

Nietzsche's Philosophy of Affirmation: A Paradox Avoided

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Introduction

Yirmiyahu Yovel claims that "the need is growingly felt to consider Nietzsche not as a critic or a 'negative' reformer merely, but [also] to take his role as an affirmative thinker more seriously. [For] Nietzsche insists that his Dionysian message is fundamentally an affirmation, a new kind of 'yes'" (ix). The implicit idea that Nietzsche's critical endeavors coexist with or run parallel to or, perhaps, are intimately connected with some sort of affirmative ideal, to such an extent that it would be negligent or insufficient to concentrate "merely" on the former instead of the latter, is particularly interesting. For, in even the most casual of glances, one may nevertheless detect a basic tension between the no or negation of critical philosophy and the yes of affirmative philosophy. For Nietzsche to espouse both, as Yovel indicates, means that he argues in essentially different directions. The *Gay Science*, first published in 1882, pulls most greatly in these different or, better, opposite directions: indeed, in this book Nietzsche both claims that God and the divinely purposed world are dead (108-109) AND that some day he wishes "to be only a Yes-sayer" (276)¹ - in other words, he is extremely negative regarding Christian metaphysics and morality and at the same time idealizes a sort of universal affirmation or yes-saying that ostensibly applies to Christianity and everything else.

Just how these opposite directions within *The Gay Science* fit together is an important question. For on the one hand, Nietzsche says, "But the ability to contradict, the attainment of a good conscience when one feels hostile to what is accustomed, traditional, and hallowed - that is still more excellent and constitutes what is really great, new, and amazing in our culture" (297) - hence his own "contradiction" of, for example, Christianity. And on the other hand, he says,

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

That Nietzsche "wishes" this "yes-saying" ability for others, particularly those higher and more advanced souls, is implicit. And so we see two contradictory philosophies emerge from within the same book of *The Gay Science*: the philosophy that one should not affirm everything but criticize "what is accustomed, traditional, and hallowed" AND the philosophy that one should try to affirm everything and accuse or criticize nothing, not even those who are critical themselves. Further examination reveals that this second philosophy may itself encompass the original two and demonstrate their contradictory nature. For consider the proposition "You should affirm everything," the basic proposition of section 276, summing up Nietzsche's wish "to be only a Yes-sayer" even regarding nay-sayers or "those who accuse." The proposition "You should affirm

everything" we will call P. Now, "You should affirm everything" is expressed in opposition to "you should not affirm everything" or "it is not the case that you should affirm everything," which we will call $\sim P$. Indeed, "you should" is a contrastive concept that has meaning only by contrast with "you should not": when Nietzsche says "I wish to be only a Yes-sayer," the "only" is meant to exclude or reject nay-saying. So, there is a sense in which "you should affirm everything" does mean rejecting positions that do not affirm everything. And yet, if you do take P seriously and affirm everything, perhaps you cannot avoid affirming $\sim P$ ("You should not affirm everything"), as Nietzsche indicates with his statement that he "does not even want to accuse those who accuse." But, indeed, for P to lead on to $\sim P$ seems both logically absurd and counter to Nietzsche's being "only a Yes-sayer": for (1) one cannot affirm both P and $\sim P$ at the same time without arriving at an absurdity according to the rules of logic and (2) thinking that affirmation is the "only" way to go surely entails that non-affirmation is not the way to go (and thus P denies or rejects $\sim P$). Obviously, given that P seems both to reject and to affirm $\sim P$, there exists an unresolved tension and thus incoherence or paradox in this expressed ideal of universal affirmation captured by P, and this incoherence reflects the basic tension between nay-saying and yes-saying.

In this paper, I will examine Nietzsche's philosophy of affirmation, which takes its birth in *The Birth of Tragedy* and surfaces again and again throughout all of Nietzsche's major works. In doing so I will trace the background ideas that lead Nietzsche to this New Year's resolution and wish in *The Gay Science*; I will then offer a detailed explication of philosopher Wolfgang Muller-Lauter's arguments concerning such universal affirmation and its basic incoherence, arguments along the lines of that I have just given. Though Muller-Lauter aptly characterizes such an incoherence or paradox in Nietzsche's model of universal affirmation, I will offer arguments as to why Muller-Lauter's negative evaluation of Nietzsche's most mature affirmative philosophy is itself unsuccessful, thereby defending the ultimate coherence of Nietzsche's philosophy of affirmation.

An Interpretive Framework

Starting with *The Birth of Tragedy* and moving through Nietzsche's major works I have accumulated what I consider three helpful interpretive insights: (1) that Nietzsche has several, often recurring ideas about the nature of life or about what is true of life; (2) that Nietzsche believes in some principle such that affirming more of life, digging more into life, or experiencing more of life will lead to the greater enhancement of life; and (3) that Nietzsche values and seeks to promote through his philosophizing (a) truth concerning life and reality and (b) the greatest possible enhancement of life. In one of his last published works, *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), Nietzsche describes "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable" in what is arguably a self-reflective look at how he himself eventually threw off the metaphysical appearance/reality distinction of Kant and Schopenhauer to reach, in the history of philosophy, what he simply but emphatically exclaims as the "moment of the briefest shadow; [the] end of the longest error; [and the] high point of humanity" (6). Obviously, Nietzsche values this "end of the longest error," which is the moment of greatest truth, as well as this "high point of humanity," which is the greatest enhancement of human life. Further defense of the viability of these three

interpretive insights will, I hope, come from how well these interpretive insights create an intelligible framework with which the reader can make sense of Nietzsche.

The Birth of Affirmation

Nietzsche's early interest in Kant and Schopenhauer is well-documented; and in the first section of his first published book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche soon refers to his philosophical predecessors and their metaphysical distinction between appearance and reality, or between the everyday world of appearance and the underlying deep reality:

Philosophical men even have a presentiment that the [everyday] reality in which we live and have our being is also [like dreams] mere appearance, and that another, quite different reality lies beneath it. Schopenhauer actually indicates as the criterion of philosophical ability the occasional ability to view men and things as mere phantoms or dream images. (1)

Nietzsche takes upon himself this metaphysical distinction between the phenomenal world and deep reality and articulates a certain redemptive and thus complementary relationship between these two realms unlike anything expressed in either Kant or, especially, in Schopenhauer. He says,

Though it is certain that of the two halves of our [everyday] existence, the waking and the dreaming states, the former appeals to us as infinitely preferable, more important, excellent, and worthy of being lived, indeed, as that which alone is lived - yet in relation to that mysterious ground of our being [that is, deep reality] of which we [and our everyday world] are the phenomena [or dream], I should, paradoxical as it may seem, maintain the very opposite estimate of the value of dreams. . . I feel myself impelled to the metaphysical assumption that the truly existent primal unity [that is, deep reality], eternally suffering and contradictory, also needs the rapturous vision, the pleasurable illusion [of the phenomenal world], for its continuous redemption. (4)

For Nietzsche, the "primal unity" or deep reality is "truly existent" and is characterized by Dionysian eternal suffering, pain, "tremendous terror," contradiction, oneness, and "blissful ecstasy" all "brought home to us most intimately by the analogy of intoxication" (1). The phenomenal world of everyday appearance, "the rapturous vision," is a necessary complement to this "truly existent" deep reality under the surface and is a much neater world of "measured restraint," individuals, reason, contemplation, and rules embodied in the god Apollo and in dreams (1). That these two realms represent "two [complementary] halves of our existence" is evidenced by the fact that human beings, such as the Greeks, have participated in both the everyday phenomenal world of "measured restraint" and the Dionysian deep reality of pain and joy. Says Walter Kaufmann in his introduction to *The Birth of Tragedy*, "Far from deprecating what he called 'the Apollinian,' [Nietzsche] argued that one could not appreciate it sufficiently until one became aware of another side of Greek culture that was barbarous by comparison and found expression in the Dionysian festivals" (9-10).

On first glance, the "continuous redemption" Nietzsche posits between these two realms is an aesthetic one. For he says that "it is only as aesthetic phenomena that existence and the world are justified" (5), meaning that the primal unity and the world of appearance - together making up this "existence and the world" - are both aesthetic phenomena (with their corresponding art impulses) and therefore both equally justified. "All that exists is just and unjust and equally justified in both," says Nietzsche (9), meaning that everything in the world (at deep reality level or appearance level) is "justified" as an aesthetic

phenomenon while both justified and unjustified at a moral level; and so, as an "equally justified" aesthetic phenomenon the world of appearance "continuous[ly] redeems" the Dionysian deep reality.

And yet, there may be something else behind this notion of "continuous redemption," something having to do with truth and life. Consider again the three interpretive points made above concerning Nietzsche's philosophy: (1) that Nietzsche has several, often recurring ideas about the nature of life or about what is true of life; (2) that Nietzsche believes in some principle such that affirming more of life, digging more into life, or experiencing more of life will lead to the greater enhancement of life; and (3) that Nietzsche values and seeks to promote through his philosophizing (a) truth concerning life and reality and (b) the greatest possible enhancement of life. I will contend that this "continuous redemption" of the Dionysian world by the Apollinian is not just a justified aesthetic redemption according to Nietzsche but also a redemption which is connected to and can facilitate (a) truth concerning life and reality and (b) life enhancement - and thus, given my third interpretive principle, this redemption is one Nietzsche wants to foster and promote.

One of Nietzsche's often recurring ideas about the nature of life alluded to in my first interpretive principle is that life is not just full of "measured restraint," reason, individuation, and beautiful illusions but also full of chaos, unreason, unity, suffering, contradiction, and joy. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, as aforementioned, Nietzsche relies on the Schopenhauerian distinction between appearance and deep reality to articulate and explain these dichotomies within life: in a sense, Nietzsche stretches out life between the two realms and celebrates cultures (such as the Greeks) and art forms (such as Attic tragedy) that can "bridge the gap" and pay homage to both realms, something he desperately wants for the modern Europe of the Enlightenment through a sort of re-birth of tragedy. Ten years later, in the de-deified empirical world of *The Gay Science*, however, Nietzsche is able to articulate these opposing characteristics of life such as reason, individuation, restraint, suffering, contradiction, and joy largely without the metaphysical trappings of Kant and Schopenhauer. Instead, Nietzsche concentrates on "the law of ebb and flood" within earthly life (1) as revealed through genealogy and history to explain the relationship between pain and joy, erring and certainty, morality and evil, reason and unreason. But in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche articulates the "continuous redemption" of the Apollinian and Dionysian realms, which only together can represent all these truths about life; and thus this "continuous redemption" is one not just of aesthetics but also of the truths about life and reality that can, if fostered, bring about a fullness of life in its different aspects.

For Nietzsche the art of Attic tragedy cements and facilitates this "continuous redemption" by its "Dionysian-Apollinian genius" (5) and represents an affirmation of all aspects of life for the sake of aesthetics, for the sake of truth, and for the sake of the enhancement of life. I have already shown how Nietzsche would see a "Dionysian-Apollinian genius" of "continuous redemption" between the world of appearance and deep reality as having an aesthetic justification and as leading to the greatest truth about life and reality; I will now show how affirming all aspects of life (that is, having such a

"Dionysian-Apollinian genius") for the sake of aesthetics and for the sake of truth will lead to the enhancement of life.

In the seventh section of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche describes how the Dionysian elements of tragedy, in which the audience experiences the deep terror and pain and joy of existence, leave the audience with a sense of nausea concerning the Apollinian world of the everyday. Nietzsche says,

For the rapture of the Dionysian state with its annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence contains, while it lasts, a lethargic element in which all personal experiences of the past become immersed. This chasm of oblivion separates the worlds of everyday reality and of Dionysian reality. But as soon as this everyday reality re-enters consciousness, it is experienced as such, with nausea: an ascetic, will-negating mood is the fruit of these states. In this sense the Dionysian man resembles Hamlet: both have once looked truly into the essence of things, they have gained knowledge, and nausea inhibits action; for their action could not change anything in the eternal nature of things; they feel it to be ridiculous or humiliating that they should be asked to set right a world that is out of joint [that is, the everyday world]. . . Now, no comfort avails any more; longing transcends a world after death, even the gods; existence is negated along with its glittering reflection in the gods or in an immortal beyond. Conscious of the truth he has once seen, man now sees everywhere only the horror or absurdity of existence. (7)

Obviously, at this point in the tragedy after the "rapture of the Dionysian state," the audience members are anything but interested in their everyday lives, which they feel to be ridiculous distortions of the deep truth of "the horror or absurdity of existence," and they are thus far from affirming life as it is stretched out between deep reality and phenomenal appearance. But the particularly "Dionysian-Apollinian genius of tragedy," represented in the satyr chorus that lives in a world "intermediary" between Dionysus and Apollo, saves the audience from abandoning life by discharging this nausea with the everyday world:

Here Here, when the danger to his will is the greatest, art approaches as a saving sorceress, expert at healing. She alone knows how to turn these nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live: these are the sublime as the artistic taming of the horrible, and the comic as the artistic discharge of the nausea of absurdity. The satyr chorus of the dithyramb is the saving deed of Greek art; faced with the intermediary world of these Dionysian companions, the feelings described here [of nausea] exhausted themselves.

Attic tragedy, through its notions of the sublime and comic, provides a metaphysical comfort. . . that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable - this comfort appears in incarnate clarity in the chorus of satyrs, a chorus of natural beings who live ineradicably, as it were, behind all civilization and remain eternally the same, despite the changes of generations and of the history of nations.

Through its "Dionysian-Apollinian genius" or, rather, its fullness of the different aspects of life, its "continuous redemption" of the two realms of life, Attic tragedy is able to bring man to the brink of life-negation and instead give him notions "with which one can live" and moreover a certain "metaphysical comfort...that life is at the bottom of things...indestructibly powerful and pleasurable." Nietzsche, looking back on *The Birth of Tragedy* in his "Attempt at a Self-Criticism," indicates that these notions "with which one can live" and "metaphysical comforts" concerning life were important for him to espouse because they could help one to affirm life in a way that would counter the "hostility to life of Christianity" and could thus serve to enhance life rather than denigrate it (5). Indeed, what is most important to gather from this description of tragedy's life-affirmative and life-enhancing role is that tragedy creates notions "with which one can live" and "metaphysical comforts" concerning life that help to affirm all aspects life and

which thus lead to its highest enhancement by bringing to bear on the audience a "Dionysian-Apollinian genius," that is, by bringing to bear on the audience a certain fullness of life, a fullness of the truth about life in all its Dionysian and Apollinian aspects. Indeed, Nietzsche wants to claim that logic without art (such as that of tragedy) is incapable of grasping the whole truth and thus leads not to life-affirmation and life-enhancement but to nausea with life and the absence of enhancement (BT 15).

The Gradual Disappearance of Metaphysics and the Concentration on Empirical Life

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche spreads out both reality and human life between the Apollinian world of appearance and the Dionysian world of deep reality. In a wonderful section of that work, Nietzsche describes how the Greeks were pulled in their lives between these two realms, meaning that their lives were stretched out in a sense between these two realms:

Up to this point we have simply enlarged upon the observation made at the beginning of this essay: that the Dionysian and the Apollinian, in new births ever following and mutually augmenting one another, controlled the Hellenic genius; that out of the age of 'bronze,' with its wars of the Titans and its rigorous folk philosophy, the Homeric world developed under the sway of the Apollinian impulse to beauty; that this 'naive' splendor was again overwhelmed by the influx of the Dionysian; and that against this new power the Apollinian rose to the austere majesty of Doric art and the Doric view of the world...And here the sublime and celebrated art of Attic tragedy and the dramatic dithyramb presents itself as the common goal of both these tendencies whose mysterious union, after many and long precursory struggles, found glorious consummation in this child - at once Antigone and Cassandra. (4)

As life and reality are stretched out between these two realms, so is truth about life and reality.

Nietzsche's articulation of the appearance/reality distinction in *The Birth of Tragedy* differs from that of Schopenhauer in that Nietzsche argues for the complementarity of the "two halves of our existence," the two halves of our lives, the two halves of truth - he does not argue for the greater value of one realm over the other. Schopenhauer thought that we have an immediate grasp of deep reality or the world of will and can completely experience this deep reality by throwing off the veil of Maya, the principle of individuation. We should do so because egoism and the principle of individuation are the main sources of our problems and because the egoless state of the world of will is much more valuable. Though Nietzsche and Schopenhauer disagree about the comparative value of the two realms of appearance and reality, they do agree on the availability of the realm of deep reality to ourselves. While Schopenhauer thinks we can get there through a sort of resignation and loss of self, Nietzsche sees art, particularly Attic tragedy and music, as necessary for reaching the full truth about life and reality, especially necessary for reaching deep reality. Assumed, of course, in this idea of the necessity of art for reaching deep reality is the Schopenhauerian notion or promise that deep reality can be fully reached or attained.

In 1873, one year after publishing *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche wrote a short essay called "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" that began to question the appearance/reality distinction he had inherited from Schopenhauer - a distinction which, as I have described, allowed Nietzsche with some independent tweaking to articulate

some of his basic insights into human life concerning the necessity of reason and unreason, joy and suffering, coherence and contradiction, etc. Throwing off his Schopenhauerian belief that humans can reach deep reality as well as the world of appearance (i.e. that human life is stretched out, so to speak, between the realms of appearance and deep reality), Nietzsche embraced a more Kantian view of the appearance/reality distinction - and this changed what he saw as the "extensions" (continuing this stretching analogy) of life and truth.

According to Nietzsche in "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable," Kant viewed deep reality (that which is opposed to our everyday world of appearance) as "unattainable, indemonstrable, unpromisable; but the very thought of it - a consolation, an obligation, an imperative" (3). And in "Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense," Nietzsche adopts this Kantian view of deep reality by claiming that our "intellect has no further mission that would lead beyond human life" (42), "the 'thing in itself'. . . [being] quite incomprehensible to the creators of language and not at all worth aiming for" (45). In this way, Nietzsche limits human life to the realm of appearances and bars humans from experiencing deep reality. Life, which had been spread out over the two realms, now focuses on the one realm of appearances. And yet, in the sense that the thought of deep reality is an "obligation" or "imperative," reality is still stretched out into the two realms of appearance and deep reality. Truth, then, takes on two meanings. First, there are the truths of human life, its relations and activities: "[truth is] a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms - in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people." Second, there are unreachable deep truths which must correspond to deep reality and of which human truths are just "illusions." In this sense, truth is spread out between the two realms of appearance and deep reality while life is not.

It is important for the argument to come that this point about "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" is made clear. With human life having been limited to and concentrated in the realm of appearances and with truth spread out between the realm of appearances and deep reality, Nietzsche may be at an impasse of sorts if one grants my overarching interpretive claim (3) that Nietzsche values and seeks to promote through his philosophizing (a) truth concerning life and reality and (b) the greatest possible enhancement of life. In this claim we see a basic concentration on life over reality - Nietzsche is interested in the truth about both but is particularly interested in the truth about and the enhancement of life.

Two New Affirmative Models

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche continues his thoughts from "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense," holding that we can no longer reach any full truth about all reality since we cannot reach deep reality. Taking his philosophy in a new direction, however, Nietzsche effectively drops his concerns about deep reality and concentrates for the most part on our everyday empirical world, using Darwinian science, genealogy, and history to investigate and seek out the truths of human life. And yet, often Nietzsche refers to the

necessity of error in such truth-seeking, to the "general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science" (107). To explain this "realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation" (107) one should yet look to Nietzsche's position concerning the appearance/reality distinction in "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense." Given that there Nietzsche holds onto the appearance/reality distinction and stretches out reality and thus truth about reality between the two realms of reality, all human truths or empirical truths concerning human life and the realm of appearance are just "illusions" or "delusion and error" regarding the realm of deep reality and its inaccessible truths. Maudemarie Clark explains that holding on to a "metaphysical correspondence theory of truth" in both "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" and *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche "concludes that [empirical] truths [and human truths] are illusions because he assumes both that truth requires correspondence to things-in-themselves [that is, deep reality] and that [these] truths do not exhibit such correspondence" (83).

And yet, in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche still seeks and expounds human truths or truths about human life, despite their seemingly necessary connection to illusion and error. One of his most oft-referenced truth claims about nature and human life, supposedly afforded by such science and genealogy, concerns the de-deification of nature. In Book Three, section 108, Nietzsche claims, "God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. - And we - we still have to vanquish his shadow, too." Part of "vanquishing" God's shadow is getting rid of notions concerning God's purpose or some divine plan to the universe:

Let us even beware of believing that the universe is a machine: it is certainly not constructed for one purpose...The total character of the world, however, is in all eternity chaos - in the sense not of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever other names there are for our aesthetic anthropomorphisms. (109)

Indeed, organic life was not even planned - its just "an exception of exceptions," a random chance event that was highly improbable (109).

Nausea and nihilism can rear their ugly heads both in response to "the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation" and in response to this human truth claim concerning the de-deification of nature with its absence of purpose and providence for the universe and its human inhabitants. To counter these two different instances of nausea and nihilism, Nietzsche posits two different models of life-affirmation. The first, the affirmation of life in its totality as an aesthetic phenomenon differs markedly from the second, which constitutes an affirmation of human life in all its different formulations or, rather, an affirmation not of the totality of human life and existence but of every aspect of human life and existence. One of the main problems with Nietzsche's position in *The Gay Science* and in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* concerns how this latter mode of affirmation is expressed and articulated. I will consider these problems and ultimately hearken back to the former mode of affirmation introduced here in an explanation and defense of Nietzsche's most mature affirmative philosophy. But first I must give further explication of these two affirmative modes.

At the end of Book Two of *The Gay Science*, in section 107 "Our ultimate gratitude to art," Nietzsche claims that "the realization of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science - the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation - would be utterly unbearable...[and] lead to nausea and suicide," the negation and denigration of life, were it not for the "counterforce against our honesty" of "art as the good will to appearance" (107). What Nietzsche means by "art as the good will to appearance" is a sort of artistic "good will" toward or appreciation of the world of appearance. Recall that "the realization of general untruth" stems from locating truth as such in deep reality, making our human truths about the world of appearance in a sense untrue and illusory. Art, however, takes the focus away from this deep reality, and makes it so that "as an aesthetic phenomenon existence [or the world of appearance] is still bearable for us." Says Nietzsche, "art furnishes us with eyes and hands and above all the good conscience to be able to turn ourselves into such a phenomenon" (107). And this turning of ourselves and existence into such aesthetic phenomenon to combat nausea and save our lives requires a sort of affirmation in the totality, a sort of appreciation of our lives and our existence in wholeness, not in every moment - and not for the sake of truth but for the sake of art and ultimately for life. This affirmation of totality is implicitly indicated by the metaphorical language Nietzsche uses in this section concerning "floating above" our lives and the world. He says, "At times we need a rest from ourselves by looking upon, by looking down upon, ourselves and, from an artistic distance, laughing over ourselves or weeping over ourselves," indicating some sort of aesthetic appreciation or affirmation over our entire selves or over existence in its entirety. Indeed, we cannot just affirm our wisdom but must also affirm our folly, explains Nietzsche as he drives home further this idea about affirmation of the totality. The counter to this affirmative ideal would constitute a "relapse," an indication of just how this affirmative ideal will keep one from the life-denigrating sickness of nausea and suicide.

On the other hand, Nietzsche's answer to the nihilistic and life-despairing attitudes surely engendered by the revelation of the de-deified world takes a different sort of affirmative route from this affirmation of existence in its totality, which is an affirmation for the sake of aesthetic value and ultimately for the sake of life enhancement and survival. In describing the de-deification of nature, Nietzsche is not worrying about problems with deep reality and deep truth; that is, Nietzsche claims that God is dead and the world devoid of divine purpose without worrying about some sort of necessary untruth to such a claim, an untruth arising out of the division between the phenomenal world and deep reality. Indeed, claiming that God is dead and claiming the world a Darwinian one devoid of plan, purpose, or providence constitutes for Nietzsche a rejection of the thing-in-itself or deep reality as a "shadow of God."² Unlike in his description of art as saving us from the nausea engendered by general untruth in section 107, Nietzsche is here taking one baby step beyond "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense": for not only is the thing-in-itself unreachable, it is downright wrong and hence rejected. To be sure, it takes Nietzsche several years after writing *The Gay Science* to drop fully the appearance/reality distinction and, as Maudemarie Clark puts it, his necessarily problematic "metaphysical correspondence theory of truth." But for the moment, at this beginning of Book Three of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche has fully concentrated on empirical human truths, one of

which is that nature and the world around us is not divinely ordered or purposive. To save the lives of those who might fall into nihilistic despair and nausea, to enhance their lives as much as possible, Nietzsche calls upon a new affirmative ideal based not in the life-saving or life-enhancing prospects of aesthetic justification but in the life-saving or life-enhancing prospects of the full truth.

In Book Three of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche posits that the full truth of human life can be revealed bit by bit through genealogy and history. These two intellectual processes show a sort of "polytheism" to human life: for, an historical genealogy of morals shows that there have been innumerable conceptions of virtue or "health of the soul" for many different people (120), conceptions most often created by individuals themselves and often masked as the voice of different gods by these individuals as a way to avoid blame and guilt for their individuality (143). If this individual creation of values happened before, it can happen again; says Nietzsche,

In polytheism the free-spiriting and many-spiriting of man attained its first preliminary form - the strength to create for ourselves our own new eyes - and ever again new eyes that are even more our own: hence man alone among the animals has no eternal horizons and perspectives. (143)

What makes one heroic? - Going out to meet at the same time one's highest suffering and one's highest hope.

In what do you believe? - In this, that the weights of all things must be determined anew.

What does your conscience say? - 'You shall become the person you are.'

Where are your greatest dangers? - In pity.

What do you love in others? - My hopes.

Whom do you call bad? - Those who always want to put to shame.

What do you consider most humane? - To spare someone shame.

What is the seal of liberation - No longer being ashamed in front of oneself. (268-275)

In these two passages one can detect a call for a sort of new polytheism, in which individuals meet their own thoughts and hopes, "determining anew" values, becoming who they want to be and positing their own new values without shame. In the absence of a divine purpose and value-system, people are to create their own purposes and values, which will save them from the nausea and nihilism of being without a plan, purpose, and value-system. Now, part of accepting this new polytheism and letting it save one from nausea and nihilism is a sort of affirmation of the polytheism of the past and of the polytheism to come. That is, to accept the idea that we can create our own values we must accept the polytheism of the past, the different values and truths of the past, which thereby liberates individuals today from feeling guilty or "ashamed in front of [themselves]" for having created their own values - that is, we can create our own new values once we realize through genealogy that that is what people have been doing for millennia.

But to combat truly the nausea and nihilism that we are in danger of feeling in the deified world and to enhance life most greatly, Nietzsche takes this appreciation and affirmation of the past and all its different virtues and values and such one step further. In section 337 of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche says:

Anyone who manages to experience the history of humanity [values and facts] as a whole as his own history will feel in an enormously generalized way all the grief of an invalid who thinks of health, of an old man who thinks of the dreams of his youth, of a lover deprived of his beloved, of the martyr whose ideal is perishing, of the hero on the evening after a battle that has decided nothing but brought him wounds and the loss of his friend. But if one endured, if once could endure this immense sum of grief of all kinds while yet being the hero who, as the second day of battle breaks, welcomes the dawn and his fortune, being a person whose horizon encompasses thousands of years past and future. . . if one could burden one's soul with all of this - the oldest, the newest, losses, hopes, conquests, and the victories of humanity; if one could finally contain all this in one soul and crowd it into a single feeling - this would surely have to result in a happiness that humanity has not known so far: the happiness of a god full of power and love, full of tears and laughter. . .

According to Nietzsche, the affirmation of every individual pain and displeasure from past to future - indeed, that of an invalid, that of an old man, that of a lover, etc. - when this affirmation is coupled with the affirmation of every moment of hope and conquest and happiness of the past to the future then such an affirmative person will have reached the highest form of happiness, the greatest life-enhancement. This affirmative model takes its most succinct formulation in section 276 as described in my introduction:

I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer.

And so we see Nietzsche respond to the nihilism possibly engendered by the deification of nature by positing a new polytheism, which leads him to an ever-widening affirmation of life as the answer to life's enhancement in the face of this nihilism. Being "only a Yes-sayer" to every pain, every suffering, every triumph, every hope from past to future constitutes a universal affirmative model that parallels Nietzsche's conception of what is the full human truth (that is, every pain, every suffering, every triumph, etc., etc.) (Muller-Lauter 87). And so, one of my beginning interpretive claims has now come full circle: (2) that Nietzsche believes that affirming more of life, digging more into life, or experiencing more of life will lead to the greater enhancement of life. Nietzsche's affirmative model here has the principle of greatest enhancement through affirmation of all life's aspects and thus through a full truth about life - as does his exemplar of Attic tragedy in *The Birth of Tragedy*, in which all aspects and truths of human life coalesced in tragedy's "Dionysian-Apollonian genius" for the enhancement of life.

Thus Spoke Wolfgang

In *Nietzsche: His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of His Philosophy*, Wolfgang Muller-Lauter argues that this extreme "Yes-saying" in *The Gay Science* constitutes a paradox, one which he sees retained in and represented by the two incompatible forms of overmen in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the violent overman and the wise overman. My discussion of this paradox in my introduction runs parallel to Muller-Lauter's discussion, though, of course, Muller-Lauter provides greater depth of explication. Muller-Lauter says,

Two opposite conclusions can be drawn from the unrestricted Yes whereby the overman is to profess his ideal - and himself. First, such unrestrictedness can mean that he must tolerate no counter-ideals. Wherever they appear, he must subject them to his own ideal or seek to destroy them. Secondly, the Yes should extend not merely to the leading goal-idea and what it subsumes. Here unrestrictedness means expansion of the Yes to all that is and was. Self-affirmation in this sense does not require negation, but quite the contrary, the recognition of the independent claims of other ideals. This approval and that rejection are, however, mutually exclusive. (84)

If Nietzsche wishes for himself (and for others) "to be only a Yes-sayer" for the sake of life's enhancement, then he must "tolerate no counter-ideals" to this ideal of unrestricted Yes-saying. "Whenever [these counter-ideals] appear, he must subject them to his own ideal," meaning change them around so they agree with his own ideal, "or seek to destroy them." So, for "those who accuse," that is nay-say (which is a counter-ideal to yes-saying), Nietzsche must either turn this nay-saying around to yes-saying or seek to destroy this nay-saying given his commitments to being "only a Yes-sayer" and to achieving the greatest life-enhancement thereby. Here we have the idea that P ("You should affirm everything") and \sim P ("You should not affirm everything") are necessarily expressed in opposition to one another and would together lead to an absurdity. And yet, explains Muller-Lauter, "the [unrestricted] Yes should [since it is unrestricted] extend not merely to the leading goal-idea and what it subsumes. . .[but also] to all that is and was. Self-affirmation in this sense does not require negation, but quite the contrary, the recognition of the independent claims of other ideals," including the ideal of nay-saying or "accusation." This latter consequence of the unrestricted Yes is captured by the idea that P ("You should affirm everything") necessarily affirms and accepts \sim P and all other ideals. The notion that P prohibits or rejects \sim P and the notion that P accepts and affirms \sim P are obviously "mutually exclusive" or incompatible notions; indeed, that both notions are generated by Nietzsche's expression of his life-affirmative and life-enhancing model of the unrestricted yes-saying constitutes a paradox for that model and thus a possible problem.

Muller-Lauter posits the wise man of Thus Spoke Zarathustra as the synthesizing overman who says Yes to everything, including all counter-ideals. And the strong man or violent man of Zarathustra, who "restricts himself to his own ideal" (86), represents the other "half" of extreme Yes-saying, the notion that this unrestricted Yes-saying is proposed in opposition to the counter-ideals of nay-saying or accusation. Part of Muller-Lauter's argument is that "both the strong man, restricting himself to his own ideal, and the wise man, assimilating the multiplicity of ideals, find the criterion for their overmanship [and their Yes-saying affirmation] in the eternal return, although in different meaning. [For Muller-Lauter] The question, then, will be whether the differences can be eliminated or at least so complemented as to remove the incompatibilities" between these two types of overman - and removing these incompatibilities would solve the paradox of being "only a Yes-sayer" since this paradox is represented by these incompatibilities as aforementioned (86).

To explain the relationship between the wise man's unrestricted Yes-saying and the eternal recurrence of the same, Muller-Lauter considers the actual "yes" of this unrestricted Yes-saying and affirmation of every single thing, of "all that is and was." He says,

Now there are different degrees of intensity of affirmation. The merely declamatory Yes is only an apparent affirmation. There is less Yes in concession than in recognition; and in turn less in recognition than in 'reconciliation' (Z II). And less in this than in consent. Consent can in turn be heightened to identification with what is affirmed. Finally, what is affirmed can become what dominates and leads all action and thought. Only such a Yes is a Yes willed with ultimate urgency and hence a genuine Yes. (86-87)

The affirmative model of extreme affirmation of everything that was, is, and will be - the extreme Yes to everything, to every part of the truth, for the sake of life-enhancement - this model [at least that part represented by the wise man] requires a sort of strong affirmation in the sense not of approval, nor of perceived necessity, but of the desire for each individual thing or event for its own sake (87). Furthermore,

as an affirmative will [then], [this] Yes-saying becomes the process of sanctification. All of life...is supposed to be sanctified. But how can affirmative will become sanctification? By having affirmative will become a wanting back...The [wise, synthesizing] overman's yes is perfected only in the will that everything that is and was [individually] return an infinite number of times [, including counter-ideals to this affirmative Yes]. (87-88)

Embracing the eternal recurrence, then, becomes for the wise overman the most effective means toward universal affirmation of all that was, is, and will be. Citing *The Will to Power* (1053, 1055), Muller-Lauter indicates that for the violent overmen, who represent the notion that an unrestricted Yes "tolerates no counter-ideal,

"the doctrine of eternal recurrence becomes a weapon, a hammer. They claim it as the 'cultivating idea.' Their confrontation with the doctrine of eternal recurrence reveals who is too weak 'for a new order of life.' Whoever cannot bear it is 'condemned.' Whoever, on the contrary, finds it to be the 'greatest benefit' is 'chosen to rule.' (78)

"Whoever cannot bear" the eternal recurrence of the same, that is, whoever cannot affirm everything that was, is, and will be in the sense of wanting it back - whoever cannot do this the violent overmen "condemn" and the wise overmen accept. Muller-Lauter again asks the question of paradox concerning the unrestricted Yes represented by both the wise overman and the violent overman:

How shall the one who selects and rejects, breeds and destroys, possibly be the same as the one who unconditionally affirms everything that is, was, and will be without condemning anything? How can the overman who is driven to the thought of desiring again and again in the same way with all intensity the most variegated things - including what is contrary to his own ideal - how can he use this thought as a weapon for the goal of eliminating what his ideal condemns? The latter mode of behavior does not merely lag behind the first; it is fundamentally different. Each of the two types of overman must with his consistent self-realization destroy what is peculiar to the other. Their incompatibility is as glaring as before. (99)

And so, as described, there thus exists an "incompatibility" or paradox within section 276 of *The Gay Science*, where Nietzsche posits his second of two life-affirmative and supposedly life-enhancing models: "I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer." A quick answer to this paradox might be that Muller-Lauter and I have mischaracterized this notion of affirmation or extreme Yes-saying, and that this affirmation allows certain instances of negation and condemnation: after all, Nietzsche does say, "Looking away shall be my only negation." And yet, Nietzsche follows that up with, "And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer," or without negation and nay-saying, which is that which is embodied so to speak in the synthesizing, wise overman who affirms everything including the counter-ideal to his extreme affirmation.

In response to the paradox of extreme affirmation demonstrated by the "glaring" incompatibility of the violent overman and the wise overman, Muller-Lauter says, "The

question must therefore be asked again, whether under the aspect of the eternal recurrence of the same the condemnation and destruction of the weak [committed by the violent overmen] can be combined with their unrestricted affirmation [practiced by the wise overmen]" (100). I italicize "under the aspect of the eternal recurrence of the same" because Muller-Lauter is looking for a way to resolve the paradox of extreme affirmation within its appropriation of the eternal recurrence of the same. Muller-Lauter correctly holds that Nietzsche considered the eternal recurrence as crucial to this highest form of life-affirmation and thus life-enhancement encountered in his wish to be "only a Yes-sayer," the form of universal affirmation of all that was, is, and will be. Aptly quoting Nietzsche, Muller-Lauter says,

Thus 'the ideal of eternal recurrence' is revealed to be the 'highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable' (Ecco Homo). It constitutes 'the ideal of the most high-spirited, alive, and world-affirming human being who has not only come to terms and learned to get along with what was and is [i.e. who wants to be 'only a Yes-sayer'], but who wants to have what was and is repeated into all eternity, shouting insatiably da capo- not only to himself but to the whole play and spectacle' (BGE 56). (88)

Furthermore, regarding the question of "whether under the aspect of the eternal recurrence of the same the condemnation and destruction of the weak [the nay-sayers] can be combined with their unrestricted affirmation," Muller-Lauter is right to indicate that such a combination "under the aspect of the eternal recurrence of the same" is neither described by Nietzsche nor an acceptable possibility given Nietzsche's commitments. For example, Muller-Lauter constructs a possible combination:

It [could], then, be said that the destroyer can remain the lover if he knows that the destruction is not final. 'Eternally recurs the man of whom you are weary, the small man' (Z III). . .For the synthesis of destruction and love, which the overman (whose advent Zarathustra merely prepares) is supposed to represent, the one to be destroyed could be the ever coming one, whose return is desired. For the 'great man' needs the 'little man' as his opposite. The will for the 'little man' to perish would then be one with the will for his return. (100)

Muller-Lauter indicates that this possible combination of destruction and love - of the violent overman who condemns weak nay-sayers and the wise overman who affirms even these weak nay-sayers - this combination inappropriately waters down the extreme condemnation to all counter-ideals required by the unrestricted Yes and embodied in the violent overman and the extreme Yes-saying required by the unrestricted Yes at the same time and embodied in the wise overman:

In fact, each action [in this combination] can be called neither destroying nor loving. What returns again and again is not destroyed. What is apparently destroyed is only 'put out of play' for the further course of the respective period. And what is wanted as opposite merely for the sake of opposition is not loved, that is not affirmed most intensely, as is demanded of the overman. (100)

Indeed, if he who wants "to be only a Yes-sayer" is to "tolerate no counter-ideals," then he must really condemn those counter-ideals, which surely means that he must not ever want them to recur again and again. And to be a universal Yes-sayer requires an affirmation of everything that is, was, and will be, including the counter-ideals to this affirmative ideal, not for the sake of the affirmative ideal itself (nor for the sake of its articulation thanks to some opposition with affirmed counter-ideals) but for the sake of everything that is, was, and will be, including the counter-ideals. Indeed, the eternal recurrence of the same is an affirmative test in which those Yes-sayers who accept it and wish for everything to return again and again do so because they affirm every single thing, not because they affirm one thing. Muller-Lauter posits no other combinations and concludes that the violent overman's condemnation and the wise overman's extreme

affirmation, both of which being articulated in terms of the eternal recurrence, are incompatible - and hence, the paradox of universal, unrestricted Yes-saying or affirmation is unresolved.

The Paradox Avoided

The essential question of the paradox of "some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer" is how to resolve the no to all counter-ideals seemingly required by the unrestricted Yes of being "only a Yes-sayer" with the affirmation of these counter-ideals also seemingly required by unrestricted Yes-saying itself. As aforementioned, Muller-Lauter is right to interpret this paradoxical universal Yes-saying in terms of the eternal recurrence: for that is how Nietzsche presents this affirmative model in *The Gay Science* and *Beyond Good and Evil* (hence BGE 56, which Muller-Lauter quotes above). Interestingly, Muller-Lauter also quotes *Ecco Homo*, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" I in the following manner to connect further the eternal recurrence and this universal affirmation: "The overman's genuine Yes is perfected only in the will that everything that is and was return again an infinite number of times. Thus 'the idea of eternal recurrence' is revealed to be 'the highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable' (EH)" (88). Walter Kaufmann translates the relevant passage from *Ecco Homo* as: "Now I shall relate the history of Zarathustra. The fundamental conception of this work, the idea of the eternal recurrence, this highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable, belongs in August 1881." Implied here may be not only the notion that eternal recurrence occurred to Nietzsche in 1881 but also the notion that its "conception" "belongs" to 1881 and that this conception and its original articulation do not necessarily belong to 1888. Indeed, Nietzsche wrote *Ecco Homo* in 1888, two years after writing *Beyond Good and Evil* and six years after writing *The Gay Science*, in which he first declared the eternal recurrence as the doctrine that everything that was and is recurs an infinite amount of times (341). Within those six years, Nietzsche's ideas about life-affirmation and life-enhancement changed, as I shall soon demonstrate. Given the connection between life-affirmation and life-enhancement and the eternal recurrence, perhaps Nietzsche's ideas about the eternal recurrence changed as well. Contrary to what Muller-Lauter indicates, what Nietzsche means in the *Ecco Homo* passage might be that "the idea of eternal recurrence" as originally articulated "belongs" to 1881 though it is in its mature form still "the highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable"; indeed, perhaps Nietzsche changed his ideas about the eternal recurrence to fit his changing affirmative models. I shall investigate this later.

Yet before describing what I understand as a change of Nietzsche's thought from 1882 to 1888 regarding affirmation and life-enhancement and the eternal recurrence I must recall briefly to my reader some of what has gone before. In *The Birth of Tragedy* we have seen Nietzsche as valuing the art of Attic tragedy because it cements the "continuous redemption" between the two realms of reality and life in its "Dionysian-Apollinian genius" and because it thereby represents an affirmation of all aspects of life for the sake of truth (about life) and for the sake of the enhancement of life. And, indeed the enhancement of life comes from having this fullness of life, from this affirmation of all aspects of life as truths about life - i.e. from a fullness of truth and affirmation. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche responds to two different forms of nausea and nihilism, possibly

engendered by some of his ideas, by creating two different affirmative ideals. In section 107, Nietzsche claims that a turning of ourselves and existence into aesthetic phenomenon to combat nausea and to save our lives requires a sort of affirmation in the totality, a sort of appreciation of our lives and our existence in wholeness, not in every moment - and not for the sake of truth but for the sake of art and ultimately for life and its enhancement. The second affirmative ideal is the one I have been discussing most recently in this paper, that of being "only a Yes-sayer" to every pain, every suffering, every triumph, every hope, from past to future, which constitutes a universal affirmative model that parallels Nietzsche's conception of what is the full human truth (that is, every pain, every suffering, every triumph, etc., etc.). This affirmative model shows what I have identified as one of Nietzsche's overarching principles of life-enhancement: that life is enhanced most greatly through the fullest affirmation of life's aspects and truths, through a fullness of truth about life. And so we see the affirmative models of Attic tragedy and of being "only a Yes-sayer" seeking to enhance life through affirming all aspects of human life and bringing a sort of fullness of truth about human life, a fullness that is absent in the first affirmative model of *The Gay Science* advocating the affirmation of life in its totality.

And yet, Nietzsche's conception of truth about life changes from 1882 to 1888, indeed, from when he introduces the doctrine of the will to power in 1886 to when he gives it its most mature formulation in 1888. And in this change, Nietzsche's conception of a full truth about life and a full affirmation of life for the enhancement of life will also change, and change so as to embrace Nietzsche's affirmative ideal concerning life in its totality as proposed in section 107 of *The Gay Science*. Indeed, we must not overlook the fact that Nietzsche posits two different and contradictory models of affirmation and life-enhancement in *The Gay Science*, that of affirming life in its totality and that of affirming every different event and entity of life individually. Wolfgang Muller-Lauter argues that this second model of affirmation is mired in paradox, especially considering its connection to and use of the doctrine of the eternal recurrence, the affirmation of which constitutes the extremely affirmative wish that "everything that is and was return again an infinite number of times." Still, this second affirmative model shares an affinity with Nietzsche's original affirmative model, Attic Tragedy, in its concern for a fullness of life and truth as sufficient conduits to life-enhancement. What happens by 1888 is that Nietzsche abandons the paradoxical model of being "only a Yes-sayer" in the sense of an extreme affirmation of every aspect of life, and he adopts as a new affirmative model the life-enhancing affirmation of life in its totality - and he does so without giving up his long-standing principle that fully affirming life and having a full truth about life yields the greatest life-enhancement, the principle behind the affirmative models of Attic tragedy and extreme Yes-saying. Muller-Lauter does not see this change of affirmative models, nor the possibly attendant change in Nietzsche's theory of the eternal recurrence, which I shall describe soon, and for this reason believes Nietzsche's affirmative philosophy is forever mired in the paradox and incoherence of extreme Yes-saying through the eternal recurrence (as proposed in *The Gay Science*). And now, to that movement, to that change in Nietzsche's conception of truth, affirmation, and eternal recurrence - a movement which introduces a new model of affirmation and one which

avoids this paradox of affirming and rejecting counter-ideals, the paradox of being "only a Yes-sayer."

In *The Gay Science* (sections 107, 256) and *Beyond Good and Evil* (sections 2, 4, 34), Nietzsche often talks of the necessity of error, claiming our human truths are erroneous illusions. As aforementioned, Maudemarie Clark attributes this to the fact that Nietzsche is at this point still holding on to a "metaphysical correspondence theory of truth" in which he "concludes that [empirical] truths are illusions because he assumes both that truth requires correspondence to things-in-themselves [that is, deep reality] and that our [empirical] truths do not exhibit such correspondence."³ Recall that with the death of God and the de-deification of nature, Nietzsche starts to get rid of the notion that there is a real world or thing-in-itself, not just the notion that we can have no knowledge of this deep reality. And yet, in both GS and BGE, Nietzsche still largely gauges what is true by this rejected notion of deep reality. However, out of his concern for human truths and empirical reality, a concern addressed in his scientific and genealogical endeavors, comes Nietzsche's new and final conception of the essence of life: "life itself is will to power" (BGE 13). Gone from Nietzsche's philosophy is the notion that different ideas about life or reality or whatever can be erroneous (this is confirmed in "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable" sec. 6, "end of the longest error"); for truth no longer has anything to do with correspondence to some deep reality as opposed to appearance but with instantiating the will to power which is the essence of life, the one reality. And since all value systems, all forms of life, from paganism to Christianity, are all wills to power or instances of power-seeking, that is, power-expressing and power-seeking perspectives; since this is so, every different ideal, even that which denies the ideal of the will to power, is true - for it is an instance of the will to power, Nietzsche's new criterion of truth. Since every different human ideal, value system, perspective, etc. is a true instantiation of the will to power, the full human truth connected to affirmation and enhancement comes out of a sort of objectivity by transperspectivity. In *Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay, Section 12, Nietzsche says,

But precisely because we seek knowledge [or the truth], let us not be ungrateful to such resolute reversals of accustomed perspectives and valuations with which the spirit has, with apparent mischievousness and futility, raged against itself for so long: to see differently in this way for once, to want to see differently, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its future 'objectivity' - the latter understood not as 'contemplation without interest' (which is a nonsensical absurdity), but as the ability to control one's Pro and Con and to dispose of them, so that one knows how to employ a variety of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge.

A fuller and fuller objectivity or account of human truth comes from "employing a variety of perspectives and effective interpretations," all of which are true, effected by a sort of moving through of perspectives and interpretations - a transperspectivity. There is no full human truth in the sense of gathering many, many different perspectives and affirming each individual one from some non-perspectival stance, from some "contemplation without interest": for "there is only a perspective seeing, only a perspective 'knowing'" claims Nietzsche in this section. Nietzsche means that we can never get out of these different value perspectives and amass each one individually in one non-perspectival affirmative moment.

And so, in this objectivity by transperspectivity we see an ideal of truth and affirmation different from GS 337 (in which truth and affirmation and enhancement come from experiencing all together every different truth) and from the doctrine of the eternal recurrence as originally articulated in GS 341 (through which one affirms every instance of truth out in the world and in history individually). By the sheer nature of never being able to get out of a certain perspective, a certain "Pro and Con," man cannot ever get every truth out there and affirm every perspective or truth. For, the affirmative model that comes out of Genealogy of Morals and the idea of objectivity by transperspectivity is akin to the affirmative model in the second book of *The Gay Science*, in which life is affirmed in its totality. Moving through different perspectives, different instantiations of truth, Nietzsche's new philosopher in GM affirms the totality of life, affirms the totality of perspectives as worth moving through, as that which together make up the truth and which would make his life more powerful and thus enhanced if he were to see with their "eyes." And yet the process of moving through different perspectives involves the "ability to control one's Pros and Cons and to dispose of them" when appropriate; that is, to move through different perspectives and get the full human truth in this new sense of truth requires a Yes (Pro) to new perspectives and a No (Con) to old perspectives and truths already experienced. And so, every affirmation of a perspective involves a negation of another - hence one cannot affirm every truth or perspective in the sense provided by affirming the eternal recurrence of GS 341, in the sense of being "only a Yes-sayer." The model of objectivity by transperspectivity thus becomes the new model of full truth-seeking and, as described, a model of life-affirmation in the totality that always necessitates certain instances of individual negation (Cons); and, as usual with Nietzsche, something which attempts the fullest human truth and life-affirmation is that which most greatly enhances life - this is one of the overarching principles I have been insisting upon. Indeed, since each truth is a will to power, "getting" more and more truths by objectivity by transperspectivity and by affirming life in its totality increases or promotes one's will to power, which enhances life according to *Beyond Good and Evil* 44.

Obviously, this new affirmative model provided by objectivity by transperspectivity - a model of affirmation of life in its totality that seeks the fullest truth about life to promote its greatest enhancement - differs markedly from the second affirmative model of *The Gay Science*, Books Three and Four, in which the eternal recurrence (at least as originally articulated) became a sort of affirmative test or, rather, impetus to affirm each and every individual moment, value, entity, or event for itself and for the fullest truth. The latter affirmative model of extreme Yes-saying runs into paradox in that it is proposed in opposition to and hence rejects counter-ideals of nay-saying and such while at the same time affirming those counter-ideals necessarily. The former affirmative model provided by Nietzsche's new conception of life and truth, this model of affirming life in its totality while moving through different perspectives to reach the fullest objectivity by transperspectivity, does not fall into the same paradox as does the model of extreme Yes-saying; for, in this new ideal of affirmation of life in its totality and of objectivity by transperspectivity, the new philosopher affirms the counter-ideals in the sense that they are parts of the whole which is to be affirmed and yet rejects these counter-ideals as perspectives we have already moved through or experienced. Indeed, the counter-ideal to the will to power, to objectivity by transperspectivity, and to this new affirmation of life

in its totality - the counter ideal to all of this is part of the whole which is affirmed, but it is also a rejected ideal we have already moved through according to Nietzsche. In this sense Nietzsche may not resolve the paradox of being "only a Yes-sayer" - for he provides no way in which the affirmative model of "being only a Yes-sayer" can make sense of its incompatible commitments to affirm and reject counter-ideals; Nietzsche does, however, avoid the paradox by dropping that paradoxical affirmative model and adopting this new one encapsulated by objectivity by transperspectivity, one free of that paradox. The evidence for this new affirmative model is striking if look at *The Gay Science* and *Twilight of the Idols* together and compare Nietzsche's thoughts in both.

The Gay Science was originally published in four books in 1882. The last section of Book Four, 342 *Incipit Tragedie*, is nearly identical to the first section of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (his next book) and describes Zarathustra deciding to go down to men and share his wisdom and happiness. And, as I have described, part of the wisdom and happiness of Books Three and Four of *The Gay Science* and of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is the affirmative model of extreme Yes-saying encapsulated by the eternal recurrence (which Nietzsche announces at end of Book Four, 341), the joyous affirmation of every single element of life and truth for the sake of life's enhancement. As described, this model runs into problems with paradox and incoherence, demonstrated by what Muller-Lauter takes to be incompatible overmen. In 1887, Nietzsche published a second edition of *The Gay Science*, with a new fifth book attached. The ending of this fifth book plays on the ending of the fourth: section 382, the second-to-last section of Book Five, ends with the phrase "tragedy begins," the translated title of the last section of Book Four. Section 382 introduces an ideal quite different from the extreme Yes-sayer alluded to in section 342:

Another ideal runs ahead of us, a strange, tempting, dangerous ideal to which we should not wish to persuade anybody because we do not readily concede the right to it to anyone: the ideal of a spirit who plays naively - that is, not deliberately but from overflowing power and abundance - with all that was hitherto called holy, good, untouchable, divine; for whom those supreme things that the people naturally accept as their value standards, signify danger, decay, debasement. . . the ideal of a human, superhuman well-being and benevolence that will often appear inhuman.

Here we see an ideal that includes negation and criticism of the highest values we hold dear, not the universal affirmation provided by the eternal recurrence of *The Gay Science*. In the next section, 383, Nietzsche refers to this "dangerous ideal" of negation and criticism as a "gloomy question-mark." But then Nietzsche describes the spirits of his own book and his thoughts as demanding a stop to all this talk of gloominess and a song and dance of gaiety. "Who will sing a song for us, a morning song, so sunny, so light, so fledged that it will not chase away the blues but invite them instead to join in on the singing and dancing?" Indeed, the gloomy criticism - "the blues" - is not to be chased away but to join in on the gay fun. "Rustic bagpipes" are suggested for the festivities, but the spirits exclaims, "No! Not such tones! Let us strike up more agreeable, more joyous tones!" - a quote from the words of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Consider this reference to Beethoven's Ninth, the "Ode to Joy," which reaches climax in the Creator's exclamation "You millions, I embrace you, / This kiss is for all the world!" The Creator embraces the millions and the world as one in its totality. The spirits of the book reflect this affirmation of totality both when they directly quote the Beethoven lines and when

they invite "the blues" (the "gloomy question mark") to join in on their fun - they want to affirm everything in its totality, of which "the blues" is a part. The "gloomy question-mark" of hard philosophy, negation, and criticism with which Nietzsche is concerned is only that which facilitates this new affirmative process: recall that Nietzsche's mature affirmative model as encapsulated within the notion of objectivity by transperspectivity requires negation and criticism to "keep the ball rolling" so to speak toward truth, affirmation, power, and enhancement.

The preface of *Twilight of the Idols* is concerned with the same gloomy question mark of criticism. Obviously Nietzsche is afraid that people will misunderstand his basically affirmative message that requires, in his objectivity by transperspectivity model, instances of negation. He remarks, "Maintaining cheerfulness in the midst of a gloomy affair, fraught with immeasurable responsibility, is no small feat;. . .a revaluation of all values, this question mark, so black, so tremendous. . .[but] even in a wound [of criticism] there is power to heal [affirm and enhance life]." After the preface, in the first section of *Twilight* entitled "Maxims and Arrows," Nietzsche succinctly but effectively refers to his new affirmative ideal for the sake of truth and life enhancement. In 33-44, Nietzsche refers to genealogy, truth, pity, self-analysis and all the different methods and ideals he has used or experienced. At the end of this list, in 44, Nietzsche refers to his new project: "The formula of my happiness: A Yes, a No, a straight line, a goal." This project harkens to that affirmative model encapsulated by objectivity by transperspectivity: we are to say "Yes" to new values and to the totality of truths as we move through them while saying "No" to old values that we have moved through and abandoned, and we do so in a "straight line" going through different perspectives one by one and never transcending them all, affirming life in its totality as we move along toward the "goal" of reaching a most full truth about life, which will make us more powerful and enhance our lives. Nietzsche no longer wants to be "only a Yes-sayer." He has accepted the necessity of the hammer and has thus dropped eternal recurrence, at least as articulated in GS 341, as the paragon of affirmation. Muller-Lauter says,

When in the *Twilight of the Idols* [Nietzsche] describes the attitude of no-longer-denying represented by the free spirit as a belief grounded on the fact that 'in the totality, everything is redeemed and affirmed,' this points to a mode of believing that is legitimated by the religion of the eternal return and can be made adequately understandable only in terms of that doctrine as a faith. (90)

But as Muller-Lauter himself argues, the affirmation which the eternal return is after has nothing to do with affirming a totality or with affirming existence as a whole but with affirming individually everything that was, is, and will be by wishing for its return; and Muller-Lauter holds that the universal affirmation connected to such use of the eternal recurrence is incoherent and paradoxical. Though he may indicate otherwise by this block quote, Muller-Lauter still holds on to such an estimation of the role of eternal recurrence in Yes-saying, i.e. that the eternal return allows one to affirm individually everything that was, is, and will be by wishing for its return. And this is why Muller-Lauter insists on the incoherence and paradox of Nietzsche's affirmative philosophy (120-121) despite recognizing (in the quote above) that Nietzsche moves to a new affirmative model in *Twilight of the Idols*, in which one is to affirm life or the world in its totality for the sake of life's enhancement. Muller-Lauter allows the doctrine of the eternal recurrence and the problems associated with it and universal affirmation to get in the way of his

understanding of Nietzsche's new affirmative ideal expressed in *Twilight of the Idols*, an ideal which does not suffer from the same paradox as does the ideal of extreme Yes-saying. As Nietzsche's conception of truth changes by 1888, so does his conception of full affirmation and full truth for the sake of life's enhancement; and this change produces an affirmative model that does not suffer from the same paradox as the universal affirmation of being "only a Yes-sayer." Muller-Lauter recognizes this new model but sees it only in the light of the eternal recurrence of *The Gay Science*, and thus he associates this new model with its paradoxical predecessor which Nietzsche articulates through the eternal recurrence in *The Gay Science* and, particularly, *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Now, one might counter that Nietzsche declares himself the "teacher of the eternal recurrence" in *Twilight of the Idols* ("What I Owe the Ancients," 5) and that this declaration sets him at odds with the supposedly new affirmative model of affirming life in its totality: for in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche connects the eternal recurrence with the affirmation of every single element, aspect, and truth about life; perhaps his reference to the eternal recurrence at the end of *Twilight of the Idols* refers back to that former affirmative ideal. Yet, Nietzsche's use of the eternal recurrence in this passage is ambiguous, and one can see the possibility that Nietzsche has changed his ideas about the eternal recurrence since its "conception" in 1881 as documented in *Ecco Homo*. Idealizing the Greeks and their Dionysian mysteries, Nietzsche says,

For it is only in the Dionysian mysteries, in the psychology of the Dionysian state, that the basic fact of the Hellenic instinct finds expression - its 'will to life.' What was it that the Hellene guaranteed himself by means of these mysteries? Eternal life, the eternal return of life; the future promised and hallowed in the past; the triumphant Yes to life beyond all death and change; true life as the over-all continuation of life through procreation, through the mysteries of sexuality. ("What I Owe the Ancients," 4)

In this Hellenic conception of the "eternal return of life" facilitated by procreation, one espies a basic return of life over and over again - a return not of every different individual but the basic return of living beings over and over again, a sort of return of life not in particularity but in totality or in essence. That "Goethe did not understand the Greeks" ("What I Owe the Ancients," 4) might mean that Goethe, an exemplar of the affirmation of life in its totality ("*Skirmishes of an Untimely Man*," 49), did not understand the Greek role of eternal return in the affirmation of life in its totality. Nietzsche says,

Saying Yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems, the will to life rejoicing over its own inexhaustibility even in the very sacrifice of its highest types - that is what I called Dionysian, that is what I guessed to be the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet. Not in order to be liberated from terror and pity, not in order to purge oneself of a dangerous affect by its vehement discharge - Aristotle understood it that way - but in order to be oneself the eternal joy of becoming, beyond all terror and pity - that joy which included even joy in destroying. ("What I Owe the Ancients," 5)

This "eternal joy of becoming" that includes "even joy in destroying" might be that combination of the eternal return and the affirmation of life in its totality that would constitute a new conception of the eternal return. Nietzsche's mention of "types" as opposed to particulars would play nicely with such a changed notion of eternal return, a notion of all of life in its totality or essence returning again and again (perhaps through procreation, perhaps through other means).

The most important point here is that Nietzsche does re-affirm the eternal recurrence at the end of *Twilight of the Idols*; and yet this re-affirmation is sufficiently ambiguous and is articulated in connection with Greek notions of affirming life in its totality that there is room for either Nietzsche or Nietzscheans to overcome the objection that this re-affirmation of eternal recurrence harkens back to the original articulation of the eternal recurrence in *The Gay Science* and to its paradoxical affirmative model to such an extent that Nietzsche's most mature philosophy never gets past this paradoxical affirmative model. And in this sense there are resources for Nietzsche or Nietzscheans to avoid, ultimately, the paradox Muller-Lauter sees as plaguing all of Nietzsche's affirmative philosophy. And even if Nietzsche's re-affirmation of the eternal recurrence is hearkening back to the original sense of GS 341, one can still argue that Nietzsche articulates a new affirmative model that successfully avoids problems with paradox and the eternal recurrence by arguing that Nietzsche articulates the eternal recurrence as a sort of secondary assertion or test to aid his affirmative philosophy, not as a real metaphysical doctrine to be taken seriously - a standard sort of argument regarding the eternal recurrence. And so, despite Muller-Lauter's demonstrations to the contrary, Nietzsche's affirmative philosophy can ultimately avoid the paradox and incoherence in which it finds itself mired in *The Gay Science*: for even by *The Gay Science* Nietzsche has articulated several different affirmative models and so he should be able to articulate another, one which avoids this paradox. Nietzsche does so but not, I think, because he wants to avoid the paradox Muller-Lauter describes; he changes his affirmative model for the sake of greater life-enhancement and at the same time overcomes a paradox of which he might have not even been aware.

Endnotes

1 All direct quotes from Nietzsche are followed by the section numbers, not page numbers, of the works in which they are found. This practice will hold throughout my paper.

2 Jim Peterman, "Four Stages Along the Way to Rejection of Metaphysical Realism," Nietzsche Seminar, University of the South, Sewanee, 5 Oct. 1998.

3 Much of what is to come in this paragraph is a synthesis of Clark's fourth chapter of *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, conversations with Dr. Jim Peterman, Nietzsche class discussions with Dr. Peterman, and my own critical thought.

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