantiate their claims.

[268] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, pp. 237-238.

[269] Roux, *Kampf der Theile*, pp. 163-164.

reading of Roux.[270] However, before discussing Nietzsche's reading notes, I wish to briefly put his reception of these ideas into context. Although he did not read Roux until 1881,[271] the importance of physiology had already started to dawn on him in 1880 as he was writing *Daybreak*. In it, he speculated that the source for moral evaluations was only incompletely known. By relating morality to physiology, he was able to underline our imperfect knowledge of the human subject. "*However far a man may go in self-knowledge, nothing however can be more incomplete than his image of the totality of drives which constitute his being.*"[272] In a note from the same period,[273] Nietzsche argued that moral reason, with which we justify our actions, is the product of this incomplete hypothesis and what the subject consciously knows are only epiphenomena. The recognition of the possible abysmal depths of human psychology led him to question whether "*our moral judgments and evaluations* [...] *are only images and fantasies based on a physiological process unknown to us, a kind of acquired language for designating certain nervous stimuli?*"[274] Our conscious reactions to these drives would be "*a more or less fantastic commentary on an*

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[270] Nietzsche's reading of Roux was most probably first done in 1881, and repeated in 1883. Wolfgang Müller-Lauter developed a list of all the fragments that can be linked to Roux. See Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, Contradictions of his Philosophy and his Philosophy of Contradictions*, p. 163 n13 & n14. See also Müller-Lauter, *Physiologie de la Volonté de Puissance*. tr. J. Champoux (Paris : Allia, 1998), pp. 117-118 n13 & n14. However, as already noted in the preceding chapter, the fragments contained in notebook 11 (M III) of vol. 5 of the French translation of Nietzsche's collective works does not have the same fragment numbering as in the KSA. Therefore, I will give both the *Fragments Posthumes* numbering and its correspondent numbering in the KSA when necessary.

One should note that this was not his only reading in biology during this period. Thomas Brobjer lists, along with Roux, Michael Foster's *A Textbook of Physiology* (1877, published in German as *Lehrbuch der Physiologie,* 1881); William Rolph's *Biologische Probleme, zugleich als Versuch zur Entwicklung einer rationellen Ethik* (1884); Karl von Nägeli's *Mechanisch-physiologische Theorie der Abstammungslehre* (1884) and others. See Brobjer, Thomas. "Nietzsche's Reading and Knowledge of Natural Science: an Overview" in T. Brobjer and G. Moore eds. *Nietzsche and Science*. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), pp. 38-44.

[271] Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, Contradictions of his Philosophy and his Philosophy of Contradictions*, p. 163 n13.

[272] D, § 119.

[273] FP 1880, 6 [365]

[274] D, § 119.

unknown, perhaps unknowable, but felt text [.]"[275] Self-knowledge, and by extension knowledge of human motivations, would therefore always be incomplete because our drives essentially do nothing more than "*interpret nervous stimuli,*"[276] which lay hidden under the veil of consciousness. "[W]e are accustomed *to* exclude *all these unconscious processes from the accounting and to reflect on the preparation for an act only to the extent that it is conscious*[.]"[277] The possible physiological origin always lies hidden from our conscious deliberation and is easily ignored or refused.

These interpretations of nervous stimuli amount to a selection in which one drive gains ascendancy over another drive. "[T]*his entire procedure of the intellect is only the blind instrument of another drive which is a rival of the drive whose vehemence is tormenting us* [.]"[278] The intellect has learned to listen to one drive and ignore another and it is only when a drive has been put into relation with previously evaluated drives that it is given value.

> "[I]*t acquires* [value] *as its second nature, only when it enters into relations with drives already baptized good or evil or is noted as a quality of beings the people have already evaluated and determined in a moral sense.*"[279]

It is therefore not through a rational and conscious decision that a drive is given meaning. Although it may be that the human subject rationally evaluates the drive, this evaluation is nothing other than interpreting it by putting it in context. Consequently, the intellect is here described as a superficial phenomenon determined by an inner struggle between multiplicities of competing drives.

It is important to note here that Nietzsche essentially transferred his philological language to physiology. His discussion of the relation between the

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[275] D, § 119.
[276] D, § 119.
[277] D, § 129.
[278] D, § 109.
[279] D, § 38.

intellect and its affects was here cautiously described as being "*all metaphors*."[280] These metaphors rest on the complexity and the indeterminacy of physiological drives that are interpreted by the intellect as text.[281] The intellect reads its affects as a text and attempts to interpret its meaning. However, beneath this reading there is a sub-text determined by the struggle between the various drives. The reason for discussing this passage is to illustrate how Nietzsche already had a vague grasp of an inner struggle operating beneath the veil of consciousness and had already identified the importance and fertility of a physiological description of unknown and unconscious processes. But more importantly, he described the relation between the intellect and the body as an interpretation. His reading of Roux, to which I will now turn, was therefore not uniquely directed toward gaining greater knowledge of physiological processes.[282] The existence of a sub-text on which the intellect's interpretation is unknowingly based will return following his reading of Roux and play an important role in his physiological philosophy of history.

3.1.4 Nietzsche and the Inner Struggle

We have now seen that prior to his reading of Roux, Nietzsche had already recognized the possibility that the human subject has an incomplete knowledge of itself. I will now give an account of his reading of Roux using his notes as a guide, which will serve as the basis for my discussion of Roux's effect on his philosophy. The purpose of this section is not to repeat what I have already mentioned while discussing Roux, but to indicate where Nietzsche adopted Roux's ideas and where he

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[280] D, § 119.
[281] D, § 119.
[282] Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, Contradictions of his Philosophy and his Philosophy of Contradictions*, p. 167; Christian J. Emden, *Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness and the Body*, p. 87.

adapted them. I will also include elements pertaining to his developing knowledge of physiology crucial for our understanding of his metaphoric interpretation of the body.

Nietzsche began his commentary of Roux's ideas by defining the inner struggle as the agonistic relation between the cells, tissues, organs, and organisms.[283] Beginning at the cellular level, which is the most basic physiological level of the organism,[284] the struggle develops throughout the body in such a way that all parts having a similar function in the organism are perpetually on guard against those of a like kind.[285] Cells struggle against cells and tissues against tissues and so on. And, as with Roux's account, the inner struggle is primarily for food and space.[286] It is only once a part has gained these resources at the expense of its neighbors that a struggle ensues.

Nietzsche had already recognized the importance of cellular excitation, but here in his reading, he discovered its importance for the development of the inner organic struggle.[287] However, unlike Roux who narrowly defined it as functional excitation, Nietzsche broadly understood it as the reception of something foreign into the cell, tissue or organ, which leads the part to assimilate it to itself. Thus, unlike Roux, excitation was not necessarily liked to a part's function within the organism. Therefore, *all* stimuli act trophically by inciting the assimilation of what is foreign.[288] Nietzsche gave the example of the appearance of a parasite in the body that obliges it to grow around it by developing its capillary system. Thus stimulated by the parasite,

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[283] FP 1881, 11[199] = KSA 9, 11[128]. It should be noted that Müller-Lauter misidentifies this passage. It is numbered KSA 9, 11[28] when it should be as it is above.
[284] FP 1881, 11[201] = KSA 9, 11[130].
[285] FP 1881, 11[206] = KSA 9, 11[134].
[286] FP 1881, 11[204] = KSA 9, 11[132]; 1883, 7[86].
[287] See FP 1872-1873, 19[209]; [210]Barbara Stiegler argues that excitation was an important development of the nascent cellular theory. Rudolph Virchow and Claude Bernard had already described the importance of excitation for cellular assimilation. See Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la Biologie*, pp. 30-36; also Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, Contradictions of his Philosophy and his Philosophy of Contradictions*, p. 177.
[288] FP 1884, 25[325]. This note is misidentified by Stiegler, p. 34.

the body responds by assimilating it to itself.[289] His description of excitation is not only important because it generalizes Roux's concept, but also because it implies that assimilation is not only limited to food but also to potential dangers. Assimilation, therefore, is a defense mechanism that neutralizes potential threats to it organization and survival.

Unlike cellular excitation, overcompensatory assimilation was one of the essential elements that Nietzsche discovered in his reading of Roux.[290] Following Roux, he understood assimilation as the overcompensation of incurred losses.[291] Here, Nietzsche again extended the tenor of Roux's concept as literally designating the process by which something foreign is rendered similar to the receiving body.[292] Added to his generalized version of excitation, assimilation became the attempt to overcompensate the presence of something foreign by rendering as much of it as possible similar to the receiving body. However, Roux was not alone in bringing Nietzsche to the conclusion that assimilation operates by overcompensation. In 1884, Nietzsche acquired a book by William Rolph, an obscure Anglo-German zoologist, entitled *Biologische Probleme* (1884).[293] As with Roux, Rolph's major idea was that life does not seek to compensate for its losses in the struggle of existence, but insatiably assimilates more nutrients. Essentially, Rolph's theory was that endosmosis predominates over exosmosis.[294] The cells' intake of nutriments exceeds the amount it expends. Rolph's influence can be perceived in Nietzsche's claim that nourishment is "*a consequence of insatiable appropriation* [.]"[295] Cells, and the other parts of the

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[289] FP 1883, 7[197].
[290] Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, Contradictions of his Philosophy and his Philosophy of Contradictions*, pp. 163, 169; Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*, p. 37; Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 30.
[291] FP 1881, 11[206] = KSA 9. 11[134].
[292] FP 1883, 7[33]; FP 1887, 5[65]; FP 1885, 41[11]; FP 1884, 26[448].
[293] Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*, p. 47.
[294] Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*, p. 47.
[295] FP 1885-1886, 2[76]. (WLN).

organism, assimilate more than what is needed to compensate the losses incurred through excitation. As with Roux, this leads to growth and competition for space within the organism.

However, unlike Roux, Rolph extended this insatiable appropriation to explain not only cellular growth but also cellular division and conjugation. Cellular conjugation is the consequence of scarcity, which leads two cellular organisms to form one.[296] Cellular division, on the other hand, is the result of the cell's exceedingly abundant nourishment that it cannot assimilate properly and must then divide into two.[297] Since it is the excitation that provokes an overcompensatory assimilation or insatiable appropriation, it is the most strongly excited parts that grow stronger.[298] The less excited parts must then combine with other cells through cellular conjugation. Thus the ability to be excited is of paramount importance in the growth and development of the organism. [299] The easily excited cells produce more progeny, and the less stimulated shrink in number and do not reproduce.

Cellular conjugation is important for Nietzsche's rendering of the self-formation of the purposeful. Through overcompensation, which stimulates growth, the various parts come into direct contact, which leads to the domination of one part over another.[300] Nietzsche would later described this as the formation of an "*aristocracy of cells*[.]"[301] The weaker part that is unable to secure enough nourishment reacts to the growth of the stronger part by conjugating itself to it. Faced with an expanding and strengthening neighbor, a part can either perish or link itself to a stronger one. The weaker part must therefore adapt to the stronger,[302] and through

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[296] Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor,* p. 48.
[297] Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor,* pp. 48-49, Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, pp. 75-76.
[298] FP 1883, 7[95].
[299] FP 1883, 7[95][86].
[300] FP 1883, 7[95]; [93].
[301] FP 1885, 40[42]; 1885-1886, 2[76]. (WLN).
[302] FP 1881, 11[204] = KSA 9, 11[132].

its adaptation, it becomes a function of the stronger and serves it needs.[303] But these weaker parts must themselves dominate other parts because it is only in such a relation that the stronger part will allow it to exist as a function.[304] The domination of one part serves the needs of another.[305] Ultimately an "aristocracy" is established between the various parts that serves the whole organism.

Self-regulation by domination and coercion is another important element that Nietzsche found in Roux.[306] Without self-regulation the organism could perish.[307] If the various parts did not submit to each other according to their strengths, the organism would be constantly torn apart by its inner struggle and could therefore not exist as a whole. The "*functional auto-structuration of the most appropriate force relations*"[308] proceeds from the alliances formed between the various parts of the organism. Through the process of domination, there develop alliances serving the various parts' needs.[309] According to Nietzsche, a strong part requires the cooperation of the weaker part, and vice-versa.

> "*In how far obeying also involves resisting; the obeyer by no means gives up its own power. Likewise, in commanding there is a concession that the opponent's absolute power has not been vanquished, not incorporated, dissolved.*"[310]

The hierarchy of the organism's constituent parts requires both the subordination of the weaker elements and the stronger parts' recognition that they cannot maintain their position without the cooperation of their weaker counterparts.[311] Since the weaker

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[303] FP 1881, 11[206] = KSA 9, 11[134].
[304] FP 1881, 11[206] = KSA 9, 11[134].
[305] FP 1881, 11[341] = KSA 9, 11[284].
[306] FP 1884, 26[272]. Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, Contradictions of his Philosophy and his Philosophy of Contradictions*, p. 174. Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 50-51.
[307] FP 1883, 7[190].
[308] FP 1883, 7[190]. Author's translation.
[309] FP 1883, 7[94].
[310] FP 1885, 36[21]. (WLN)
[311] FP 1885, 25[430]. See also FP 1881, 11[341] = KSA 9, 11[284].

elements are subordinated to the stronger ones and serve as a function of the latter, the strong are dependent on their weaker counterparts because they require the former's cooperation in order to carry out the function demanded of them by their *own* masters.[312] Thus there is a reciprocal relation between qualitatively different parts of the organism and a balance of forces is reached within it. The stronger dominate the weaker, but the latter is not necessarily vanquished and completely assimilated to the stronger; it has only been rendered as similar as possible, which does not mean that it has been completely transformed into a part of its master. There is a tension that remains in the organism between the competing parts and acts as the possibility of future excitations. This tension can be affected and may result in the transformation of the organism's hierarchy.

Ultimately this reciprocal relation between the various parts of the organism is related to its external environment. Through its interaction with the external world a part becomes useful in the Darwinian sense. "[F]*or the longest time while a quality is developing, it does not preserve or prove useful to the organism* [...] *but in the struggle of parts, it won't be long before a new form begins to relate to a partial usefulness* [.]"[313] The utility of an organ, or any other part of the organism, is not immediately determined by its possible use. The organism does not produce new parts because it has need of them; rather, because there are new parts that may be used, a purpose is assigned to them by a stronger more vigorous part. These newly conjugated parts are only then selected by external conditions and their utility in the 'struggle for existence' is also determined.

Thus, Nietzsche's reading notes testify to the importance that he gave to Roux. He noted the importance of excitation that leads to overcompensation, which he also

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[312] FP 1885, 34[123].
[313] FP 1886-1887, 7[25]. (WLN); GM II, §12.

found in Rolph's writings. The combination of these two biologists allowed him to portray the auto-structuration of the organism as the result of the conjugation of weaker cells to stronger ones. The aristocracy of cells that is produced structures the organism's purposefulness in its relation to its *milieu*. But there is a further element to Nietzsche's understanding of the organic that will be important for his physiological philosophy of history.

Nietzsche's philosophical use of physiology reintroduced memory to his discussion of history by way of the organic. He claimed that by following the body as a guide it could be possible to gain a better representation of memory.[314] Fundamentally, memory distinguishes the organic from the inorganic.[315] The essential distinguishing point is that the inorganic has no past.[316] "*All that is organic distinguishes itself from what is inorganic inasmuch as it* accumulates experiences."[317] Although inorganic material may be organized in many different ways, it does not retain its previous structures as a part of itself. In contradistinction to inorganic material, organic life has the capacity to accumulate traces of its past organization. However, Nietzsche did not regard this accumulation of experiences as necessarily passive. This active accumulation of experiences may in part be due to Roux's description of the organism's intussusceptive ability predicated on the cell's inner conditions, which meant that there was no passive feeding. But it was not Roux that *overtly* disputed the passivity of organic memory. In 1886, Nietzsche read Carl

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[314] FP 1884, 26[374].

[315] Nietzsche stated that there is no inorganic world (FP 1885, 34[247]). The distinction between the organic and the inorganic was not particular to Nietzsche. Although Roux does not discuss memory, using memory to distinguish the organic from the inorganic was common in nineteenth century biology. As Barbara Stiegler argues, this distinction can be brought back at least to the work of Ernst Haeckel (*Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 58ff).

[316] FP 1881, 12[225] = KSA 9, 12[15].

[317] FP 1883, 12[31]. (Authors's translation). It should be noted that there is a translation error in the *Fragments posthumes*. The first phrase should read: "*Tout ce qui est organic se distingue de ce qui est* ***inorganique***...." rather than: "...*ce qui est organique* ...." The German reads *Anorganischen* (KSA 10, 12[31]).

von Nägeli's *Mechanish-phyiologische Theorie der Abstammungsglehre* (1884) that argued that a cell's ability to feed was conditioned on the idioplasma that regulated the cell's assimilation.[318] "[T]*he* plasma *assimilates and absorbs into its forms what it continuously appropriates*[.]"[319] The cell's assimilation of nutrition is dependent on its ability to shape what it takes in on the forms already present in its plasma. Thus, even in the organic process of assimilation, Nietzsche perceived the importance of memory. Organisms do not passively assimilate what is external to them but force the exterior to take on forms that are already contained within it. This will be important for Nietzsche's understanding of consciousness.

We may now better appreciate the importance of Nietzsche's reading of Wilhelm Roux's *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus*. In it, he discovered a description of the organism that he had not seen in any of his previous readings. Following his reading of Roux, Nietzsche understood organisms as determined not by their *milieu*, but by their parts' ability to be affected by external excitations to which these parts responded by an overcompensatory assimilation. Assimilation was described as leading to the growth of the parts and eventually to a struggle between the unequally developed components of the body. This struggle then led to some parts dominating other parts, and resulted in the formation of a self-regulating hierarchy within the organism. However, as has been shown, Roux was not the only influence on his understanding of the organic, both Rolph and Nägeli also contributed to it.

To the organic capacity for excitation, assimilation and regulation, Nietzsche added the ability to retain past forms. These four elements are the basis for Nietzsche's physiological understanding of history. I will now use this discussion to explain how Nietzsche philosophically understood history as physiology. Essentially,

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[318] Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 68-69. For more on Nietzsche and Nägeli see Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, biology, and Metaphor*, p. 31-32.
[319] FP 1886-1887, 7[9] (Author's translation).

this understanding of history rests on the removal of passivity from the subject's relation to its world. Through Roux's account of excitation and Nägeli's description of assimilation, memory becomes the active production of the forms that are the basis for all knowledge of the past. But before reaching the anticipated conclusion, I must first describe Nietzsche's physiological metaphor.

Part 2: History

3.2.1 The Nietzschean Subject

After having discussed his reading of Roux, I will now show that the effect of Nietzsche's reading of *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus* amounted to more than a biological reduction. Nietzsche used his knowledge of the physiological struggle between an organism's parts not only to better understand the complexity of the body, but also to understand the relationship between the body and the intellect. He makes this point in a series of unpublished notes that argue for the methodological priority of the body over consciousness, spirit or soul.[320] According to Barbara Stiegler, it is here that Nietzsche made his most fundamental break with the modern philosophical tradition. Through his physiological interpretation of the human subject, Nietzsche broke with the philosophical tradition that portrayed the human subject as determined by its categories of understanding.[321] His discussion of the organic basis of memory implied that the continual restructuration of the body's organization conditioned its ability to interpret new experiences. The human subject is therefore an auto-regulating

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[320] FP 1884, 25[356]; 1884, 26[374]; 1884, 27[70]; 1885, 34[46]; 1885, 40[21]; 1885-1886, 2[91]; 1886-1887, 5[56].
[321] Barbara Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 70-71.

structure that actively mediates the continual influx of new experiences.[322] The reception of stimuli implies their assimilation, which then acts as the pre-condition to the reception of additional stimuli by developing tensions that can be affected. Whereas the subject had been previously described as an opposition between the active process of thinking and the passive reception of experiences, Nietzsche's use of the body brought him to define both the reception of stimuli and their assimilation as active historical characteristics of the subject.[323] Assimilation works towards creating the hermeneutic horizon that orients the possibility of any new interpretation.

Nietzsche's physiological reinterpretation of the human subject developed its ultimate form in *Beyond Good and Evil.* In it, he contested the traditional understanding of the soul as the unique psychic center and seat of consciousness. Basing himself on the newly discovered physiological processes, he objected to the traditional conception of the soul as indestructible, eternal, and indivisible.[324]

> "[T]*he way is open for a new version and refinements of the soul-hypothesis; and such conceptions as 'mortal-soul,' and 'soul as subjective multiplicity,' and 'soul as social structure of the drives and affects' want henceforth to have citizens' rights in science.*"[325]

But by way of undermining the traditional conception of the individual as a unitary soul, Nietzsche appealed to the fertility of physiological study rather than psychology. "[F]*irst a physiological investigation and interpretation, rather than a psychological one*[.]"[326] Nietzsche stated to this effect that nothing good has ever come of the contemplation of the soul and it is only once the body is studied that one gains a

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[322] Barbara Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 82; See also Barbara Stiegler, "Mettre le corps à la place de l'âme, qu'est-ce que cela change? Nietzsche entre Descrates, Kant et la biologie" in *Philosophie*. vol. 82 (2004), pp. 92; and Babara Stiegler, *Nietszche et la critique de la chair: Dionysos, Ariane, le Christ*. (Paris: PUF, 2005), pp. 203-238.
[323] Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 82.
[324] BGE, §12.
[325] BGE, §12.
[326] GM I, §17.

better understanding of intellectual processes. Psychology cannot overcome the understanding of the subject as the Cartesian "I think" or the Schopenhaurian "I will,"[327] but physiology, however, reveals the "I" as a conceptual synthesis "*which makes possible both the individual and the whole.*"[328] Moreover, "*even if the* centre of 'consciousness' *doesn't coincide with the physiological centre, it would still be possible that the* ***physiological*** *centre is also the* ***psychic*** *centre.*"[329] There is a startling similarity between intellectual processes and physiological ones, and the latter "*may certainly also serve as a metaphor for the intellectual*[.]"[330] By following the body as a guide, a better understanding of intellectual processes is possible which reveals a complicated synthesis of forces that are only incompletely understood when the intellect is examined alone. As we have seen, Nietzsche prefigured this in *Daybreak* where he had cautiously described moral evaluations as the product of competing drives interpreted as a text.

Let us now turn to his comparison between the intellectual processes and physiology. According to Nietzsche, the intellect, as the seat of consciousness, is not alone in thinking; the *whole* body thinks. His understanding of the physiological interpretation of consciousness began during his first reading of Roux where he described the affects as links between the various physiological constituents of the body, which intellectualize the physiological struggle of the parts.[331] Through the affects' translation of the inner struggle, the intellect becomes part of the body. This was later refined in 1883 where the affects were described as acting "as if" they were organs because they struggle amongst themselves for the attention of the intellect.[332]

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[327] BGE, §16.
[328] FP 1885, 40[21]; 1885-1886, 1[87]. (WLN).
[329] FP 1886-1887, 5[56]. (WLN).
[330] FP 1885, 40[38]. (WLN).
[331] FP 1881, 11[199] = KSA 9, 11[128].
[332] FP 1883, 7[94] [198].

Moreover, they subordinate organs to their needs, which are recompensed for their cooperation by increased levels of nourishment. By way of explaining the relation of the affects to the body, Nietzsche described them as telegraphic links between two actual organs like the connection between a pianist's hands and his brain.[333] The instinctual movement of the hands that follows the reading of the partition without necessarily consciously willing each movement characterizes the action of the affects. The command that coordinates the various parts of the body when playing music must be broken down into its smallest constituent parts. The movement starts from these smallest parts then percolates upward following the body's hierarchy.[334] "*We presuppose here that the whole organism thinks, that all the organic parts have their part in thought, in feeling, and willing –consequently the brain is but a great centralizing apparatus.*"[335] The intellect is not the only part of the body that thinks, feels and wills. All the parts of the body think, the intellect is simply the organ that coordinates all these distinct and competing affects. Thus, Nietzsche clearly thought that the body thinks inasmuch as its operations are not fully determined by the brain. I will now explain how he thought this was possible.

It is through the sensations of pleasure and pain that the intellect coordinates its affects and that the body can be said to think. This coordination is made possible by "*the posterior effects of long conserved evaluations that now act instinctively as a system of pleasure and pain judgments.*"[336] Through these sensations, the intellect is capable of knowing what is happening to the body. However, these sensations are not the causes of the body's reaction. Pain is only a sign that something has upset the

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[333] FP 1883, 7[211].

[334] FP 1884, 27[19].

[335] FP 1884, 27[19]. (Author's translation).

[336] FP 1884. 25[460]. (Author's translation). For more on Nietzsche's treatment on pain and pleasure albeit in the context of modern neurology see Abraham Olivier. "Nietzsche and Neurology" in *Nietzsche-Studien*, vol. 32 (2003), pp. 124-141.

previously existing balance between the parts, and, as such, it is a judgment that precedes any intellectual interpretation of this imbalance.[337] But, as Nietzsche observed, this signal is sent after the body has reacted to the disturbance.[338] One stubs one's foot and is stopped from falling by the other leg's reaction and it is only after this reaction that the sensation of pain is felt as if to tell the brain that the foot is hurt: pain is the recognition of the possible consequences of the disturbance.[339] Thus, according to Nietzsche, pain is not the cause of the reaction, but an interpretation sent to the body's coordinating center: the brain. Pleasure, on the other hand, is composed of small pains and resistances that have been overcome and assimilated without a loss of internal equilibrium.[340] This implies two important elements about his understanding of the body's relation to the intellect. First, the various parts of the body are able to react without the aid of the intellect, which Nietzsche understood as meaning that the intellect is not alone in thinking. Second, if the parts of the body think and evaluate they are also able to retain a memory of past evaluations that they call upon in interpreting new affects.[341] The sensations that the intellect evaluates are themselves evaluations and therefore the affects act as prior-interpretations of what the intellect then interprets.

However, as I will now show, his comparison between the body and the intellect does not only pertain to their cooperation. The intellect was also described in similar terms as the body inasmuch as its "*needs and capacities are so far the same as those which physiologists posit for everything that lives, grows, and multiplies.*"[342] It is in this sense that it "*is most similar to a stomach.*"[343] Like a stomach that must

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[337] Didier Franck, *Nietzsche et l'ombre de dieu.* (Paris : PUF, 1998), p. 205.
[338] FP 1888, 14[173].
[339] FP 1888, 14[173].
[340] FP 1888, 14[173].
[341] FP 1884, 25[514].
[342] BGE, §230.
[343] BGE, §230.

break down and digest food before it is assimilated into the bloodstream, the intellect also digests its experiences by assimilating the new to the old, by falsifying the external world and by filing "*new things in old files*" to suit its purposes.[344] Its digestion allows it assimilate its experiences without being overcome by their differences. But, the digestive metaphor is much more than a description of its assimilative capacities. As it was described in the previous part of the chapter, assimilation is the consequence of an excitation. Digestion, like cellular assimilation, is the result of the appearance of something foreign: digestion requires that food first enter the stomach. Just as Roux had made all assimilation conditional on functional excitation, which is essentially a pre-selection of stimuli, there must also be a similar pre-selection of digestible material when "eating." Before eating one always chooses what food will be inserted into the mouth and swallowed. When comparing the intellect to the stomach, Nietzsche described this as a "*spiritual* fatum"[345] or a "*predetermined decision and answer to predetermined selected questions.*"[346] There are a determinate number of intellectual stimuli that can excite the intellect's assimilatory capacity beyond that the intellect cannot assimilate any more. The intellect may therefore be compared to the body insofar as its assimilation of experiences, and information, is always pre-determined by what experiences may affect it.

We have now seen how his knowledge of physiology was related to his later reinterpretation of the intellect. The subject now exists as whole only through the competition of its affects that divide and interpret its relation to the body and the outside world. It also acts like a body insofar as it digests and assimilates experiences according to a pre-selection of digestible material. However, despite the intricate

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[344] BGE, §230.
[345] BGE, §231.
[346] BGE, §231.

relation between the intellect and the body through the affects, what Nietzsche was arguing was not a reduction of mental activities to physiological processes. The body is his metaphor for understanding mental phenomena and, by extension, history.

3.2.2 The Body as Metaphor

Now, Nietzsche's use of the body pertains much more to his understanding of the world than to a biological rendering of intellectual phenomena. The body, as Nietzsche described it, is an interrelation of competing forces rather than a unitary phenomenon.[347] As the representation of our subjective unity,[348] it should not be thought of as a being, but rather as an event or becoming.[349] The constant struggle that animates it does not allow for a permanent equilibrium. The appearance of new elements, or the strengthening of others, may upset this balance, which must then be reestablished. Through its constant reequilibration, the body is the prime example of how something can be said to be whole without actually being one. Because it is a composite of a diversity of parts competing and forming alliances, it exemplifies the articulation of the world. The world, as Nietzsche understood it, is chaotically devoid of any intrinsic properties and attributes; it exists as a whole insofar as it is able to affect the subject through the body. Thus, it is through the body that we understand and organize our world.[350] It is the basis of our relation to the world inasmuch as it is able to receive something foreign into itself.[351] It is this capacity of being affected from the inside by something other, which marks the body as methodologically

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[347] Andrea Rehberg, "The Overcoming of Physiology" in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, vol. 23 (2003), p. 41.
[348] FP 1885, 40[21]; Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, p, 42.
[349] Didier Franck, *Nietzsche et l'ombre de dieu*, p. 183.
[350] Didier Franck, *Nietzsche et l'ombre de dieu*, p. 176.
[351] Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 87.

important.[352] It is its intussusceptive capacity that marks the body as a fertile metaphor.

Therefore, the body is the link between the world and our consciousness. It is through the body that the world may affect the intellect.[353] It receives stimuli from the outside, which are then translated into a text that the intellect can interpret. The sensory apparatus that the body has developed is the means by which the body pre-interprets and determines the nervous signals that are allowed to act on the intellect as a "*pre-text*" to its interpretive assimilation.[354] The body's interaction with the world is such that it pluralizes the chaos of the world through its ability to pre-interpret its excitations.[355] As a composite of parts each having the ability of being affected in certain ways, the body pre-determines how the world appears to the intellect. The intellect then receives this plurality and through its assimilation of it, simplifies and falsifies the world by interpreting the pre-text given to it by its affects.. Thus, the body, through the affects, establishes the pre-text for conscious interpretation of the world.

Now, Nietzsche's physiological metaphor reflects his reading of Roux but also extends beyond his reworking of the intellect. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he asked whether there is any "*other 'reality' besides the reality of our drives*[?]"[356] If the only knowledge of the world we have is necessarily mediated by our body and our affects, would it not be permitted to omit the material existence of the world? Would it not be preferable to base our knowledge on the only reality we know: our affects? With this

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[352] Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la critique de la chair*, p, 31.
[353] Eric Blondel, *Nietzsche, le corps et la culture : la philosophie comme généalogie philologique.* (Paris: PUF, 1986), p. 282.
[354] Sarah Kofman *Nietzsche et la métaphore.* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1983), p. 198.
[355] Kisten Brown. *Nietzsche and Embodiment: Discerning Bodies and non-dualism.* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), p. 111-113. Eric Blondel, *Nietzsche, le corps et la culture : la philosophie comme généalogie philologique*, p. 282.
[356] BGE, §36.

"*one would have gained the right to determine* all *efficient forces univocally as –will to power.*"[357] It is in this sense that Nietzsche argued that "[t]*his world is the will to power – and nothing besides!*"[358] This passage, and others, need not be read as implying an ontological argument about the world, as some have suggested.[359] The will to power could simply be his hypothesis about our reality inspired by his reading and knowledge of physiological processes.[360] This expression is generally understood in the context of the evolutionary sciences as his response to Darwinian biology,[361] but if it is interpreted according to my reading of Nietzsche's discussion of physiology, the will to power is the essence of the world only insofar as it is modeled on how we experience and construe our reality. It is the "*world viewed from the*

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[357] BGE, §36.

[358] FP 1885, 38[12]. (WLN). The will to power is a complicated and much discussed part of Nietzsche's writings. There are several competing interpretations of the will to power; since it has been voluminously discussed in the literature, a complete discussion of the expression would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, the status of this nebulous expression is uncertain. See Paolo D'Iorio "Les volontés de puissance" in Mazzino Montinari, *La volontés de puissance n'existe pas*. (Paris: Éditions de l'éclat, 1996), pp. 119-160. See also Mazzino Montinari "Interprétations nazies" in *La volontés de puissance n'existe pas*, pp. 28-70.

[359] Martin Heidegger, for example, reads the will to power to be the "*basic character of all beings.*" (Heidegger, Martin. *Nietzsche vol.I.* tr. David Farrell Krell [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979] p. 3). This ontological reading is not unique to Heidegger, see Jean Gayon "Nietzsche and Darwin" in *Biology and the Foundation of Ethics*. eds. J. Maienschein and M. Ruse (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 169.

[360] Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche Doctrine of the Will to Power: neither Ontological nor Biological" in *International Studies in Philosophy*. vol. 32, no. 3 (2000), p. 119ff. See also R. Lanier Andersen, "Nietzsche's Will to Power as a Doctrine of the Unity of Science" in *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, vol. 25, no. 5 (1994), pp. 729-750.

[361] There are many passages that may be interpreted in this way. See for example GS, §349; BGE, §13; GM II, §12; TI "Expeditions of an Untimely Man" §14; FP 1884, 26[276]; 1885, 34[208]; 1885-1886, 2[68]; 1886-1887, 7[9]; 1887, 9[91]; 1887, 9[151]; 1887-1888, 11[121] to list but a few of these. In the context of his reading of evolutionary history the expression is interpreted in contra-distinction to the passivity of natural selection. For examples of this use of the will to power as a reaction to Darwin's natural selection see John Richardson, *Nietzsche's New Darwinism*, pp. 12, 18-19; Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*, p. 28; Keith Ansell-Pearson "On the Miscarriage of Life & the Future of the Human: Thinking Beyond the Human Condition with Nietzsche" in *Nietzshe-Studien*, vol. 29 (2000), p. 155; Alfred Tauber "A Typology of Nietzsche's Biology" in *Biology and Philosophy*. vol. 9, no. 1 (1994), p. 31; Elizabeth Grosz *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and the Untimely* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004) pp. 125-126; Jean Gayon "Nietzsche and Darwin," p. 169; Patrick Wotling "La morale sans métaphysique," p. 352.

inside, the world defined and determined by its "intelligible character"[.]"[362] The will to power rather than describe a metaphysical essence of reality, encompasses all interpretive organizations of the world that give it meaning.[363] As the essence of the world, the will to power should therefore be understood as determining the *text* of the world and consequently its possible interpretations.

My purpose in raising this issue is to underline the importance that Nietzsche gave to the body rather than discussing the will to power itself. This importance was not restricted to the understanding of mental phenomena, but through the will to power, it was applied to the rest of the world. What we know is only the pre-text that our affects give us. Our entire modern scientific edifice has been built on the idea that there exists matter that can be quantified. But, retorts Nietzsche,[364] if this is only the way that the world is given to us, and that it affects us, then why not extend this understanding to the world itself?

The body is therefore Nietzsche's paradigm for understanding the world, not because he was advocating a physiological reduction of our knowledge, but rather because of its status as an interpreting synthesis of forces.[365] If we look out onto the world, all we see is the will to power conditioning every experience; all we see is the world as a bundle of forces that have come to be represented in a certain manner that we then interpret. The body is therefore the most important lens that we can use to

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[362] BGE, §36.

[363] This is Wolfgang Müller-Lauter's interpretation (*Physiologie de la volonté de puissance*, pp. 46-72). He argues against Heidegger and explains that the will to power is not metaphysical because Nietzsche speaks of wills to power. This, he argues, indicates that the expression signifies that it should be read as an expression of the interpretive organization of the world. On the contradiction between wills to power and will to power, see Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, his Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 23-40.

[364] BGE, §36.

[365] Eric Blondel, *Nietzsche, le corps et la culture : la philosophie comme généalogie philologique*, p.297; Partick Wotling, *Nietzsche et le problème de la civilisation*. (Paris : PUF, 1995), p. 88; Sarah Kofman, *Nietzsche et la métaphore*, p. 199; Kisten Brown, *Nietzsche and Embodiment: Discerning Bodies and non-dualism*, p. 142.

understand our world and ourselves. This has led to a list of four distinct ways that Nietzsche understood the body as a metaphor, which I have already integrated into this chapter.[366] First, the psychological metaphor that uses the body to describe the intellect and negates the soul-hypothesis by making the entire body think. Second, the gastroenterological metaphor that exploits the way that the body intussuscepts its environment. Third, the political metaphor that utilizes the body's hierarchical organization produced through their struggle. Finally there is the philological metaphor that emphasizes the interpretative activity of the body, both within itself and in relation to the world. There is a fifth metaphor that one may draw from Nietzsche's discussion of the body, and my comments on the will to power: the body as history.

3.2.3 History as Physiology

Having now discussed the tenor of Nietzsche's physiological metaphor and seen that it can be extended to encompass the whole world, I will finish by explaining why his philosophy of history should be called physiological. The body is a historical phenomenon. As an evolved aggregate of organs, the body has a history and can be interpreted historically. But this implies that the epistemological ground for understanding the world is conditioned by the evolution of our sensory organs. Even knowledge of our evolution is conditioned on our evolution, as I have discussed at the end of the last chapter. However, Nietzsche did not endorse a cleavage between our evolved faculty to know and a "real" world. Empirical knowledge is a heuristic principle that describes the world "as-if" it was such and such.[367] Nietzsche was aided in no small part by his reading of Roux, which gave him a perspective on evolutionary history that was not based on factors extrinsic to the object studied. The

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[366] Partick Wotling, *Nietzsche et le problème de la civilisation*, p. 97.

[367] BGE §15. See Nadeem J.Z. Hussain, "Reading Nietzsche through Ernst Mach" in *Nietzsche and Science*. G. Moore and T. Brodjer eds. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 121-126.

assimilation of the nutrients was predicated on the cell's ability to be affected from without, which was determined not by external factors, but by the cell's intussusceptive ability. Similarly, the world that the subject inhabits and interprets is a consequence of human evolutionary history that developed certain perspectives that orient the subject's interpretation. This explained how the chaos of the world is translated into a conscious phenomenon and given a unitary denomination. The body pluralizes the world, which is bereft of any intrinsically determined qualities without implying a "real" world that is only partially revealed.

History is physiological because it has the interpretive qualities of the body. Like the body, history pluralizes the chaos of the past, which is then simplified by the historian's interpretation. History acts like the body inasmuch as it is the mediation of the chaos of past events. History translates this chaos into past peoples, places, events, and objects, as a pre-text to our interpretations, which we customarily call "facts.". The historian, therefore, acts as the consciousness to history's body inasmuch as it simplifies the pre-text given to it by history. This implies that history is not passively constituted through an addition of experiences. The pre-text donated to the historian is composed of pre-interpretations produced by preceding generations of historians. The appearance of new experiences, or information, is conditional on history's pre-text, which is the basis for any new interpretations. It is in this sense that Nietzsche's discussion of memory's capability for retroactive action takes on all its significance. History, as a sum of already existing interpretations of the past, acts as a "*backbone to which everything attaches itself.*"[368] All new information about the past is brought back to other existing interpretations. History acts as the basis for an assimilation of new experiences, and therefore any new interpretation developed by a historian becomes a pre-text to new assimilation.

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[368] FP 18885, 39[12].

Nevertheless, history is not an addition of interpretations produced by succeeding generations of historians. As has already been described when discussing cellular conjugation, the process of assimilation, or falsification and simplification, inherent to interpretation, is not without its resistances. In the reception and assimilation of something new, there is always a counter-movement that resists this assimilation.[369] This counter-movement means that the new part is not fully assimilated and dissolved into the previous historical body, but remains as an incitement to further assimilation.[370] Although this new element is put into relation with the other elements present in history, it is not necessarily fully integrated to the already existing structure. The overall cohesiveness of history is weakened because there is an element that has not been fully assimilated and constitutes the weakest part of the interpretation.[371] This has an impact on further assimilations because this weak element acts as an unanswered question. Memory is therefore active. However, to try and limit this weak part's ability to affect history would lead to prohibiting the effect of new experiences and information. This would ultimately lead to arrested development. "[A] reversion, *a turning back in any sense and to any degree is quite impossible. We physiologists at least know that.*"[372] Because the past is able to affect us, it remains present despite attempts to excise parts of it from history. Through these incomplete assimilations, history gains new ways of affecting the subject, which Nietzsche describes as wounds.[373] The struggle that is implied in the process of

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[369] FP 1885, 36[21]; Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, his Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*, p. 177; Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, p. 69.

[370] Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*, pp. 72-73.

[371] An example of this would be the English evolutionists stubborn attempts at explaining the existence of "evil" in a world they had already determined to the product of an evolutionary process that worked towards the betterment of humanity and its general progress and well-being. This, of course, is the case for Spencer's evolutionary history, a fact that Nietzsche was fully conscious of and was exposed in the previous chapter.

[372] TI, "Expeditions of an Untimely Man" §43.

[373] See FP 1883, 7[86][95].

assimilation, which leads to some elements being less fully assimilated than others, opens "wounds," which are new possibilities of being affected.

Understood in relation to history, these "wounds" are experienced as something that must be interpreted and integrated. Like the body that restructures itself in response to the apparition of a foreign object, likewise history also reequilibrates its internal force relations. This can be understood through Nietzsche's distinction between two aspects that interact within the historians work. There is the enduring aspect, which consists in the "*custom, the act, the 'drama', a certain strict sequence of procedures,*" and the fluid aspect that consists in "*the meaning, the purpose, the expectation associated with the performance of such procedures.*"[374] The enduring aspect is accordingly older than the fluid aspect that is grafted upon it. It is the enduring aspect that is the wound that impels further interpretation. The fluid aspect is the meaning that is given to something that is contained within history, which beckons an interpretation. A historian then responds to a question that is contained with a historical horizon and invites an answer.[375] A question is always the sense and direction demanded of the interpretation.[376] This question is a pre-text that orients the exegesis. Thus, the enduring aspect acts as the hermeneutic horizon, and because it has pluralized the chaos of the past and presented it as a pre-text, it always asks a question oriented in a certain direction. It is therefore a perspective offered by history unto the past.

As oriented questions, these "wounds" are the historical perspectives that are the preconditions to any interpretation.[377] Understood in relation to history, these perspectives constitute history's affectivity. Perspectivally construed, the past does not

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[374] GM II, §13.
[375] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method.* tr. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Corssroad, 1975), p. 333.
[376] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* p. 326.
[377] Christian Emden, *Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness and the* Body, pp. 141-142.

exist as an unconditioned object that the subject must reveal. As part of the subject the past is contained within its perspectives from which the subject cannot free itself.[378] There are many possible perspectives, which may cohabitate within the subject.

> "*There is* only *a perspective seeing,* only *a perspective 'knowing'; and the* more *affects we allow to speak about one thing, the more* eyes, *different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity', be.* [T]*o suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of this – what would that mean but to* castrate *the intellect?–*"[379]

Knowledge of the past is therefore dependent on the available perspectives and the arresting of knowledge through the affirmation of one single perspective weakens history's affectivity and its "objectivity." If history is only the interpretation of the past taken as a stable and unconditioned object, it would become the sum of these and disregard the fact that the past acts as an irruption that incites a reaction. The past incites us to assimilate it and it is these incitations or excitations that are the source of our interpretations. The past presents itself to us in such and such a manner through history. Each interpretation acts as a perspective because it is one response to a way that the past can affect the human subject, but it also implies the existence of other possible interpretations. Thus, history is never fully known because it is constantly rebuilt and reinterpreted.

3.2.4 Conclusion

We have now completed our tour of Nietzsche's physiological philosophy of history. We have seen that his reading of Roux introduced him to the idea that the body is an artificial whole that can be devolved into a series of struggling parts. These

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[378] Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche, his Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*, p. 38
[379] GM III, §12.

parts are able to be excited and they overcompensate their losses. In so doing, a struggle ensues that produces a semblance of a structure we call the body. We then saw Nietzsche extend this understanding of physiology to the human subject that allowed me to claim that he developed a physiological metaphor. I then understood this metaphor through the enigmatic will to power, which I adopted as justifying the extension of his metaphor to all phenomena.

Thus, history may be understood as a body. Like a body, history may be affected in multiple ways. The past therefore is transformed from a undifferentiated chaos of events, peoples and places, into a series of objects that affect the historian as a pre-text for further interpretations. These historical affects are then assimilated and related to the existing history by which they are simplified and given meaning. Thus the past as chaos is pluralized by history understood as body into a series of perspectives. However, the interpretation of the past is never complete, there always remains a series of "wounds" that act as oriented questions offering a new perspective in the hermeneutic horizon. Thus, history actively produces the ways that the past may affect it though its incitation to interpretation that produces new questions and perspectives.

Nietzsche's philosophy of history is therefore physiological. This, as we have seen, is in contradistinction to anatomy. Whereas anatomy privileges an understanding of the body that is predicated on the dissection and separating of its various components, physiology implies a vivisection that conserves the relations that the various parts have with one another. Therefore, physiologically construed, Nietzsche's philosophy of history endeavors to perceive how the various interpretations of the past operate together. These interpretations were therefore understood as themselves incitements to further interpretations, thus disabling any attempt to seize history as a unique object better known as the historian accumulates

greater amounts of information. History is never fully determined. As a body, it is continually restructuring itself because of the transformation of its various components, and because of its constant solicitation by the possibility of new perspectives and questions.

Conclusion

We have now surveyed Nietzsche's writings from his aborted Ph. D. dissertation to his the last notes he wrote before the end of his career. We can conclude from this survey that there is indeed a philosophy of history hidden within his works. As I noted in the introduction, his philosophy of history is neither a methodological reflection nor an ontological statement about the nature of the past. Nietzsche's philosophy of history is physiological because it is derived from his understanding of the philosophical importance of the body. Let me now summarize what has been said in the preceding three chapters as to make this point clear and distinct.

In the first chapter, we saw Nietzsche develop an understanding of history through his early writings on organic purposes and the evolution of language. These early writings showed how his developing knowledge of Darwinian evolutionary science mediated by F-A. Lange and Empedocles had an early effect on his understanding of history. These writings were read as meaning that Nietzsche thought that historical purposes were the consequence of the human subject's physiological structure that had evolved a distinct relation to the world. We then saw, in his *Second Untimely Meditation*, that this preliminary appreciation of history was developed into a thorough analysis. Here history was shown to be state determined by creative retrospection. This was taken to mean that Nietzsche did not think that the past had any existence outside of history. It was then linked to the human subject through his identification of a plastic power shaped by historical, unhistorical and suprahistorical powers. The historical and unhistorical powers combine to produce a historical horizon populated with past events, peoples and places. These elements were then shown to be purposeful only through the suprahistorical power, which ascribes

meaning to them independently from any particular temporal perspective. Thus, the parts of this first chapter are interrelated insofar as they both portray the use of history as dependent on the distance that separates the subject from the historical object; history is not concerned with discovering anything about the past, but rather developing a past that can serve the future. History was described as a state dependent on its relation with the human subject conceived physiologically and artistically. However, since history was shown to be inextricably bound to the subject that is itself historical, then histories change as life changes.

In the second chapter, we saw Nietzsche embark on a historical criticism of all supposedly unconditioned values. This project led him to further his knowledge of Darwinism because he initially thought that their use of history could be exploited to advance his project. Through his reaction to his reading of Paul Rée and Herbert Spencer, I showed that this critical project eventually rejected their potential contribution. Nietzsche rejected their ideas not because he had overcome his "positivist" phase, but because he had developed a greater knowledge of their work, which heretofore had been lacking. The reason for this rejection was that these moral historians were unable to distance themselves from their moral presuppositions and had produced a distinctly moral interpretation of evolutionary history. Although his readings of these historians culminated in a disappointment, they remain important for Nietzsche's philosophy of history. The reason for their importance is that they demonstrated how history, in addition to being linked to the subject, is conditioned on the manner that it has already been interpreted. Thus, history as a state of the past was further understood as a state that had become, and is not given meaning outside of any temporality. Therefore, this chapter added the importance of previous interpretations to any historical inquiry; every attempt at circumscribing the past is necessarily mediated by previous interpretations that present the past in such and such a way.

This important conclusion led us into the third chapter. In it, we saw Nietzsche read Wilhelm Roux's *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus*. The importance of this reading lay in the way it influenced his understanding of physiology. Although he had already recognized the philosophical importance of physiology, in his reading of Roux, Nietzsche discovered a novel understanding of the body. Roux had described the formation of organic purposefulness without having recourse to factors extrinsic to the body. Roux understood the body as a synthetic whole composed of parts agonistically interrelated. The struggle of parts therefore implied that the present configuration of the body was the byproduct of an aimless and unceasing conflict between it components. Furthermore, in arguing that the body was unstable structure he also gave an account of the cellular intussusceptive ability that had an important consequence for Nietzsche's philosophy. Rather than understand a cell's intake of nutrients as passive, Roux described it as dependent on the cell's inner structure. Thus, the cell's inner state was the pre-condition to any assimilation. The inner state became the mediation of the cell's environment, rather the product of forces acting on it from outside. I then showed how Nietzsche used the ideas of the body as a synthesis of forces and the cell's intussusceptive ability to develop his physiological metaphor. He applied this metaphor to the human subject, thus fracturing what had previously been the only stable entity on which he had developed his philosophy of history. The subject's intellect was shown to have similar properties as the body, namely the ability to mediate the external world through its competing affects. Human knowledge of the world was then described as the interpretation of what the affects had already pre-interpreted an offered to the intellect. The affects that had come to dominate some parts of the body were able to transmit a pre-text to the mind, which it then interpreted. I then applied this metaphor to history. The justification for this extension was found in Nietzsche's nebulous will

to power. This allowed me to argue that history is most similar to a body. As the body mediates the world, likewise history mediates the past. As the body has developed a certain ways that the world can affect it, likewise previous interpretations have pre-determined the way the past is affective. More importantly, the body is an unstable structure that can easily be upset by the influx of new elements. These incomplete assimilations become the preconditions to future relations with its environment, which amounts to it actively determining its structure and relation to the world. Similarly history's previous interpretive structure may be upset by new interpretations that result in unanswered questions. These questions act as the orientation and sense of future interpretations, which may also be called perspectives. Thus, history actively determines future interpretations through these oriented questions and this amounts to history being an active appropriation of the past.

Therefore, Nietzsche's philosophical discussion of history is much more than a methodological analysis of the historian's vocation. It is also more than the philosophical explication of historical development. Nietzsche's philosophy of history is necessarily physiological because it adopts the ideas of contemporary science that fractured the body into competing yet synthetically interrelated parts. Likewise history is also a momentary configuration that changes along with its interpreters. This implies that history does not have a stable essence that can be discussed metaphysically, nor that there is a proper method of historical inquiry. Thus history is a transitory state and not a being.

There is one last consideration that must be raised before closing this discussion. Throughout this thesis I have linked the development of Nietzsche's philosophy of history with his readings of evolutionary sciences. Although I maintain that this is a fruitful way of interrogating his philosophy, there are some unfortunate implications that accompany this interpretive strategy. First, it portrays the

development of his philosophy in a historicist manner. It is as if Nietzsche was determined by the scientific environment of his time. Second, it sets his readings between the interpreter and his text as if his readings added something to his writings that were not already there. However, this implies an interesting interpretive problem: is there ever a text that can speak on its own? Or is it always necessary that there be an intermediary between the reader and the text? Thus implying that there is no Nietzschean text to read and interpret but only particular readings. But this would not answer the question because there would be a further question: what is read?

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