Filling the Gap:
Nietzsche's account of authenticity as a supplementary ideal

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Abstract

This thesis examines the ideal of authenticity: why we might want or need such an ideal, what such an ideal would look like, and what mechanisms we would need to ensure the successful operation of such an ideal.

The thesis has three main parts.

The first part of the thesis aims at motivating the need to look to authenticity as a supplementary ideal to normative moral theory. I do this by drawing a distinction between ethics and morality and arguing that there are important aspects of our lives (such as our relations to ourselves, our beliefs and projects) about which normative moral theory fails to give us guidance and about which an ethical ideal, namely that of authenticity, can provide us with the requisite guidance.

The second part of the thesis elucidates Nietzsche's view of authenticity as eternal return. I argue that eternal return consists in holding a particular attitude to one's life – one's past, present and future. I then demonstrate that what is fundamental to successfully living authentically in accordance with eternal return is a rigorous search for self-knowledge.

In the third part of the thesis I argue that, in order to achieve the self-knowledge necessary to being a successful authentic agent, one must acquire it through a process of dialogue with other agents. I give a model of self-knowledge as a dialogic encounter that provides two important mechanisms whereby such self-knowledge can be gained.

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Contents

Introduction

A large proportion of the contemporary work that has been done in ethics has fallen into three broad categories: meta-ethics (the study of the nature and status of moral claims) normative ethics (the generation of theories of morality), and applied ethics (the study of the practical applications and implications of moral theory). All three of these categories fall within what Bernard Williams terms 'morality' (Williams, 6ff). Morality is a subset of a broader field of study, which Williams terms 'ethics' (Williams, 6ff). Ethics is a broad field that aims at answering the question 'How ought I to live?', whilst morality is narrower, aiming to answer the question 'What ought I to do?'. Morality focuses specifically on action, and the generation of rules or principles according to which we ought to act. Ethics goes beyond this, to provide guidance about how we ought to live our lives, encompassing such things as our relationships to ourselves, our relations to our projects and what we believe. This thesis is an exercise in ethics in this sense.

The thesis is divided into three chapters.

Chapter 1 has two main aims. The first is to motivate the need for a focus on the ethical, and not merely on the moral. In order to do this, I discuss the gap that I contend exists in modern normative theory, through a discussion of one of each of the three major types of normative theory (deontology, consequentialism and virtue ethics). This gap arises due to normative theory's exclusive focus on the moral. This leaves it unable to give us guidance on the ethical question of how we ought to live. It is important to note, however, that I do not call upon normative theory to fill this gap from within. Instead I propose that we need an ethical ideal to supplement normative theory. This is because normative theory is set up to deal with only those aspects of our conduct that are amenable to universality. In the realm of the ethical, on the other hand, notions of partiality and particularity are of great importance. I provide a framework for the type of ideal that would suit this purpose. Such an ideal must be able to give us guidance on the broader ethical question of how we ought to live. In other words, such an ideal must help us in our pursuit of the good life, 'the right life ... for human beings as such' (Williams, 20), rather than simply providing us with rules or principles not to be violated. The second aim of this chapter is to establish authenticity as the right candidate for such a supplementary ideal. I do this by examining another possible candidate ideal, that of

sincerity. Through a critique of sincerity's flaws, I set up the criteria that authenticity must meet to be a successful candidate ideal. I argue that authenticity is the correct ideal to pursue, and provide a working definition of it as being a state of the bringing to self-reflective coherence of one's beliefs and desires, through the holding of a creative attitude towards oneself.

Chapter 2 aims to focalise the tentative definition of authenticity given at the end of chapter 1 through an examination of Friedrich Nietzsche's account of authenticity. I argue that Nietzsche's project is not, as is claimed by some of his critics, the destruction of morality *simpliciter*. As argued by Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche does not encourage immorality, or desire the avoidance of all moral actions (Clark, xvii). Nietzsche (albeit tacitly) draws the same type of distinction between ethics and morality that Williams does. Given that he draws this distinction, what he attacks is not morality itself, but ethical ideals masquerading as moral ones. In other words, he attacks ideals that claim universal applicability when they in fact have no right to do so. One of his major targets is the ascetic ideal, which is exactly such a masquerading ethical ideal. The ascetic ideal presupposes a metaphysic that places a strong emphasis on the otherworldly and advocates that one prioritises the otherworldly over this world. It advocates living one's life in poverty and humility and loving one's neighbour, and encourages people to view themselves as guilty and in need of redemption. According to the ideal, this way of living is appropriate and beneficial to all, and objectively justified. According to Nietzsche, the ideal is in fact motivated by the priests' desire to maintain some feeling of power, and is in fact not necessarily beneficial to those who subscribe to it. Nietzsche claims that the reason for the ideal's continued flourishing is the absence of a suitable counter-ideal. I contend that Nietzsche in fact provides us with such a counter-ideal, in the form of his account of authenticity. According to Nietzsche, to be authentic is to be 'a kind of artist who freely shapes his self as a work of art' (Golomb, 69). I discuss Nietzsche's account of authenticity in terms of eternal return, arguing that it provides us with an alternative to the ascetic ideal as it offers us an alternative means of dealing with the reality of our human condition through aiming towards self-knowledge and avoiding self-deception.

Chapter 3 provides a supplementation to a particular aspect of Nietzsche's account of authenticity – the role it accords (or fails to accord) to others in the acquisition of self-knowledge. In order to be the sort of authentic agent that Nietzsche describes, one

needs to have self-knowledge. Nietzsche draws our attention to this on a number of occasions, but he does not place any real emphasis on the method(s) whereby we are supposed to gain self-knowledge. I argue that self-knowledge is a dialogic process, which must, if it is to be successful, accord a significant role and value to others. In order to do this I draw on and expand upon David Jopling's account of dialogic self-knowledge and self-knowledge acquisition. Jopling claims that self-knowledge and its acquisition require a particular type of dialogue. I provide a theoretical framework for the operation of such dialogue, by drawing on Robert Brandom's account of assertion. I then discuss the relationship that must exist between the participants in such a dialogue, by drawing on Levinas' critique of Merleau-Ponty's account of intersubjectivity.

Chapter 1

Normative theory and supplementary ideals

In this chapter I contend that there exists a gap in traditional normative approaches to ethics, and that, in order to fill this gap, we must turn to other values or ideals that are not countenanced by such theories. In section 1, I explain what I believe the gap in modern normative theory to be and explain why I believe this gap arises. In addressing these issues, I provide a framework for the type of theory that might be useful in attempting to fill the gap. In section 2, I discuss one such theory, that of the ideal of sincerity. Section 3 comprises a critique of this ideal, which in turn provides a framework for what a more comprehensive ideal might look like. Finally, in section 4, I provide guidelines for a theory of authenticity that does not fall prey to the same critiques as sincerity. At this point, the definition of authenticity is to be merely a sketch, which will be filled out in greater detail as the thesis progresses.

1. Minding the gap

The gap that I contend exists in normative theory arises both from a particular conception of which aspects of our lives normative ethical theories are applicable to and from a particular conception of the role of normative ethical theories in guiding our actions. In order to demonstrate this, I discuss the distinction drawn between morality and ethics, as laid out by Williams and Foucault. I then elucidate Nozick's conception of morality as side-constraints and explain how traditional normative ethical theories fall under this conception. From this, I draw out two problems that arise for normative ethics, so as to motivate the need for an additional ideal as supplementary to them.

Before commencing with my arguments in this section, I would like to examine and dismiss one of the major types of objection that is generally levelled at this type of criticism of normative ethics. I will term this the 'so what?' objection. It runs as follows. Most (if not all) theorists of normative ethics would concede that there do exist gaps in normative ethical theory. One such gap might be the one mentioned above – that these theories are not applicable to a broad cross-section of our activities and that their principles only provide minimal guidance. However, they would also hold that the onus does not rest on normative ethics to fill these gaps. Thus we may be prompted to ask

'So what if there are gaps? The filling of these gaps falls outside the scope of normative theory's project.' I am happy to concede this, as the objection presented in fact has no effect on the case that I lay out in the rest of this section. This is because my argument does not call upon normative ethics to fill the gaps from the inside. In fact, it is explicitly an attempt to fill these gaps from outside the boundaries of normative ethical theories as they are traditionally construed, by appealing to other values and ideals that do not form part of the sets of principles advocated by these theories.[1]

Bernard Williams draws a distinction between morality on the one hand and ethics on the other (Williams, 6ff). Ethics, for Williams, is a broad field of study, encompassing many aspects of the ways in which we should lead our lives. According to Williams, morality is one part of ethics, which encompasses only particular aspects of how we should lead our lives, focusing specifically on action[2]. Morality is ethics narrowly construed and is specifically concerned with certain notions, such as duty and right. We might look at the distinction in terms of the questions that morality and ethics attempt to answer. Ethics is concerned with answering the broad question 'How ought I to live?' while morality is concerned with providing an answer to the more specific question 'What ought I to do?'. This is not to say that ethics does not answer questions about what one ought to do (as this is surely part of how one lives), but to say that in addition to this ethics provides answers to other questions (e.g. 'What ought I to believe?', 'What ought my relation to myself be?', 'What ought my relation be to my projects?') that fall beyond the scope of morality. Thus the realm of the moral is a subset of the realm of the ethical. As such, all moral actions are necessarily ethical actions, but some ethical actions fall outside the sphere of morality. For example, my decision to consistently read *Asterix* instead of Aristotle hardly seems to be immoral, but it might be construed as unethical if viewed in the light of my failing to be true to my project of becoming a philosopher.

Another way of viewing the distinction between ethics and morality is that provided by Michel Foucault. According to Foucault, ethics is concerned with 'the way in which the

[1] The idea that the gaps in normative theory are not normative theory's to fill will become clearer when I discuss the notion of universality below.

[2] Williams specifically notes that morality generally applies to those aspects of our lives which involve other-regarding actions (Williams, 6), although it is not immediately clear that the realm of the moral might not extend to self-regarding actions as well. A Kantian, for example, would view such (seemingly) self-regarding actions as lying to oneself or suicide as clear-cut examples of immoral actions.

individual has to constitute ... himself as the prime material of his moral conduct' (Foucault, 26). In other words, ethics is concerned with self-formation, which does not necessarily have to be a rule-based activity. Morality, on the other hand, is 'a set of values and *rules of action* that are recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various prescriptive agencies'[3] (Foucault, 25, my emphasis). Thus, what moral theory provides for us is a set of rules to which we are supposed adhere in the performance of actions. Once again, the conception is of the realm of the ethical as broader than that of the moral, since the work that must be done by an agent in constituting himself as moral encompasses more than just performing the correct actions in accordance with a set of rules or principles. What is particularly important about Foucault's characterisation of the distinction between the moral and the ethical is the emphasis that he places on the notion of the agent developing himself. It is to this notion that we will return when examining possible supplements to normative theories in sections 2 and 4 of this chapter.

Foucault's conception of morality as providing a set of rules for action is similar to Robert Nozick's conception of morality. It is to this conception that I now turn. According to Nozick, morality provides us with a set of 'side-constraints' (Nozick, 29). What he means by this is that moral theories provide us with the boundaries of action in the form of a set of rules or principles. In pursuing our goals, we are limited by the injunction not to overstep these boundaries, i.e. not to violate the rules. Provided that we do not overstep the boundaries, our actions are morally permissible. On this view, there is no need for further consideration of anything else that goes on in between the boundaries, as the rules come into play only as a limit on which actions may be performed. This view of the role and applicability of moral theory is one that is applicable to modern normative ethical theories.

There are three general classes of theories that constitute modern normative ethics: deontology (e.g. Kantianism and Neo-Kantianism), consequentialism (e.g. utilitarianism) and virtue ethics (both ancient and modern). It is not my aim here to provide detailed accounts of each of these classes of theory. I aim only to provide (through the discussion of a theory of each type) an account of the general form of each class and what concerns may arise from this form. The first two groups of theory (deontological

[3] By 'prescriptive agencies' Foucault has in mind such institutions as the family, educational institutions and the church. We might also include in this group the corpus of moral philosophy, and normative theories specifically.

and consequentialist) share a number of similarities in form that they do not share with virtue ethics. I will thus begin with a discussion of examples of such theories (Kantianism and utilitarianism) and then move on to a discussion of virtue ethics.

What both deontological and consequentialist theories of morality provide us with is a set of principles or rules which are supposed to delineate the limits of morally permissible action. These rules are designed to be general, universally applicable and agent-neutral. In other words, they are designed to be the sort of principles to which any rational agent should adhere in the performance of action. In the case of Kantian ethics, we are bound, through rationality, by the categorical imperative. We must act in such a way that we act only on those maxims that we could will to be universal[4]. In the case of utilitarianism, we are told to perform actions that will maximise overall utility. Utility itself may be construed in a number of different ways, depending on the specific form of utilitarianism in question, but the general principle (that utility ought to be maximised) remains the same. Provided that we act in such a way that we do not violate the relevant rule or principle, each of these theories would judge our action to be a morally permissible one.

Both deontological and consequentialist theories provide us with generally applicable, agent-neutral side-constraints. This feature of these theories gives rise to a concern. It may be argued that we want more from ethics than just a set of rules that we must avoid violating. If all there is to being moral is acting in accordance with a set of principles, then anyone qualifies as a moral agent by not violating these principles. There is no concern for who it is who performs the action, or what type of character that agent has. The concern is that, if this is all there is to ethics, then we will be unable to provide answers to the broader question of 'How ought I to live?'. This is because, in order to answer this question, it seems that we need to have something to say about the agent performing the actions. In other words, we need to look at notions such as character and self-knowledge. Returning to the Nozickian point, these theories have nothing to say about what is going on inside the boundaries, and, in the realm of ethics, it is precisely this that we have to say something about.

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[4] Kant in fact gives four formulations of the categorical imperative in the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, but this is the most commonly used of the formulations and sufficient to demonstrate the point at hand.

Another way of expressing this concern is with respect to the concept of universality. This is a concept that is held dear by normative theories, since such theories aim to provide us with moral rules or principles that will apply universally to all rational persons. If we analyse the concept of universality, we may cash it out in terms of impersonality and impartiality[5]. A universal moral rule or principle is one which is agent-neutral (impersonal) and which aims at eliminating bias in our moral reasoning (impartial). Normative theory takes its subject matter to be precisely that which falls within the scope of universality. In ethics, however, partiality and particularity are very important. If we take Foucault's conception of the ethical seriously, it becomes clear that, in answering ethical questions, we are answering questions about the self-development of particular agents, who are individuated from other agents in terms of their specific projects and situations. As Williams puts it, the question of 'How ought I to live' is 'a question about [a] particular person' (Williams, 20). Whilst the form of the guidelines for this development may be universal, the content is not. In contrast to this, normative theory provides us with both universal form (that moral deliberation takes) and universal content (the particular rules or principles advocated by a specific normative theory).

It is at this point that virtue ethics appears to be a more promising option[6]. Virtue ethics seems to escape the above concern for the very reason that its focus is on the character and character development of the agent. In traditional Aristotelian virtue ethics, for example, we are provided not with a set of rules governing actions, but with a list of virtues (such as honour and courage) that we ought to cultivate as part of our character and a list of vices (such as *akrasia*) that we ought to avoid[7]. The character of the agent performing an action, and the way in which that agent develops that character, becomes directly important. Thus virtue ethics escapes the concern raised above by placing emphasis on the agent and attempting to guide us in what kinds of people we ought to try to be.

There is, however, a second concern that arises, to which all three classes of theory fall prey. This concern is that the lists of rules or of virtues and vices fail to capture numerous aspects of our dealings with the world. In the case of deontology and consequentialism, we do not simply want guidance about what it is that we ought to do,

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[5] An elucidating conversation with Marius Vermaak was of great help in formulating this position.
[6] My thanks to Dr Samantha Vice for many helpful conversations on the subject of virtue ethics.
[7] This is discussed in great detail in *Nicomachean Ethics*.

we also want guidance about how it is that we ought to live. It will not be sufficient here to claim that act utilitarianism requires us to apply utilitarian calculations to all our actions. Firstly (as can be seen by the move away from act utilitarianism to rule utilitarianism) this view of how we should go about acting is a deeply crippling one, both theoretically and practically. Secondly, it may be argued that there is more to the good life than maximising utility. As Williams pertinently observes: 'We do not merely want the world to contain certain states of affairs [e.g. those of maximal utility] (it is a deep error of consequentialism to believe that this is all we want).' (Williams, 56). Virtue ethics does go further towards satisfying the demand for guidance about how we ought to live, by placing the emphasis on character and character development, but it still does not escape the concern at hand. The list of virtues and vices it provides us with, even if correct, is not an exhaustive one[8], and so aspects of daily life fall outside of its scope. It seems that simply following the rules or cultivating a specific kind of character is not going to be sufficient for leading the good life. According to Williams, the ethical question 'seems to ask for the conditions of *the good life* – the right life perhaps, for human beings as such' (Williams, 20).

It is beyond the scope of this section to provide a fine-grained discussion of the details of what constitutes the good life. The conception of the good life that I have in mind here is largely a formal one. What constitutes a good life is a life that is fulfilled and fulfilling *for the agent that leads it.* As John Cottingham has pertinently pointed out, in order for us to live fulfilled and fulfilling lives, we must 'try to understand ourselves and ... [attempt] to remove the obstacles to fulfilled and happy living' (Cottingham, 5). If we are to live the good life, what we need is an effort towards self-knowledge. This self-knowledge is then to be used in the service of being fulfilled. This will occur through the bringing to self-reflexive coherence of an agent's beliefs and desires or, in Cottingham's terms, the agent's reason and their passions. This provides us with a blueprint for the sort of broad ethical ideal that we can use to supplement the gap in modern normative theory. Such an ideal must place importance on self-knowledge and coherence of self. It is to an ideal of this type, that of sincerity, that I turn in the following section.

[8] I am not making any claim here about whether or not proponents of virtue ethics purport the list of virtues and vices to be exhaustive.

2. The ideal of sincerity

Sincerity is an ideal which places emphasis on self-knowledge, albeit in a somewhat indirect manner. Our commonsense notion of sincerity is that to be sincere is to present oneself faithfully to others. In order to make a faithful presentation of oneself to others, it seems clear that one must know the self that one is presenting. In this section I discuss Lionel Trilling's account of sincerity in his book *Sincerity and Authenticity*. In the next section I offer a critique of this ideal, so as to set up a framework for the examination of an alternative ideal, that of authenticity.

Trilling begins his discussion of the notions of sincerity and authenticity by observing that we may, on occasion, 'observe the moral[9] life in the process of revising itself' (Trilling, 1). On one level this is a comment about moral history. The Reformation, for example, may be viewed as an instance of the moral life (and the prevailing ethos) revising itself. More importantly, however, this is a comment about the nature of the self. It tacitly draws our attention to the theory of the self that is implicit in Trilling's account. If the moral life is capable of revision, then the self (as the initiator and maintainer of that life) is capable of development and change. Thus, in this account, the self is not eternally fixed and immutable. Trilling holds that there are two ways in which such a revision may be made. The first is by 'reducing the emphasis [the moral life] formerly placed upon one or another of its elements' (Trilling, 1). The second is by 'inventing and adding to itself a new element, some mode of conduct or of feeling which hitherto it had not regarded as essential to virtue'[10] (Trilling, 1). In other words, the moral life may revise itself by either subtraction or addition, which may (and probably quite often will) be instantiated in a change of emphasis. The idea of revisions of the moral life (in both their additive and subtractive aspects) is one that sits well with the theorists of authenticity to be examined later. For example, Nietzsche urges that we decrease the emphasis that we formerly placed on 'traditional' or received morality in favour of an increased effort to cultivate self-creativity and authentic will to power[11].

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[9] Trilling uses the word 'morality' to denote both what I have defined as morality and what I have defined as ethics.

[10] This is what Trilling believes to be the case with sincerity, as will be discussed in greater detail below.

[11] Nietzsche's account of authenticity is the subject of Chapter 2 of this thesis.

As far as Trilling is concerned, sincerity is a 'state or quality of the self' and refers mainly to 'a congruence between avowal and actual feeling' (Trilling, 2). He discusses the operation of this congruence with reference to Polonius' injunction to Laertes in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: 'to thine own self be true/And it doth follow, as the night the day/Thou canst not then be false to any man' (*Hamlet*, II, ii, 77-79). In this statement, Polonius both conceives of sincerity as an essential condition of virtue ('Thou canst not then be false to any man') and shows how it can be achieved ('to thine own self be true'). Thus, in order to be sincere, an agent must have a relation of truthfulness to himself. It is this requirement for having a particular relation to oneself that makes sincerity an ethical ideal – its requirements go beyond rules for action.

This is not, of course, to say that such a relation is easily attained or easily attainable. Trilling is explicit on the fact that sincerity is something that cannot be attained 'without the most arduous effort' (Trilling, 6). However, the making of this effort was, at a certain point in moral history, conceived of as being of great importance to the leading of a moral life.

Trilling utilises a genealogical examination of the etymology of the word 'sincerity' in order to demonstrate how its application developed, how sincerity gained importance as an ethical ideal and finally how its influence waned. The word derives from the Latin *sincerus*, meaning 'clean, sound or pure' (Trilling, 12). It entered the English language somewhere around the sixteenth century and in its earliest usage referred to things ('both material and immaterial') rather than to human subjects (Trilling, 12). For example, one might have spoken of wine or water as being sincere, in the sense of unadulterated. Its use with respect to persons remained 'largely metaphorical' (Trilling, 13). A person could be said to be sincere, to have a sincere life, in the sense that their life was 'sound, or pure, or whole, or consistent in its virtuousness' (Trilling, 13). In other words, the word 'sincere' in this usage in fact applied more to the person's life (as a sort of an object) than it did to the person himself. The use of the word 'sincere' as applied to persons developed to mean 'the absence of dissimulation, or feigning, or pretence' (Trilling, 13). It is this sense of sincerity that Polonius has in mind when advising Laertes, and it is this sense of the word that is the one that most readily springs to mind in an ethical context. In Polonius' formulation of sincerity, it follows necessarily ('as the night [follows] the day') from being true to oneself that one cannot be false with others (i.e. that one will be

virtuous)[12]. Given that sincerity is thus conceived of as essential to virtue, a normative claim is generated. One ought not to be false to others, and in order to do this, one ought to be true to one's self, in the sense of creating a congruence between what one believes, thinks, feels (in short, one's mental states) and one's avowals thereof. Thus sincerity becomes an ethical ideal.

Another way of examining the ethical force of the ideal of sincerity is to examine what a failure of sincerity would amount to. If one fails to be sincere, one is false with others, by virtue of not avowing one's mental states truthfully to them. In other words, one hides one's true motivations and beliefs from others. It is interesting to note at this point that many of the classic villains of literature are characters who fail to be sincere[13]. According to Trilling, 'a villain is a dissembler, his evil nature apparent to the audience [or reader], but concealed from those with whom he treads the boards [or pages]' (Trilling, 15). If we shift this definition out of a literary context, it still seems to hold that, in a society in which sincerity is the ethical ideal, the villain, in other words, the unethical member of that society, is a subject who conceals his true motivations and beliefs from others, thereby deceiving them. It is important to note that, in order to purposefully conceal their true motivations and beliefs from others, an insincere person must in fact know or be aware of what those motivations and beliefs are. The benefits to the villain of deceiving others may be many and varied, but would typically include facilitation of his projects without the hindrance of having to be honest to others and operate above board.

According to Trilling, what interests us more (in our current context) than the deception practiced by the self on others is the deception practiced by the self on itself (Trilling, 16). There are a number of reasons for this. This is partly due to a shift in emphasis in literary, political and philosophical theory. There has been a modern shift in emphasis from the moral agent as an obeyer of externally imposed rules to the moral agent as in some way having a role in the construction of the moral landscape. For example, in Kantian ethics, there is an overarching moral principle (the Categorical Imperative) according to which one should act, but it is through the exercise of one's own reason that one comes to recognise it as such. This places emphasis on the agent as

[12] It is questionable whether this in fact holds. However, I will save my critique until I give the critique of sincerity in general, so as to follow the thread of Trilling's argument at this point.
[13] For example Iago in Shakespeare's *Othello* and Tartuffe in Molière's *Tartuffe*.

autonomous, and responsible to himself in the exercise of that autonomy. In Protestant ethics emphasis is placed upon the individual's own unique relation to God, for and to which that individual is responsible.

On a more basic philosophical level our interest in self-deception is due to the difficulties we experience in accounting for this phenomenon as compared to the relative ease with which we are capable of accounting for the deception of others. In cases of other-deception, the deceiver knows or truly believes that *p*, but avows to the deceived that not-*p*, in order to induce in the deceived the belief that not-*p*. In cases of self-deception, however, there is no duality of the deceiver and the deceived. Thus, the subject must somehow have both *p* and not-*p* in their consciousness simultaneously (Mele, 121)[14]. The notion of self-deception becomes important in this context, given that, if one is to be sincere, one must be true to oneself in order to be true to others. Being true to oneself requires self-knowledge and the avoidance of obscuring or fabricating aspects of that self, which in turn is supposed to lead to one's being true to others. In other words, sincerity should involve an avoidance of self-deception. In addition (as we shall see in Chapter 2) one of the ways of dealing with authenticity is to view authenticity as fundamentally involving the avoidance of self-deception.

3. A critique of sincerity

Having risen as an ethical ideal, reaching its height in the eighteenth century,[15] the influence of sincerity over our ethical lives began to wane. There are four major reasons for the decline of sincerity as an ethical ideal. I will discuss each of these reasons in turn, in order to demonstrate how they problematise the ideal of sincerity and give us reason to seek an alternative ideal.

The first major reason for sincerity's decline as an ethical ideal is that sincerity, according to Trilling, integrally involves 'the reason that Polonius gives for being true to one's own self: that if one is, one cannot then be false to any man' (Trilling, 9). Within this first problem for sincerity, we can discern two aspects. The first is that the reason given by

[14] For a more detailed discussion of this see Mele's chapter 'Self-deception: The Paradox of Belief' in his *Irrationality: An essay on Akrasia, Self-deception and Self-control* (Oxford: OUP, 1987).

[15] Evidence of this is the rise of the genre of confessional autobiography during this era as a form of virtuousness. The publication of Rousseau's *Confessions* (1764-1775), a work discussed in some detail by Trilling, is a case in point.

Polonius assumes that it necessarily follows ('as the night [follows] the day') from being true to oneself that one is unable ('canst not') to be false to others. This does not seem to follow necessarily. It is plausible that the self to which I am true is one that prioritises the deception of others, for example. Even if we were to grant that it did follow, however, the reason would still run into a second problem. The only motivation for being true to ourselves with which the reason provides us is that doing so will prevent us from being false to others. The reason's influence over us has declined 'not because the moral temper of our time sets no store by the avoidance of falsehood to others' but because 'it does not propose being true to oneself as an end but only as a means' (Trilling, 9). This is problematic since it fails to accord anything but instrumental value to being true to oneself. This in turn makes it difficult to prioritise being true to oneself over other (potentially as effective) means to being virtuous, such as following a particular set of principles or cultivating certain character traits.

The second major reason for the decline of sincerity as an ethical ideal is that it assumes that the self is in some sense given or dictated and fixed by one's position in society. This may seem like a strange assumption to have as part of an ethical ideal, but given the context of the ideal of sincerity's introduction it is not particularly surprising. Modern liberal-democratic ideals formed no part of the ethical or political landscape of the sixteenth century. Williams goes as far as to remark that it has been in every society a recognisable ethical thought ... that one can be under [an ethical] requirement ... simply because of who one is and of one's social situation' (Williams, 7). Trilling adds to his definition of a villain in a literary context discussed above that such a person is 'characteristically [one] who seeks to rise above the station to which he was born' (Trilling, 16). Taking this out of a literary context, it becomes clear that there is an assumption that either one's inner being is determined by one's social station or that one's social station is determined by one's inner being. This is evidenced by the fact that, in a society that holds sincerity as its highest ethical ideal, the villain is, as discussed above, a dissembler and, in addition, one who tries to rise above his appointed social station. Sincerity is firmly embedded in and serves to confirm or reinforce social circumstances. In other words, within the ideal of sincerity is implicit the assumption that there is a definite and externally fixed self to which one is supposed to be true so as to present that self faithfully to others. This introduces a political element to sincerity, since, unlike in the discussion thus far, it does not merely deal with one to one

intersubjectivity, but with the individual's relation to society. It also raises the question of what the relation between an ethical ideal and notions such as one's place in society should be. We ought to be able to take a critical stance with respect to society and its values, which is not an opportunity afforded to us by the ideal of sincerity. It is this lack of critical scope with respect to society and societally defined values because of this that problematises sincerity.

The third of the reasons for the decline of sincerity as an ethical ideal arises due to the fact that, in order to be sincere, one must know what one's true beliefs and motivations are, so as to present them faithfully to others. This assumes both that consciousness is completely transparent to itself and that it is possible for there to be an immediate presentation of the self to others. These assumptions are denied by developments in psychological and political theory in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Psychoanalysis denies consciousness' complete transparency to itself. It posits certain aspects of a subject's mental life as opaque to them, possessed of meaning 'that may not be consciously felt by the person whose [mental] states they are' (Lopston, 167). Another way of viewing this lack of transparency is via the Freudian notion of the tripartite consciousness. According to Freud, the mind has three aspects: id, ego and superego. The id is the locus of subconscious instincts and drives, which are not present to the conscious ego. Once again, we have a picture of consciousness in which there is no assumption that it is transparent to itself. Even if there were a fixed self, we would, on this account, not have any guarantee of unhindered access to it, as sincerity would demand. The demand that sincerity makes on us is thus an impossible one. Marxism denies that it is possible to have an immediate or unmediated presentation of the self to others, especially once we move outside of the realm of one to one intersubjectivity and into that of the individual's relation to society. This is due to the pervasive influence of false consciousness, which distorts the individual's self-conception and thus their interactions with others. Again, the demand of sincerity is an impossible one. Even if there were a fixed self, we would still not be able to give an immediate presentation of it to others. The necessary conditions of sincerity are that one has unhindered access to one's true beliefs and motivations and that one can present these to others in an unmediated fashion. If these conditions cannot be fulfilled, then the ideal can never be fully realisable. It could be suggested that we should view sincerity as a regulative ideal - something towards which we should strive even in the knowledge that it will never be

fully realised. However, given the pervasiveness of the features about ourselves that mitigate against the fulfilment of the conditions for sincerity, we have good reason to look for an alternative ideal that, even if it is not itself completely realisable, goes further towards avoiding making assumptions about the self and our access to it that have been argued to be false.

The fourth reason for sincerity's decline is the changing way in which we viewed our selves. The introduction of sincerity as an ethical ideal, and the shift in emphasis that accompanied this introduction, constitute an additive revision of the ethical life. However, once the ideal was in place, it operated on the assumption of a fixed self, denying the notion of a constantly changing and developing self that allowed its introduction in the first place. Many of the writers discussing the notion of sincerity[16] seem to assume that there is in fact some fixed core which is one's own self to which one can be true and that it is by an accurate representation of this self to others that one is virtuous. Part of the decline of the ideal of sincerity is the renewed demand (both in theory and practice) that we again recognise that the self is not a fixed thing or object, but constantly in flux, developing and changing.

An example of a critique of sincerity along these lines is that of Jean-Paul Sartre. He criticises the ontology of self assumed by the ideal of sincerity. Nietzsche (as we will see in Chapter 2) runs a similar critique against the ascetic ideal, albeit using different terminology. In his chapter on bad faith in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre discusses sincerity as a form of bad faith[17]. According to Sartre, bad faith involves a misconstrual or misrepresentation of the human condition. The human condition consists of both transcendence and facticity. Transcendence is the aspect of human reality that is constituted by freedom. Facticity is constituted by factors such as race, sex, class, social situation and standing, history etc. In other words, our facticity consists of all the things that are true of us, but which, when taken altogether, do not provide a complete definition of us in the way that a complete list of the properties of an object would do. When one is in bad faith, one overemphasises one's transcendence, or overemphasises one's facticity, or mistakes the one for the other.

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[16] For example, Rousseau, Matthew Arnold, Shakespeare.

[17] For a more detailed discussion of the notion of bad faith and of sincerity as bad faith, see *Being and Nothingness*, Part I, Chapter 2 ('Bad Faith').

Sartre begins his discussion of sincerity as bad faith by stating that sincerity is generally viewed as the antithesis of bad faith (Sartre, 98). According to Sartre, the ideal of sincerity is that 'man is *for himself* nothing more than he *is*' (Sartre, 98, my translation). This is precisely the sort of definition of sincerity that Polonius has in mind when he advises Laertes. Sartre then alerts us to the fact that this is precisely the definition of the in-itself, i.e. of an object which is completely definable by its present properties. If I make an effort at sincerity, 'it is necessary for me, when I examine myself, to determine exactly what I am', 'to constitute myself like an object' (Sartre, 102, my translation). In being sincere I 'posit a causal determinism which constitutes the flux of my states of consciousness like a series of physical states' (Sartre, 103, my translation). This constitutes bad faith since it is a misconstrual of the reality of the human condition. In making an effort to be sincere, I fix my identity in the same way that the identity of an object is fixed. I make myself into the sum of my factical properties. By doing this I overemphasise my facticity at the expense of my transcendence. Thus sincerity is bad faith in that it operates with an inaccurate ontology of self.

In addition to this, bad faith is not, according to Sartre, merely a matter of error. In bad faith, one 'masks a displeasing truth, or presents as truth a pleasing untruth' (Sartre, 87, my translation). Bad faith 'appears to have the same structure as a lie', but what makes the difference is that in bad faith 'it is from myself that I hide the truth' (Sartre, 87, my translation). Thus, bad faith is a lie that takes place within a single unified consciousness. In other words, bad faith is essentially self-deception. Since sincerity is bad faith, it is self-deception. Thus the ideal of sincerity falls into the very problem that it urges us to avoid. In other words, the demand placed upon us by the ideal of sincerity (to be true to a fixed self so as to be true to others) is a self-defeating one.

In combination, these reasons for the decline of the influence of the ideal of sincerity demonstrate why it is insufficient as an ethical ideal in our current circumstances. Sincerity as an ideal is unreflective (in the sense of reflection as critical examination), merely reflective (in the sense of reflection as a mimesis of a given circumstance), uncritical and lacking in scope for interpretation. It also seems that the major thrust of sincerity is the omission of obfuscation in one's dealings with others. Being true to oneself is merely a means to this end.

We can construe sincerity in two ways. Either sincerity posits a conglomerate of the self and its values or it posits the self and then values that are separate from, but still connected to, the self. In the former case, both the self and the values are societally defined (as argued in section 2 above), and being sincere amounts to merely giving an accurate reflection of them to others. In the latter case, it seems that, although the values will be externally imposed, if these values contradict the self, then they may be rejected. What must be truthfully represented here is some essential own self. Both conceptions of sincerity are, however, inadequate. The first is inadequate because it asks of us to subscribe to an ideal that would render our lives unlivable in our context. It does this because it fails to be critical of society and the values it asks us to accept. Thus the first formulation of sincerity provides no scope for criticism. Whilst the second formulation seems more appealing, since it provides some scope for criticism of society's values, it is still inadequate because it does not make any allowance for a critical examination or questioning of the self that must accept or reject those values.

Given the above critique of the ideal of sincerity, we can see that this ideal is problematic in two ways. Firstly, on the level of self, it is problematic because it assumes an ontology of a fixed self to which we no longer adhere and to which we no longer have good reason to adhere. In order to illustrate why we lack good reason to adhere to an ontology of a fixed self, I will briefly outline what an ontology of a non-fixed self would look like. Since my aim here is not a metaphysical one, this account draws on and takes seriously our phenomenological experience of ourselves. We experience ourselves as being free, future-directed creatures. We have certain projects, the project to complete a thesis, for example, that aim at fulfilment at some time in the future. We 'shape [our] identities by projecting [ourselves] toward the future' (Jopling, 83). Thus, when we introspect, our selves are elusive to us. This is because the consciousness reflecting and the consciousness reflected upon are different. Since there is, at the very least, a temporal difference between the consciousness reflecting and the consciousness reflected upon, it seems that consciousness is never fully able to capture itself. This is what Sartre means when he states that 'if we attempt to grasp [the reflecting consciousness] as reflecting, it vanishes and we fall back on the reflection' (Sartre **b**, 76). It is important, however, not to confuse the view that the self is elusive and non-fixed with the view that there is no self, or that the word 'self' experiences a failure of reference. When we introspect, it is not the case that we find no self, but simply that we cannot fully capture

ourselves, due to our freedom and our future-directedness. We do experience ourselves as having certain properties, but we do not experience ourselves as having them in the fixed and readily accessible way that sincerity would require[18]. Secondly, on the level of the individual's interaction with society, it fails to provide scope for criticism of that relation, merely serving to enforce and reinforce existing social structures.

We thus have reason turn to look for a new ideal to which we would have greater reason to adhere, given the critique laid out in this section. Such an ideal would have to satisfy the criterion of allowing scope for taking a critical stance with respect to society and the criterion of allowing a critical stance with respect to the self. This is the ideal that both Trilling and I term *authenticity*. For Trilling, authenticity suggests 'a more strenuous moral experience than "sincerity" does, a more exigent conception of the self and what being true to it consists in, a wider reference to the universe and man's place in it, and a less acceptant and genial view of the social circumstances of life' (Trilling, 11). The ideal of authenticity is thus a far more critical ideal than that of sincerity, implying a 'downward movement through all cultural superstructures to some place where all movement ends, and begins' (Trilling, 11). The need for authenticity is motivated because our society and culture need criticism which requires both a level of interpretation of circumstances not afforded to us by sincerity and a critical relation to the self which sincerity fails to provide.

4. Towards a positive account

At this stage of the thesis, a definition of what authenticity is must remain largely a sketch[19]. This is in part because the definition of authenticity at this point is a negative one, and in part because of the nature of the concept of authenticity. Authenticity, as discussed in the previous section, is a more comprehensive term than sincerity and must be distinguished from it. This is because authenticity aims far more strongly at being critical than sincerity does. Authenticity calls upon us both to question our society and to question ourselves. Thus, part of the definition of authenticity is that it is not sincerity. What authenticity shares with sincerity, however, is the call to self-knowledge.

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[18] This is because we do not have these properties in the same way that things can be said to have properties, as discussed in section 4 below.

[19] At this stage, all I am aiming at is a working definition of authenticity which will be focalised through Nietzsche's account (Chapter 2) and refined through a supplementation of this account (Chapter 3) to create a fully fleshed-out definition.

In order to critique one's society and one's self, one first needs to know the self that is to be critiqued and do the critiquing[20].

The other issue surrounding giving a definition of authenticity at this stage is the nature of the concept. In the first chapter of his book, *In Search of Authenticity: From Kierkegaard to Camus*, Jacob Golomb begins by stating that the term 'authenticity' may 'very well resist definition' (Golomb, 7). He gives two reasons for this. Firstly, the word is used in 'so many different contexts' (Golomb, 7). Golomb does not elaborate on this point, but he presumably means that authenticity is a term that is used in a number of different fields or disciplines (e.g. philosophy, psychology, art history) and which carries different connotations and definitional baggage in each one. Secondly, he draws attention to the problem of 'the philosophical nature of [authenticity's] meaning' (Golomb, 7), which he views as being the fundamental barrier to defining the term.

Golomb cites Sartre in order to defend this point. For Sartre, the word 'authenticity' does not 'denote "objective qualities" such as those associated with the notions of sincerity and honesty, qualities one predicates of "the person" in the same way one asserts ... that "the table is round or square"' (Sartre, quoted in Golomb, 7). The objective quality associated with sincerity, for example, is a congruence between avowal and actual feeling. This passage raises two important points. The first of these is that 'authenticity' is not (for Sartre and Golomb) a term possessed of a finite list of criteria that will, if enough of them are fulfilled, allow us to apply the term to someone. Secondly, Sartre is drawing our attention to the disanalogy between persons (or selves) and physical objects such as tables. The disanalogy runs, not along Cartesian lines (selves are immaterial, physical objects are material), but along the lines that the self has being-for-itself (and as such is free and therefore constantly changing and developing) and a physical object has being-in-itself (and is thus fixed and fully determined by its properties). In other words, selves are not fixed entities, and predicating a complete list of their properties will not be sufficient to define them[21].

The two previous sections have served to provide us with guidelines both for a positive account of authenticity. In this section, I will explain what these guidelines are,

[20] This does not require an assumption of a fixed self, as will be demonstrated below.
[21] As we have seen in the previous section, it is exactly this disanalogy that sincerity fails to recognise. Later in this section we will see how authenticity does not fall into the same error.

demonstrate how authenticity is able to meet the criteria that they set and show why this provides motivation for our adopting authenticity as an ethical ideal.

In the critique of sincerity above, there were four major problems that led to its decline as an ethical ideal. If authenticity is to succeed where sincerity failed, then it must avoid these problems. The four problems are as follows:

1. Sincerity treats being true to oneself merely as a means to the end of being true to others.
2. Sincerity treats rising above one's social station as unethical, and serves to enforce and reinforce existing social structures.
3. Sincerity assumes both that consciousness is completely transparent to itself and that there can be an unmediated presentation of the self to the other.
4. Sincerity assumes an ontology of self in which the self is fixed.

Thus, authenticity must avoid each of these problems (or, at the very least, do a better job of avoiding them than sincerity does), whilst also providing scope for critical examination of society and of self.

In addressing how authenticity avoids these problems, I will begin with 4., since it is authenticity's insistence on an ontology in which the self is not fixed that directly allows it to avoid this problem and indirectly allows it to avoid the other three as well.

In both sincerity and authenticity, there is a demand upon us to know ourselves. In his book, *Self-knowledge and the Self*[22], David Jopling provides a very useful link between self-knowledge and ontologies of self. The link is provided by the fact that any theory of self-knowledge, its acquisition and value assumes a particular ontology of self. According to Jopling, there are three major traditions with respect to theories of self-knowledge in Western philosophy. The first of these holds that self-knowledge is 'a virtue expressed in prudential action' that is essential for the good life (Jopling, 3). Proponents of this tradition are Aristotle and Socrates. The second tradition views self-knowledge as a 'morally[23] valuable but largely unrealisable goal' (Jopling, 3). Its unrealisability is due to 'the elusiveness of the self which is its putative object' (Jopling, 3). Proponents of this tradition include Heraclitus, Sartre and Nietzsche. The third tradition sees self-

[22] My thanks to Dr Samantha Vice for directing me to this very useful book.
[23] Jopling also uses the word 'moral' interchangeably for both what I have termed 'moral' and what I have termed 'ethical'.

knowledge as 'a form of self-reflexive critique' because of 'its destructive impact on conventional ways of understanding the self, and because of its potential for moral and psychological destabilisation' (Jopling, 3). Jopling cites Richard Rorty's post-modern account of the self as the paradigm example of a theory in this tradition.

The first tradition assumes that the self 'is something that is knowable in the first place' (Jopling, 5). If this assumption is false, then the part that self-knowledge plays in being virtuous is problematised. Sincerity adheres to this sort of theory of self-knowledge, because (as argued in section 3 above) it assumes that the self is in fact the sort of thing that is completely knowable. According to the ideal of sincerity, self-knowledge (which is necessary to being true to oneself) is essential to virtue, and can be achieved because there is a fixed own self to be discovered and known. The second tradition denies this assumption. Whilst it views self-knowledge as morally valuable, it holds that it is not a fully realisable ideal 'because the self is elusive and cannot be adequately identified and conceptualised as it is *in itself*' (Jopling, 5, my emphasis). Jopling gives two ways of construing this statement. The weak construal is that 'there is always more about the self than can be identified and represented at any one time', since the self is too complex to come into the full view of the person attempting to know it (Jopling, 5). However, Jopling asserts, this may be said to be 'trivially true' of knowledge in general, not just self-knowledge (Jopling, 5). The strong construal is that our mental capacities are structured in such a way that 'there is a blind spot to the self and its existence' (Jopling, 5). This implies that the self is something that 'systematically eludes knowledge' (Jopling, 5). It seems that there may be a third possible construal of this position, which is supported by Jopling's use of the words 'in itself' in his formulation of it. Self-knowledge is not a fully achievable ideal because the self is not the sort of thing that is amenable to complete knowledge, precisely because it is not a thing. We cannot know what the self is like in itself, since its being is not subsumed by this. The self, as discussed on a number of occasions above, cannot be subsumed to being-in-itself, as it has the capacity for development and change. The third tradition also denies the assumption of a fixed self. It holds that even if we have knowledge of our 'desires, beliefs, and emotions' and of our 'character traits, life history and moral personality', there will still be 'more fundamental dimensions' of the self that we will lack knowledge of (Jopling, 8). If we are to acquire self-knowledge which will be of ethical relevance, then we must 'call into question the framework in terms of which one conventionally or habitually thinks about one's self'

(Jopling, 9). Ethically relevant self-knowledge thus requires a critical attitude to self (or to the ways in which one conceives of oneself). To avoid being merely destructive, 'critical self-knowledge must be placed ultimately in the service of a higher end: namely liberation, enlightenment or *authenticity*' (Jopling, 10, my emphasis).

Theories of authenticity subscribe in large part to the second tradition with respect to self-knowledge. As mentioned briefly in the second section of this essay, theorists of authenticity, such as Nietzsche, place great importance on the self's capacity for development and change. This is because authenticity as an ideal promotes the continual development of the self, denying that there is a fixed, object-like self to which one is to be true. The authentic project of forming one's own self 'entails reluctance to conform to any external "is" or "ought" or to seek some transcendental "ought"' (Golomb, 13). Thus, the ontology assumed by the ideal of authenticity is fundamentally at odds with that assumed by the ideal of sincerity. Against sincerity's assumption of a fixed self, authenticity affirms and embraces the flux of the self as the very condition of the ideal's possibility. Thus authenticity avoids the fourth problem encountered by sincerity.

From the above discussion of Jopling's account of theories of self-knowledge, it becomes clear how authenticity avoids the third reason for sincerity's decline. Sincerity assumes the complete transparency of consciousness to itself and the possibility of unmediated presentation of self to other. Given authenticity's rejection of an ontology of a fixed self, and its adherence to a theory of self-knowledge that denies that self-knowledge is ever a fully realisable ideal, it does not assume the complete transparency of consciousness to itself. Nietzsche, for example, is at pains to point out that there are drives, passions and motivations which influence our conduct, but of which we may be unaware. Authenticity can also accommodate the difficulty of giving an immediate presentation of the self to others. Given that there are aspects of my self of which I may be unaware, and that my self-knowledge will never be complete, I may be mistaken about myself and this can be transferred onto my presentation of my self to others.

Authenticity avoids sincerity's second problem in two ways. Firstly, if the self is not fixed, but constantly in future-directed flux, then it cannot be determined by an existing set of circumstances such as one's social station. Secondly, given that the third type of theory of self-knowledge, which is drawn on in service of the ideal of authenticity,

requires a questioning of existing modes of knowing the self, this means that one who has accepted the ideal of authenticity has 'not accepted uncritically any conventional and ready-to-hand forms of self-understanding' (Jopling, 2). Thus, if one is to be authentic, one cannot accept the definition of the self by social station, nor can one sanction the accurate reflection of a socially defined self as virtuous.

The last of the problems to which sincerity falls prey is that is accords only instrumental value to being true to oneself, as being true to oneself is only a means to the end of being true to others. Authenticity, if it is to avoid falling prey to the same problem, need not necessarily accord only inherent value to be true to oneself, but it must not accord *merely* instrumental value to being true to oneself[24]. It is clear that authenticity does accord some instrumental value to being true to oneself. In being true to oneself via authentic self-creation, one is in a position to effect change in ethical systems and society. However, the ideal of authenticity also values being true to oneself for its own sake. Even if authenticity cannot be brought to the level of an objective, normative moral theory, it can be a 'personal, corrective ideal' (Golomb, 205). The quest for self-knowledge thus becomes something valuable in itself, since even if it fails to have societal benefits, it prevents the betrayal of one's self.

Thus the ideal of authenticity escapes the four problems encountered by the ideal of sincerity. Given that it escapes these problems, and provides scope for criticism of both society and self, it is an ideal that we have more reason to pursue than the ideal of sincerity.

[24] This is analogous to the Kantian injunction that we always treat people as ends and never merely as means. In certain situations, we will treat people (e.g. a bus driver or chef) as means (to our destination or food) in some sense, but as long as we simultaneously treat them as ends, we are not immoral.

Chapter 2

Nietzsche's ideal of authenticity

In this chapter I examine the ideal of authenticity presented to us by Nietzsche. This will provide us with a concrete idea of what an ideal of authenticity would look like, and of what would be necessary to live successfully according to such an ideal. In section 1, I elucidate Nietzsche's overall project, arguing that the focus of his critique is the ethical. The second section examines Nietzsche's methodology in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, so as to set up his critique of the ascetic ideal. In section 3, I examine Nietzsche's critique of the ascetic ideal. It is this ideal that he views as his opponent, and for which he believes his ideal of authenticity to be the antidote. In section 4, I present an analysis and interpretation of Nietzsche's counter-ideal of eternal return, arguing that it is to be viewed as a particular attitude to life, in which self-knowledge plays a fundamental role.

1. The Overall Nietzschean Project

A fundamental part of Nietzsche's philosophical project, and one that can be traced back to his earliest works, is a critique of what he terms 'morality'. There are two interpretive problems that arise out of this critique. The first is what Nietzsche's attitude to morality is, and the second is what the scope of his critique is. In this section I shall discuss each of these problems in turn, arguing that Nietzsche's project is not aimed at the destruction of morality *simpliciter* and that Nietzsche's use of the word 'morality' covers both what I have termed 'ethics' and what I have termed 'morality'[25]. From this it will emerge that, while Nietzsche does criticise normative theories (e.g. utilitarianism and Kantianism), these do not form the focus of his account. The focus of his account is, in fact, directives about *how we ought to live*, i.e. ethical ideals.

One of the sources of the first interpretive problem is Nietzsche's reference to himself as 'the first immoralist' (*EH*, IV: 2). This does not, however, mean that he is opposed to the very notion of morality[26], or that he wishes to 'promote immorality, i.e., to encourage people to perform immoral actions' (Clark, xvii). Nietzsche explicitly says of himself that 'it goes without saying that I do not deny – unless I am a fool – that many actions called

[25] See Chapter 1, Section 1, 'Minding the Gap'.

immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged – but I think the one should be encouraged and the other avoided *for different reasons than hitherto*' (*D*: 103). From this it is clear that Nietzsche neither desires the encouragement of all that has previously been called immoral, nor does he desire the destruction of all that has previously been called moral. If Nietzsche is not to be a critic of morality *simpliciter*, the 'ought' in the above passage must be an ethical ought. In other words, if he defends the encouragement of 'moral' behaviour and the avoidance of 'immoral' behaviour in purely prudential, non-ethical terms, it may seem that he is not in fact defending morality at all.

Nietzsche's description of himself as an immoralist comes after a discussion of the notion of creativity with respect to values, as it is used in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Here he discusses the notion as follows: 'he who has to be a creator in good and evil, truly, has first to be a destroyer and break values. Thus the greatest evil belongs with the greatest good: this, however, is the creative good' (*Z*, II: 'Of Self-overcoming'). According to Nietzsche, being an immoralist makes him 'the annihilator[27] *par excellence*' (*EH*, IV: 2). The reason he needs to be an immoralist is in order to create new values. The notion of creativity for Nietzsche is an ethical one[28]. The 'creative good' is not a purely non-ethical good, and thus to defend immoralism by appeal to it makes this defence an ethical one. Thus the 'ought' in the passage from *Daybreak* above is an ethical ought. This demonstrates that Nietzsche's immoralism does not mean that he is opposed to the very notion of morality (which would make him an amoralist), but that it means that he is opposed to the blind and unquestioning acceptance of moral norms, without an examination of the reasons for which they are held. Immoralism is thus an attitude[29] to morality that is sceptical in the common language sense of the word. In other words, it involves a willingness to question the phenomenon of morality, without denying that it does or should exist.

The second interpretive problem is, according to Brian Leiter, '[o]ne of the standing problems in the interpretation of Nietzsche', that of defining 'the precise *scope* of his

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[26] As is argued by e.g. Philippa Foot in her paper, 'Nietzsche's Immoralism' (in Schacht (ed.) *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[27] The discrepancy in translation is due to the fact that *Ecce Homo* is in the Kaufmann translation, and *Zarathustra* is in the Hollingdale translation. Kaufmann uses 'annihilator' for Hollingdale's 'destroyer'.

[28] It is the notion of self-creativity that grounds the ethical ideal of authenticity that he proposes, as is discussed in the rest of this chapter.

[29] It is an attitude that Nietzsche shares with Hume, as discussed in section 2 of this chapter.

critique of morality' (Leiter, 74). There are two aspects to the scope of Nietzsche's account. The first is a definition of what his target is, and the second is the classification of this target i.e. whether it is in fact moral or ethical.

Leiter provides a starting point for a definition of Nietzsche's target. Leiter suggests two possible interpretations of the scope of Nietzsche's critique, both of which he rules out. The first is that Nietzsche is 'simply a critic of all morality'.[30] Part of the source of the problem here is that Nietzsche uses the same German word 'typically *Moral*, sometimes *Moralität*' (Leiter, 74) both for what he attacks and for what he is in favour of. Thus, 'on pain of inconsistency' (Leiter, 74), we must be able to distinguish the sense of 'morality' of which Nietzsche is critical from the sense of 'morality' that he retains. The second is that he is 'only a critic of a particular kind of morality' (Leiter, 74), such as Christian or 'European' morality. These types of morality are bodies of doctrine or dogma defined purely in terms of their form. Thus Leiter suggests that what Nietzsche is critical of is not moralities only with a particular content (e.g. 'Christian' or 'European' morality), but moralities of a particular form. This sort of morality is what Leiter terms 'morality in [Nietzsche's] pejorative sense' or MPS (Leiter, 74).

According to Leiter, all normative systems (of which MPS is one type) have both descriptive and normative components (Leiter, 78). In other words, normative systems presuppose 'a particular descriptive account of human agency' (Leiter, 78), which in turn makes sense of the system's normative claims, and 'embrace norms which favor the interests of some people, perhaps at the expense of others' (Leiter, 78). A normative system qualifies as MPS if and only if it presupposes three descriptive claims about the nature of human agency (the descriptive component) and/or if it embraces norms which are detrimental to the 'highest men' and advantageous to the 'lowest' (the normative component). Leiter argues that this is because people '(generally) hold particular philosophical and metaphysical views because they support their moral beliefs' and that these moral beliefs are in turn (generally) held 'because they favor the interests of those agents' (Leiter, 78-79). A clear example of this phenomenon is the ascetic ideal, Nietzsche's major target in the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, which I will discuss in detail in section 3 below. According to Leiter, the descriptive component alone is not sufficient for a normative system to qualify as MPS, but it is, nevertheless,

[30] As I have argued above, it is clear that this is not the case.

very important. It is the descriptive component of MPS that is of the most interest to us here.

There are three descriptive claims about human agency that are presupposed by the normative judgements of MPS. These are that

1. 'agents possess a will capable of free and autonomous choice' (Free Will)
2. the self is 'sufficiently transparent that agents' action can be distinguished on the basis of their respective motives' (Transparency of Self)
3. agents are 'sufficiently similar that one moral code is appropriate for all" (Similarity) (Leiter, 80).

The formulation of the second of these claims is problematic. This is because, as Leiter formulates it, it leaves no room at all for motives in the description or evaluation of an agent's action. It seems that, as I argued in section 3 of Chapter 1, even if the self is not completely transparent, we are still able to distinguish at least some of our motivations. Nietzsche does, for example, distinguish the motivation of philosophers in adopting the ascetic ideal from that of the priests. Thus the formulation of the second claim ought to be that the self is sufficiently transparent that agents' action can be distinguished *solely* on the basis of their respective motives. This formulation leaves room for some role for motivation, whilst admitting that many of our motives (e.g. those involved in self-deception, or our instincts and drives) may be opaque to us.

In combination, Leiter's three claims ground and render intelligible the normative judgements of MPS. This is because Leiter believes the normative judgements of MPS to be characterised by three traits that correspond to the three claims above. The normative judgements of MPS:

I. 'hold agents responsible for their actions'

II. 'evaluate and "rank" the motives for which agents act'

III. 'presuppose that "morality" has universal applicability' (Leiter, 80).

Given the nature of the normative judgements of MPS, as characterised by these three claims, Leiter argues that, if any of the three descriptive claims about agency fail, the corresponding kind of judgement cannot be justified. Thus,

i. 'If agents lacked "free will" they could not be held responsible for their actions'

ii. 'If agent motives could not be distinguished then no evaluative distinctions could be drawn among acts in terms of their motives'

iii. 'If agents were, in fact, different in some overlooked but relevant respect, then it would, at least, not be prima facie apparent that one morality should have universal applicability' (Leiter, 80-81).

Each of these claims is problematic. Firstly, it is far from clear, as has been frequently argued in recent years[31], that determinism is in fact incompatible with moral responsibility. Secondly, as I have already mentioned above, the self is sufficiently transparent for some motivation to be distinguishable. It is also clear that Nietzsche does, in the *Genealogy*, for example, engage in some ranking of motivations. The self-affirming motivation of the nobles in the creation of values is preferred to the *ressentiment* that characterises slave valuation and the purely pragmatic motivation of philosophers in 'adopting' or taking on the trappings of the ascetic ideal is preferred to the *ressentiment* that motivates the priests and the self-deceived motivation of the slaves. Thirdly, the problem of universal applicability arises because Leiter fails to draw the distinction between ethics (where universality is inappropriate) and morality (which falls precisely in the scope of the universal). This is problematic because, as I shall argue below, this is a distinction that Nietzsche does draw, albeit not as explicitly as Williams or Foucault. Despite its problems, Leiter's account is useful in providing a framework within which to understand the scope of Nietzsche's account. It is especially pertinent because it draws our attention to the fact that Nietzsche's target is form- rather than content-based. While the content of the ascetic ideal is problematic, as will be demonstrated below, it is its form that makes it a target for Nietzsche.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche comments that 'morality' can have a 'narrower' sense (*BGE*: 32) and thus, by implication, a broader sense. This is a distinction between ethics and morality, in very similar terms to those used by Williams. Whilst Nietzsche is obviously critical of morality in the narrower sense, arguing that we should move beyond it into the supra-moral (*BGE*: 32), he is also, and more pervasively, critical of ideals that fall under the scope of morality in the broader sense, or ethics. This becomes clear if we examine his critique of the ascetic ideal[32]. The ascetic ideal is not a moral ideal, but an ethical one masquerading as a moral one. It does not merely provide rules or principles that must be obeyed, but gives directives about how one ought to live, what one ought to

[31] E.g. by Bernard Williams in 'How free does the will need to be?' (in *Making sense of humanity and other philosophical papers*, Cambridge, CUP, 1995), R. Jay Wallace in *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard UP, 1996) and Harry Frankfurt in 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person' (in *Journal of Philosophy*, 68: 1).

[32] This will be discussed in greater detail in section 3 below.

believe and what one's relationship to oneself and the world (and the other world) ought to be. The ascetic ideal helps itself to universal applicability when it has no right to do so. The sort of universal applicability that it claims is the sort of universal applicability that metaphysical truths are supposed to have. In other words, its claims are supposed to be objectively true and therefore applicable to all agents. However, as Nietzsche argues in the third essay of the *Genealogy*, the ascetic ideal's claims are neither objective nor true. They are motivated by the *ressentiment* of the priests in a last-ditch attempt to retain their position and gain a feeling of power. Both the ideal's metaphysic (with its strong emphasis on the other-worldly) and its ontology of personhood (with its denigration of the body and the passions) are wrong. Thus it is inappropriate for the ascetic ideal to claim universal applicability both because it is an ethical ideal and because, even if it were not, it would not be able to have the type of universality it requires.

Nietzsche's concern with the ascetic ideal is its form – it is an ethical ideal that attempts to help itself to the universal applicability that is appropriate only to moral ideals. It is this that allows Nietzsche to posit his counter-ideal of authenticity, as its form is an antidote to that of the ascetic ideal. It is to a discussion of the ascetic ideal and the counter-ideal of authenticity proposed by Nietzsche that I now turn, beginning with a discussion of *On the Genealogy of Morals*.

2. *On the Genealogy of Morals*

As I mentioned in the first section of this chapter, a critique of what he terms 'morality' forms a central part of Nietzsche's philosophical project. It is a theme that is possibly most clearly dealt with in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the *Genealogy* was published in 1887, the penultimate productive year of Nietzsche's life, and can thus be viewed as a mature presentation of his views on the subject.[33] The second is that it is, from a stylistic point of view, one of Nietzsche's clearest books. It is divided into three closely linked essays, each dealing with an aspect of his critique of morality. The first essay deals with the origins of the values 'good' and 'evil', the second with the moral(ised) psychology of guilt and bad conscience and the third offers a critique of the ascetic ideal.

If we examine the place of the *Genealogy* in Nietzsche's œuvre, it becomes clear exactly what he aims with it were. The title page of the original edition bears the words: 'A Sequel to My Last Book, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Which it is Meant to Supplement and Clarify' (Gay, 439). Thus Nietzsche views the *Genealogy* as a continuation and clarification of the themes in *Beyond Good and Evil*, among which is a critique of morality is prominent. In a letter to Burckhardt (22/9/1886), he describes *Beyond Good and Evil* as saying 'the same things as my *Zarathustra*, but differently, very differently' (quoted in Kaufmann, 182). Once again, a critique of a particular kind of morality forms a central part of this work. Thus, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* are to be viewed as containing three treatments of the same theme, each a refinement or clarification of the previous, with the *Genealogy* as the pinnacle of the refining process.

In order to understand the *Genealogy* properly, one must first have an understanding of the genealogical method that Nietzsche employs in it. I shall discuss two facets of genealogy. Firstly, I will provide an account of what criteria must be fulfilled in order for a method to count as a genealogical method, drawing on Raymond Geuss' account. Secondly, I will discuss Nietzsche's views about his genealogical method and how he believes it to be different from that of those he terms the 'English psychologists'[34] (*GM*, I: 1). I will do this through a comparison of Hume and Nietzsche, specifically with respect to their accounts of the origin of justice.

According to Geuss, Nietzsche's genealogy is 'the exact reverse' of what he terms 'tracing a pedigree' (Geuss, 1). When one traces a pedigree (of a person, a thing, a custom or a value) what one aims to do is to legitimise or attribute positive value to the subject of the pedigree. In order to do this, one must assume that there is a 'singular origin' of the subject of the pedigree that is the 'actual source' of the value one attributes to it (Geuss, 3). One then traces an 'unbroken line of succession' (Geuss, 3) from that origin to the subject of the pedigree, by a series of steps 'that preserve or enhance whatever value is in question' (Geuss, 3). By contrast, giving the genealogy of something (in Nietzsche's case,

[33] Maudemarie Clark holds that the *Genealogy* is Nietzsche's '"finished" thoughts on its major topics' (Clark, xv).

[34] This is a term that Nietzsche seems to mean very broadly, as his targets include Paul Rée, a German, and David Hume, a Scotsman.

the system of values and customs that he terms 'morality'[35]) is generally undertaken to demonstrate a lack of legitimacy or positive value of the subject of the genealogy. This is because a genealogical method denies both the assumption that there is a singular origin of the subject of the genealogy, and that the origin of a thing and its purpose are linked in a value-transmitting way. For Nietzsche, questions of origin and questions of purpose come apart – a thing's purpose does not explain its origin (*GM* II: 12). Thus there can be no value-transmitting link between a thing's current purpose and its origins. This lends support to Nietzsche's project, which aims, not at legitimising 'morality' and the values it asks us to accept, but at '*call*[ing] *into question*' the '*value of these values*' (*GM*, P: 6).

Nietzsche contrasts his genealogical method with that of those he terms the 'English psychologists' (*GM*, I: 1), such as Rée and Hume. He criticises these genealogists of morality for having an 'unhistorical' (*GM*, I: 2) approach to their subject. It may seem strange for Nietzsche to criticise them for being 'unhistorical', since genealogy is driven by the search for origins, which seems, in an obvious sense at least, to be a historical enterprise. However, what Nietzsche means is not that they fail to look for origins, but that, in their search for the origins of moral terms, they operate from the contemporary meaning and value attributed to these terms, thereby assuming that the meaning of such terms has been fixed and unchanging throughout their development. As Michel Foucault succinctly puts it, Rée 'assumed that words kept their meaning[36], that desires still pointed in a single direction, and that ideas retained their logic' (Foucault **b**, 341). In contrast, Nietzsche's genealogy denies this, by 'opposing the sentimental assumption that things we now value (for whatever reason) *must* have had an origin of which we would also approve'[37] (Geuss, 4). In other words, the 'meanings' (in the Foucaultian sense discussed) of our moral terms may (and in fact do) change, and we must, if we are to be good genealogists, be constantly aware of this in our search for origins. It is this awareness that Nietzsche criticises the 'English psychologists' for lacking.

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[35] As argued by Geuss, we ought to view morality in Wittgensteinian fashion as 'encompass[ing] a wide variety of different sorts of things that are at best connected to each other by "family resemblances"' (Geuss **b**, 167).

[36] It seems that what Foucault has in mind here is not only meaning in the sense if denotation, but also in the sense of connotation. Whilst words, e.g. punishment, may keep their reference to a family of practices, the way in which these practices are viewed, e.g. in terms of their purpose and origin, changes, and this change may be obscured from us.

[37] This point will become clear when I discuss the origins of the ascetic ideal in section 3 below.

The contrast between Nietzsche and those he views as his opponents will become clearer if we compare Nietzsche and Hume. They have in common that they both attempt to provide genealogies of morality and that they are both naturalists. However, their approaches to their subject matter are different. According to Leiter, both Nietzsche and Hume are 'methodological naturalists' (Leiter, 6). Both philosophers operate from the belief that philosophical inquiry ... should be continuous with empirical inquiry in the sciences' (Leiter, 3). The way in which this continuity is supposed to occur is by bringing the experimental method 'of testing progressively refined claims against experience' (Leiter, 4) into the practice of philosophy. This is particularly clear in the case of Hume, who subtitled the first edition of *A Treatise of Human Nature* 'An Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects'. Driven by the desire to explain morality in naturalistic terms, without recourse to God or metaphysics, each of these philosophers 'construct[s] a quasi-speculative theory of human nature to explain certain features of human belief systems' (Leiter, 10), in this case, the features related to morality.

A brief comparison of Hume and Nietzsche's accounts of the origin of justice will suffice to demonstrate the differences in their genealogical methods. Hume presents his reader with a dilemma about the origin of justice. Its origin is either 'our reflecting on [its tendency to "promote public utility and support civil society"]' or 'like ... [the] appetites ... and [the] passions [it] arises from a simple original instinct in the human breast, which nature has implanted' (Hume, 201). The latter option is ruled out by an examination of the empirical facts. It is clear that the sentiment of justice is one that has to be learned, not one that comes naturally to us. Hume argues that, if we were to '[r]everse in any considerable circumstance, the condition of man' by producing 'extreme abundance or extreme necessity' or by '[i]mplant[ing] in the human breast perfect moderation or perfect rapaciousness and malice' (Hume, 188), we would render justice obsolete. This is because, in situations such as these, justice ceases to have any use to society. Thus, according to Hume, 'public utility is the *sole* origin of justice' (Hume, 183).

Nietzsche's account of the origin of justice is, in one sense, similar to Hume's. He also denies that a sense of justice is an instinct that we all possess inherently. According to Nietzsche, justice exists only after the institution of law (not, as was argued by Duhring[38],

[38] In his book, *The Value of Life: A Course in Philosophy*.

after the perpetration of a harm) (*GM*, II: 11). The institution of law is designed to take the object of revenge (the perpetrator of a harm) out of the hands of those who desire revenge (those against whom the harm was perpetrated). There are a number of means by which this can be done. These include the substitution for revenge of some sort of 'moral' struggle against those elements of society which are deemed to be the 'enemies of peace and order' (*GM*, II, 11), the introduction and imposition of settlements, and the standardisation of equivalents for harms perpetrated. The last option involves what we would term punishment. Thus, justice is at base what happens when we 'sanctify revenge' (*GM*, II: 11), rendering it part of the realm of morality. Thus, by moralising revenge, we create a new moral category, justice, which is given a positive value. The difference between Nietzsche's account and Hume's thus consists in the fact that Hume, although he questions the origin of justice, still takes as a starting point the assumption that justice has, and has always had, a positive value. Nietzsche, on the other hand, questions not only the *origin* but also the *value* of justice. Given the origin of justice, its pretensions of purity and having the best interests of all concerned at heart are undermined. Once again we are made aware that the origin and purpose, and thus the valuation, of a practice come apart.

We are now in a position to examine Nietzsche's critique of morality in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. It is not my aim in this section to provide a detailed exposition of everything that Nietzsche covers in this work. I aim to set up his argument against the ascetic ideal, so as to demonstrate that he is critical of it because it is an ethical ideal that attempts to claim the sort of universal applicability that is appropriate only to moral ideals[39].

Nietzsche begins the Preface of the *Genealogy* with a statement that is vital in setting up his argument against the ascetic ideal: 'We are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge' (*GM*, P: 1). Despite the great advances we continue to make in our knowledge of numerous fields, we lack self-knowledge. According to Nietzsche, this is 'necessarily' so, because we 'have never sought ourselves' and so 'how could it happen that we should ever *find* ourselves?' (*GM*, P: 1). As I argued in Section 1 of Chapter 1, self-knowledge is crucial to ethics. Nietzsche is here drawing our attention to this very point. If we are to conduct a meaningful inquiry into the value of our values, as he aims to do in the *Genealogy*, then we must know for whom these values are supposed to be

[39] Thus, a discussion of his views on e.g. perspectivism and truth falls outside the scope of this project.

valuable. We cannot formulate a coherent ethic without knowing what kind of creature we are formulating it for. In other words, the question 'How ought I to live?', in other words, 'What is the good life?', cannot be answered without providing an answer to the question 'The good life for whom?'. This is precisely the sort of consideration that will be of importance in putting forward a critique of the ascetic ideal. As Geuss points out, 'the question "What is the significance of ascetic ideals?"[40] is incomplete; the full version would have to read: "What is the significance of ascetic ideals *for* ...?" where the blank is filled in by some specification of a particular group of people' (Geuss, 18, my emphasis). If we view the ascetic ideal as something that has inherent significance (as it urges us to do), the different significances it may have for different groups of people, depending on their interests, are obscured from us. Our lack of self-knowledge thus creates a climate in which an ideal like the ascetic ideal can gain a footing and begin to flourish in the absence of questioning or criticism.

3. The ascetic ideal

Nietzsche describes the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* as providing an answer to the question of 'whence the ascetic ideal, the priests' ideal, derives its tremendous *power* although it is the *harmful* ideal *par excellence*' (*EH*, III: *GM*). The answer is that it is 'not, as people may believe, because God is at work behind the priests but *faute de mieux*[41] – because it was the only ideal so far, because it had no rival' (*EH*, III: *GM*). In this section I discuss the ascetic ideal and its meaning for various groups of people, in order to draw out why Nietzsche finds it such a problematic ideal and how he believes it to have come to be the only ideal available to us.

The ascetic ideal is characterised by 'three great slogans' – 'poverty, humility, chastity' (*GM*, III: 8). These three words succinctly demonstrate the values that the ideal holds dear, values that it demands that its adherents accept, despite their seeming antipathy to human nature. In accepting these values, it demands that its adherents recognise the true abhorrence of their base human natures, their bodies and bodily desires. It is not, however, purely out of a distaste for these values that Nietzsche criticises the ascetic ideal. He takes issue with the ascetic ideal because of the form it takes. In order to see

[40] This is the question Nietzsche takes himself to be answering in the third essay of the *Genealogy*, which has the question as its title.
[41] For lack of something better.

clearly what this form is we must examine Nietzsche's discussion of the value or meaning that the ideal holds for various groups of people.

Nietzsche's discussion of the meaning of ascetic ideals deals with its significance for four groups of people: artists, philosophers, priests and the rest of humanity in general. Nietzsche summarises these as follows:

> In the case of artists they mean nothing or too many things; in the case of philosophers and scholars something like a sense and instinct for the most favourable preconditions of higher spirituality; ... in the case of the physiologically deformed and deranged (the *majority* of mortals) ... their chief weapon in the struggle against slow pain and boredom; in the case of priests ... their best instrument of power, also the "supreme" licence for power (*GM*, III: 1).

Linking all of these is Nietzsche's contention that '[e]very animal ... instinctively strives for an optimum of favourable conditions under which it can ... achieve its maximal feeling of power' (*GM*, III: 7). In other words, human beings seek out those conditions that they take to be most favourable for their development and fulfilment and thence take on those values or ideals that enable the maintenance of those conditions.

Nietzsche begins his discussion of the meaning of ascetic ideals for artists with a commentary on Wagner's opera, *Parsifal*. He describes Wagner as 'pay[ing] homage to chastity in his old age' (*GM*, III: 2). The reason that this is of importance is that, according to Nietzsche, it demonstrates a complete turnaround in the values to which the artist adhered – 'Wagner leaped over into his opposite' (*GM*, III: 2). This ability to make a jump from the celebration of sensuality that Nietzsche identifies in *Die Meistersinger* to the glorification of chastity that he identifies in *Parsifal* is key to Nietzsche's conclusion that ascetic ideals in the case of artists mean '*nothing whatever* ... Or so many things it amounts to nothing at all' (*GM*, III: 5). This is because Nietzsche holds that artists 'do not stand nearly independently enough in the world and *against* the world' (*GM*, III: 5) for us to take their valuations seriously. Because of this they simply become the mouthpieces or instruments of prevailing doctrines and dogmas. Given this, they can make the ideal mean whatever they like, depending on the theme that they are pushing. The ideal is only 'adopted' for their own purposes, and thus holds no real meaning, either for the artist or the spectator/reader. In the case of Wagner, Nietzsche claims, the artist used Schopenhauer, a respected philosopher, 'as his herald and

protection' (*GM*, III: 5). What Nietzsche means by this is that the impetus and justification for Wagner's embracing of the ascetic ideal in fact came from the authority enjoyed by Schopenhauer.

Nietzsche leads on directly from his discussion of Schopenhauer's role in Wagner's embracing the ascetic ideal to a discussion of Schopenhauer's relation to ascetic ideals in order to begin his account of the meaning of ascetic ideals to philosophers. Schopenhauer, taking on board a Kantian conception of aesthetics, viewed the contemplation of beauty as giving us 'pleasure without interest'[42]. This disinterested pleasure in turn induced in the spectator a 'calming of the will' (*GM*, III: 6). Nietzsche argues that the attraction of this ascetic way of viewing beauty lay for Schopenhauer in it providing a 'release from a torture' (*GM*, III: 6), in this case from the distracting influence of sexual desire or 'interestedness'. In order to concentrate properly on the higher intellectual and spiritual pursuits, such as philosophy, it is necessary to 'put a check on an unrestrained and irritable pride or a wanton sensuality' (*GM*, III: 8).

This leads us to the real meaning of ascetic ideals for philosophers. Ascetic ideals are, according to Nietzsche, the very precondition of philosophers leading their lives as philosophers. The reason for this is that the 'inactive, brooding, unwarlike nature of contemplative men long surrounded them with a profound mistrustfulness' (*GM*, III: 10). In ages dominated by the active and warlike elements of society, those who represented the opposite were viewed with a profound distrust and the only way to dispel this, according to Nietzsche, was to induce in others a '*fear* of oneself' (*GM*, III: 10). This was, in turn, achieved by retreating from society and taking on the trappings of hermits and spiritual types. Philosophers, in the absence of other options, disguised themselves using the '*previously established* types of the contemplative man – priest, sorcerer, soothsayer, and in any case a religious type – in order to be able to *exist at all*' (*GM*, III: 10). Thus ascetic ideals provided philosophers with a (dis)guise in which to present themselves to the world so as to avoid persecution and distraction. Philosophers put on the ascetic ideal as an acceptable outer garment to hide, and allow them to continue wearing, their distrusted philosophical robes underneath. The 'adoption' of the ascetic ideal by philosophers is purely pragmatic, and thus carries no inherent meaning. They never adopt it because of self-loathing and an abhorrence of their natures.

[42] Kant: *Critique of Judgement*, §§ 1-5.

The crux of the answer to the question of the meaning of the ascetic ideal is its meaning for the '*ascetic* priest' (*GM*, III: 11). This is because his '*right* to exist stands or falls with that ideal' (*GM*, III: 11). It is the ascetic priest that both creates and disseminates ascetic ideals, which in turn justify, in a circular fashion, his very existence. The ascetic ideal is founded on the priest's valuation of our life: 'he juxtaposes it (along with what pertains to it: "nature", "world", the whole sphere of becoming and transitoriness) with a quite different mode of existence which it opposes and excludes, *unless* it turn against itself, *deny* itself' (*GM*, III: 11). The ascetic ideal rests on a metaphysic of the otherworldly. Its focus, rather than being on the world and on life as experienced, is on a posited other world, an afterlife, which one may attain if one follows its rules in this life. Given this metaphysic, life as it is experienced is treated as 'a mistake that is put right by deeds' (*GM*, III: 11). The ascetic ideal urges us to put right this mistake by acting in accordance with its slogans of poverty, humility and chastity. In fact, it holds that 'we *ought* to put [it] right' (*GM*, III: 11). Thus, the ascetic ideal is a normative ideal. It is the form that this normativity takes that renders the ideal problematic. The ascetic priest '*demands* that one go along with him … he compels acceptance of *his* evaluation of existence' (*GM*, III: 11). The nature of the normativity of the ascetic ideal is thus of a piece with that of the normative theories discussed in section 1 of Chapter 1. The ascetic ideal posits itself as being both impersonal and impartial – the lives of all agents are 'mistakes' to be 'put right by deeds', and the manner in which all agents can do so is by living according to the ascetic ideal – and thus as being universal.

In section 1 of Chapter 1 we saw that this sort of universality is appropriate to morality, or ethics narrowly construed, but not to ethics in the broad sense. However, if morality tries to usurp the place of ethics, its claims to universality become problematic. Thus, if the ascetic ideal is an ethical, and not a moral ideal, then it cannot help itself to the universality it desires. This is because when we attempt to answer the moral question 'What ought I to do?' we aim at making prescriptions that will be both impersonal and impartial, and thus universal. On the other hand, when we attempt to answer the ethical question 'How ought I to live?' we are attempting to give an answer with reference to a particular agent, not to agents in general. Given that agents are particular, there can be no one universal answer to the question. It will be seen that considerations of impersonality and impartiality are incapable of subsuming the ethical realm. It is for this reason that

the ascetic ideal's claims to universality are problematic. The ascetic ideal is fundamentally an ethical, not a moral ideal. It gives directives not only about action, but about other aspects of life, such as what an agent's relation to himself should be, what metaphysic he should adopt and what beliefs he should hold. Given that the ascetic ideal actually aims at answering the broader question 'How ought I to live?', rather than the narrow question 'What ought I to do?', universality is inappropriate to it. Because the ascetic ideal is an ethical ideal masquerading as a moral one, it is a problematic ideal.

The metaphysic of the otherworldly that appears to ground the ascetic ideal creates a problem – what if this metaphysic is correct? If it is, then the ideal, along with its claims to universality, is rendered unproblematic. While it is clear that Nietzsche views the ascetic ideal's metaphysic as obviously false, his reason for its rejection can be explained in terms of the nature of a belief in this metaphysic, rather than the content of the metaphysic itself. This will become clear if we examine the source of the ideal for the priests, their real motivation for preaching it, and its meaning for 'the majority of mortals'.

In order for the priests to achieve their 'maximal feeling of power', they must place themselves in a position of authority over the 'majority of mortals'. This is achieved through the preaching and enforcing of the ascetic ideal. The priests demand that people accept both their valuation of the world and life (with its underlying otherworldly metaphysic) and their lifestyle (built around the three central values of poverty, chastity and humility). It would be fair to ask why the majority of people would accept this, given that the priests' valuation and their lifestyle are in many senses antithetical to human nature.

An understanding of why people accept and adhere to the ascetic ideal relies on an understanding of the priests' motivation in preaching the ideal and the people's motivation in accepting it. The priests' motivation for preaching the ideal is driven by what Nietzsche terms '*ressentiment*'. *Ressentiment* is a psychological state that Nietzsche describes in large part in the first essay of the *Genealogy*. In this essay he describes two distinct character types – the nobles (also referred to as the masters) and the slaves. Within the noble class, there are two groups – the knights and the priests. The (physically 'weak' and 'unhealthy' (*GM* I: 6)) priests are defeated by the (physically

stronger and healthier) knights, who assume the position of political superiority. This creates in the priests 'a pervasive sense of impotence' (Reginster, 286).

There are three issues raised by Reginster that are worth noting at this point. (i) The salience of physical strength (as possessed by the knights) and weakness (as possessed by the priests) is 'a purely contingent aspect' (Reginster, 286) of Nietzsche's account. The link between the priests' physical weakness and their feeling of impotence holds purely because they hold this weakness responsible for their loss of political power – it is the loss of power, and not the lack of physical prowess, which is actually important. (ii) The feeling of impotence is not a passing state of mind, but becomes 'an essential feature of [the priests'] self-assessment' (Reginster, 286). This leads to the priests viewing themselves as 'irremediably weak' (Reginster, 286), having tried everything to regain political power and failed. (iii) The priests refuse to accept their impotence, and their desire to regain political power persists.

Nietzsche characterises *ressentiment* as a condition of 'repressed vengefulness' (*GM* I: 7) which grows out of three major factors:

1. The agent whom Nietzsche terms the 'man of *ressentiment*' (in this case, the priest) desires and values a particular kind of life (in this case, that of political superiority).

2. Inhibited by impotence, the priest recognises his 'complete inability' (Reginster, 287) to fulfil his aspiration to this life.

3. The priest retains his 'lust to rule' (*GM* I: 6). In other words, he retains his commitment to his original values and refuses to accept his inability to realise them.

These three factors create a 'tension between his desire to live the life he values and his belief that he is unable to do so' (Reginster, 287). Out of this tension grows the priest's preaching and enforcing of the ascetic ideal. In order to achieve a feeling of power, he must place himself at the head of the rest of humanity, 'guiding' them in accordance with the priestly ascetic ideal.

The 'majority of mortals' are drawn to the ascetic ideal for one simple reason: human existence is characterised by suffering. The causes of this suffering are many and various[45], and it takes many forms, both physiological and psychological. Nietzsche holds that 'for the vast majority, *suffering* is the basic, continuing fact about their lives' (Leiter, 257). Given the sorts of creatures that we are and the ways that we lead our lives, suffering is inescapable. In and of itself, however, this need not necessarily be a problem. In fact, as Nietzsche comments, '[m]an, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed to suffering, does *not* repudiate suffering as such; he *desires* it, he even seeks it out' (*GM*, III: 28). The problem is not that there is suffering, but that there is no answer to the more pressing 'crying question, "*why* do I suffer?"' (*GM*, III: 28). Meaningless suffering is unacceptable to humanity. Man will endure suffering of many kinds, provided that there is some meaning to be attached to it. It is because of this that the ascetic priest and his ideal can gain a grip on the 'majority of mortals'. What the ascetic ideal provides is a *meaning* for the suffering that characterises human life in general.

The form that the meaning of suffering must take in order to be effective is driven by the *ressentiment* of the majority. Experiencing suffering as a constant part of their lives, they seek someone to blame, someone against whom to take revenge for their suffering. This is because 'the *discharge* of their *ressentiment* would numb their suffering, but *ressentiment* can only be discharged when it has an object' (Leiter, 258). The priests provide the rest of humanity with a means to alleviate their suffering. There are two methods whereby they do this. The first Nietzsche terms 'innocent' (*GM*, III: 19). These include 'the general muting of the feeling of life, mechanical activity, the petty pleasure, above all "love of one's neighbour", herd organisation' (*GM*, III: 19). These methods either serve to make the individual's suffering less present through immersion in e.g. labour, or to make the individual's suffering seem less severe by comparison to his peers. The second method is what Nietzsche terms 'guilty' (*GM*, III: 19). It is this method that plays on the need for an 'imaginary revenge' (*GM*, I: 10) that is brought about by *ressentiment*. The priest provides the sufferer with someone to blame for his suffering. As Nietzsche puts it, the priest says to the sufferer "'Quite so, my sheep! Someone must be to blame for it: but you yourself are this someone, you alone are to blame for it – *you alone are to blame for yourself!*'" (*GM*, III: 15). Thus the direction of the sufferer's *ressentiment* is reversed –

[45] These include physical causes, mental anguish and societal pressures.

instead of being directed outward at a wished for culprit, it is now directed inward at the sufferer.

What is problematic here is the psychological operation of *ressentiment*. According to Bernard Reginster, *ressentiment* 'generates a particular relation between an agent and his values' (Reginster, 301). This relation is a self-deceiving one, which, according to Reginster, 'corrupts or dis-integrates the self' (Reginster, 301). The reason that *ressentiment* operates as self-deception is that it puts the agent in a position in which the values that he embraces are embraced for reasons that the agent obscures from himself. In the case of the priests, the embracing of the ascetic ideal is actually done because of a desire to regain political supremacy. In the case of the 'majority of mortals', the ascetic ideal is embraced to provide relief from suffering. However, in embracing the ideal, they become self-deceived. This is because the ideal in fact does nothing to treat the causes of the suffering, but at best appears to treat (but in actuality does not) the symptoms, thereby making the causes opaque to the sufferer. If the sufferer believes himself to be the cause of his own suffering, then there is no need to look to deal with the actual physical, psychological and social causes of his suffering (of which the ascetic ideal itself may very well be one).

We are now able to see a way of dealing with the ascetic ideal's metaphysic. The metaphysic that supposedly grounds the ideal is in fact the last link in the chain. It is the *ressentiment* of the priests that generates the ideal. Having generated the ideal, the need for some justification and basis for the ideal arises. Thus the metaphysic is developed. The ascetic ideal is based on a self-deception, a lie, which would, were it true, make the ideal universal. Thus the appearance of universality of the ascetic ideal is generated by the (actually self-deceived) belief of the priests and 'the majority of mortals' in the ideal's metaphysic.

It may be objected at this point that the ascetic ideal is in fact a necessary ideal, as it provides 'the majority of mortals' with a mechanism for coping with the world. '[H]uman kind/Cannot bear too much reality'[44], especially when that reality is as unpleasant as that suffering will be the constant factor of one's life. Bas van Fraassen argues that 'the truth, the real state of fallen humanity, is unbearable' (Van Fraassen,

[44] T. S. Eliot, 'Burnt Norton' in *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974).

141). And, if the truth is unbearable, 'it is not possible to live while facing it' (Van Fraassen, 141). Thus, self-deception about the terrible truth of the world is necessary to our survival. This way of looking at the problem would be attractive if there were no alternative. Nietzsche claims that the ascetic ideal (and concomitant self-deception) flourished only in the absence of an alternative ideal. However, Nietzsche claims to have provided such a counter-ideal in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. It is to a discussion of this ideal, the ideal of authenticity, that I now turn.

4. Zarathustra and the counter-ideal

In essence, in providing a counter-ideal, what Nietzsche offers us is an alternative method of dealing with the terrible truth of the world, that suffering will be a constant part of our reality. Instead of denying and hiding this truth from ourselves, we are urged to accept and embrace it. In this section I shall discuss the means through which Nietzsche urges us to do so (the ideal of authenticity). I shall do this by drawing mainly on the account of authenticity presented in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, as it is this work that Nietzsche explicitly identifies as providing the counter-ideal to the ascetic ideal.

It is important to note before we begin that Nietzsche does not explicitly use the word 'authenticity' in his work. According to Jacob Golomb, 'it is possible to locate its origin in his recurrent distinctions between *Wahrheit* (truth) and *Wahrhaftigkeit* (truthfulness)' (Golomb, 68). Nietzsche believes that there exists no necessary link between the truth and truthfulness. His aversion to notions of absolute or non-perspectival truth[45] does not, however, extend to notions of truthfulness. Thus, he could admire philosophers like Schopenhauer for an aspect of their characters (their truthfulness) whilst rejecting their doctrines as false. The notion of truthfulness in Nietzsche 'is virtually a synonym of the Heideggerian term *eigentlich* and of what in the later existentialist literature is called *authentic*' (Golomb, 68).

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche puts forward one of the fundamental bases for his philosophy. This is the concept of 'complete immanence' (Golomb, 68). He declares that 'God is dead' (*GS*: 108, 125) – no longer do we have recourse to the transcendental or supernatural as a justification or excuse for ourselves. Thus we must 'begin to

[45] See e.g. *GM*, III: 12, 24-27.

naturalize humanity with a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature' (*GS*: 109). In other words, '[t]ranscendental entities or supra-natural powers do not exist; there is no "pure reason", no other world, no domain different from or superior to our own' (Golomb, 68). We can refine Golomb's statement in the following way: We have *no good reason to believe* that transcendental entities, supra-natural powers, "pure reason" or the other world exist. In other words, any belief in such a metaphysic would be a motivated belief, grounded by non-epistemic reasons. In the case of the priests, the metaphysic is believed because it appears to justify their ideal as universal and thus allows them to discharge their *ressentiment*. In the case of 'the majority of mortals', it is believed because it gives some sort of meaning to their otherwise meaningless suffering. They believe the metaphysic, although they are not given any good epistemic reasons for doing so. Thus, if we are to be responsible believers, we ought not to accept such a metaphysic. Given this, we are placed in a position of responsibility for ourselves, since it is now up to us to create ourselves – 'one must adopt for oneself the God-like role of being the originator of truth and of one's own self' (Golomb, 68). If we are to do this in a spirit of truthfulness, we must 'accept life in all its harshness and its complete immanency' (Golomb, 68). It is precisely this that the ascetic ideal prevents us from doing. It provides us with a means to conceal or temper the harshness we experience in the world by refusing to accept the complete immanence of the world. It does this by providing us with recourse to a metaphysic of the otherworldly. This provides a way out of being 'the originator of truth and of one's own self'. If there is something otherworldly or transcendental to which we can appeal (e.g. God, the afterlife) then we are absolved of ultimate responsibility for ourselves and able to escape the terrible truth of this world by positing a more palatable truth about the supposed next world. This places the adherents of the ascetic ideal in a self-deceived position. Nietzsche's counter-ideal advocates an acceptance of the terrible truth of the world and provides us with a means of dealing with it in a manner that is not self-deceived[46].

Golomb suggests that one might discern two models of authenticity in Nietzsche's work. The first of these is the 'biological metaphor of a plant actualizing the potential of the seed' (Golomb, 69). This is an image that Nietzsche uses on a number of occasions, not only with reference to authenticity. For example, he describes society as a 'tree' that 'at last brings forth fruit' in the form of the '*sovereign individual*' (*GM*, II: 2). This way of

[46] It is interesting to note that Reginster suggests truthfulness, in the form of what he terms 'integrity' as an

looking at authenticity is summed up by the subtitle of *Ecce Homo*: 'How One Becomes What One Is'. According to this model, each agent has a particular potential that must be realised through his life in order for him to be authentic. The second model is that described by the 'metaphor of art and artistic creation' (Golomb, 69). On this model, the agent 'freely shapes his self as a work of art' (Golomb, 69). It is this type of active self-shaping that can act as an antidote to the passivity of the ascetic ideal. In order for such self-shaping to take place, we must have self-knowledge, so that we can 'distinguish what we can change in ourselves and in the external circumstances that have shaped us; we must realize what we have to accept as inevitable, and must do so in the heroic manner of *amor fati*[47]' (Golomb, 69). If we have sufficient self-knowledge, we will be able to accept and deal with the terrible truth of the world, without needing the ascetic ideal as a crutch to our existence.

Having sufficient self-knowledge in this case means 'knowing one's own instinctual desires, being aware of one's hidden wishes and of one's genuine ... character. At the same time it recommends coming to terms and living with them in a well-functioning and authentic manner' (Golomb, 70-71). What is recommended is an effort to gain self-knowledge of the type that will allow one to bring one's passions and one's reason into harmony. The effort towards self-knowledge that is needed here is what Volker Gerhardt terms '*self-relaxation*' (Gerhardt, 287). As I understand it, self-relaxation is a moving away from focusing solely on the intentions that lie behind actions, and allowing oneself to take other factors (such as those of the type that Sartre would term 'facticity') seriously as an agent. By doing this one does not fall into the trap of overemphasising transcendence and ignoring the absolute immanence of the world.

The model of authenticity that Nietzsche provides us with as a solution to the problem of the ascetic ideal without leaving us in the unacceptable position of our suffering being completely meaningless is that of eternal return[48]. The idea of eternal return is one that has often baffled commentators on his work. This 'mad myth'[49] is baffling to them, I contend, due to a particular interpretation of the idea to which they subscribe. Following Nehamas' interpretation up to a point, I propose an alternative interpretation, which not

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antidote to *ressentiment* (Reginster, 298-301).

[47] Love of fate.

[48] Also termed 'eternal recurrence' by some translators and commentators.

[49] Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, p 3 (London: Faber & Faber, 1999).

only gets rid of the bafflement, but also demonstrates how *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* provides the requisite counter-ideal to the ascetic ideal.

The idea of eternal return is identified by Nietzsche as '[t]he fundamental conception of [*Zarathustra*] ... [the] highest affirmation of all that is attainable' (*EH*, II, *Z*: 1). It is 'most commonly construed as a cosmological hypothesis' (Nehamas, 119). In Nehamas' terms: 'everything that has already happened in the universe, and everything that is happening right now, and everything that will happen in the future, has already happened, and will happen again, preceded and followed by exactly the same events in exactly the same order, infinitely many times' (Nehamas, 119). Or, to put it a little more succinctly, 'everything recurs as we once experienced it, and that recurrence itself recurs ad infinitum' (Kundera, 3). Those who hold this view[50] do so because of a narrow interpretation of particular mentions made by Nietzsche of the idea. For example, in 'Of the Vision and the Riddle' (Z, III: 2), Zarathustra, in an attempt to defeat the Spirit of Gravity (a lame-footed dwarf he has been carrying up the mountain on his back), says:

> Behold this gateway, dwarf! ... It has two aspects. Two paths come together here: no one has ever reached their end. This lane behind us: it goes on for eternity. And that long lane ahead of us – that is another eternity ... [I]t is here at this gateway that they come together. The name of the gateway is written above it: "Moment". ... From this gateway Moment a long, eternal lane runs *back*: an eternity lies behind us. Must not all things that *can* run have already run along this lane? Must not all things that *can* happen *have* already happened...?

In this passage it does seem that what Zarathustra is talking about is some form of cosmology. Nehamas suggests two ways in which we might view the idea of eternal return as a cosmological hypothesis. Either it is the '*unconditional assertion* of a cosmology': 'My life *will* recur in exactly identical fashion' or it is the '*conditional assertion* of a cosmology': 'My life *may* recur in exactly identical fashion'. However both of these suggestions are problematic, for three reasons. Firstly, such a cosmology, although it may have been common in a number of ancient civilisations, seems to be a highly improbable, and possibly even implausible one. Even if we were to ignore this, however, it would still be problematic. The second reason for this is that Nietzsche offers us only two options with respect to our reaction to this idea. In section 341 of *The Gay Science*,

[50] E.g. Arthur Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: Macmillan, 1965); Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (New York: Vintage, 1968); Bernd Magnus, 'Nietzsche's Eternalistic Countermyth', *Review of Metaphysics*, 26 (1973) pp 604-616.

Nietzsche asks his reader to imagine that in 'your loneliest loneliness' a demon comes to you and suggests the notion of eternal return. He then asks: 'Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a god, and never have I heard anything more divine".' (*GS*, 341). Thus we may react either with absolute anguish or absolute joy. Nietzsche does not give us the option of reacting with 'indifference' (Nehamas, 125) to the question. It would seem that, if the question were about a cosmological hypothesis, then one could be indifferent in at least two ways: either to the '*actual* fact of recurrence' or to the 'psychological consequences of the possibility of the recurrence of one's life' (Nehamas, 125-126). The fact that Nietzsche does not offer us these options creates doubt as to whether what he had in mind was a cosmological hypothesis. The third reason for not viewing eternal return as a cosmological hypothesis has to do with the nature of cosmology[51]. Cosmology, in the sense that Nehamas uses it[52] is properly construed as a branch of metaphysics. Nietzsche was notoriously sceptical about the idea of metaphysical 'truths'. As I argued above with respect to the metaphysic of the ascetic ideal, metaphysical ideas are not the sort of things for which we can have proper epistemic reasons to believe. Nehamas notes that the cosmological conception of eternal return is 'essentially a theory for which no empirical evidence can be given' (Nehamas, 120). In the absence of good reason to believe in transcendental justifications for theories, it is precisely such empirical evidence that we would require in order to epistemically justify a belief in eternal return as a cosmological hypothesis.

Zarathustra's response to his animals when they attempt to attribute the cosmological hypothesis to him provides us with further evidence that eternal return is not to be interpreted in this way. In 'The Convalescent', Zarathustra's animals declare him to be '*the teacher of eternal recurrence*' (*Z*, III: 13: 2). They state his position as being 'that all things recur eternally and we ourselves with them, and that we have already existed an infinite number of times and all things with us' (*Z*, III: 13: 2). Zarathustra's response to their interpretation is to call them 'buffoons and barrel-organs' that have made 'a hurdy-gurdy song' (*Z*, III: 13: 2) out of his teachings. The fact that Nietzsche included this passage provides us both with a possible interpretation of eternal return (the cosmological

[51] An illuminating discussion on this subject with Francis Williamson was of great assistance in my formulation of this problem.
[52] As opposed to the sense in which it might be used by a physicist, for example.

hypothesis) and with a rejection of it. This provides us with evidence that this is not the interpretation that Nietzsche had in mind for the ideal of eternal return.

If eternal return is not to be interpreted as a cosmological hypothesis, then another interpretation must be found. Nehamas suggests what he terms a psychological interpretation. This involves the '*assertion of a conditional*': 'If my life were to recur, it would recur in exactly identical fashion' (Nehamas, 127). This interpretation has 'nothing' to do with physics or the truth of the cosmological hypothesis, 'or even its coherence' (Nehamas, 127). Thus, Nehamas holds that what Nietzsche is interested in is the conditional hypothesis that, in the event of my (or any other) life recurring, it would recur in like fashion. Whilst this is far less problematic than the cosmological hypothesis, I believe that it fails to capture the true meaning of eternal return, and leaves us without a strong enough counter-ideal to the ascetic ideal.

Ivan Soll argues that Nietzsche is not interested in the question of whether or not a life will, or even can, recur infinitely in like fashion. What he is actually interested in is the *attitude* that one must have with respect to oneself in order to react joyfully to the demon's question in *GS* 341 (Soll, 323). This notion of one's attitude to oneself is key to both the ascetic ideal and eternal return. In the case of the ascetic ideal, it is demanded that one's attitude to oneself be one of self-loathing and abhorrence of one's base nature and fleshly desires. What then is the attitude that is necessary to make eternal return an ideal to which one can respond with joy rather than despair?

The answer to this question is to be found in 'Of Redemption' (*Z*, II: 20). In this section, Zarathustra discusses his conception of redemption as follows:

> To redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all "It was" into "thus I willed it" – that alone I should call redemption … willing liberates; but what is it that puts even the liberator in fetters? "It was" – that is the name of the will's gnashing of teeth and most secret melancholy. Powerless against what has been done, he is an angry spectator of all that is past. The will cannot will backwards; and that he cannot break time and time's covetousness, that is the will's loneliest melancholy (*Z*, II: 20)[51].

[51] The quotation here is from the Kaufmann translation (in *The Portable Nietzsche*, New York: Viking, 1954), as it makes clear the notion of willing throughout.

This passage reveals the key to how we are to view eternal return, and to how it forms a suitable counter-ideal to the ascetic ideal. Eternal return is to be viewed as an attitude to oneself and one's life such that one is able to *will* that any moment in that life *could* recur eternally.

Nehamas identifies two problems with this view of eternal return, which I shall discuss before explaining how, despite his objections, this provides an antidote to the ascetic ideal and how it is that we could come to have such an attitude towards ourselves. Nehamas' problems are as follows. Firstly, 'our power to control our future is not as absolute as Zarathustra sometimes suggests, since at any time our possibilities are limited by our past and our present' (Nehamas, 131). This is, however, perfectly consistent with the interpretation I outlined above. In order to live one's life in such a way that one is sufficiently at peace with it to be able to will its eternal return, one does not have to have absolute control over one's future. As I argued earlier, living an authentic life means, that we must have self-knowledge and, in Golomb's words that we must be able to 'distinguish what we can change in ourselves and in the external circumstances that have shaped us; we must realize what we have to accept as inevitable, and must do so in the heroic manner of *amor fati*' (Golomb, 69). We are never in complete control of our situation, but it is our situation that, although it constrains action, is the very condition of action. It is not our complete control over past, present or future that is important, but our attitude to them. Nehamas' second problem is that 'our past is now given to us; it consists of events which have already occurred, and over which we have no longer any control' (Nehamas, 131). Once again, this problem arises from a misreading of what is necessary to eternal return. We do not need to be able to change the past in the sense of being able to go back and undo or redo actions or events that we feel to be worthy of regret or shame. What we do need to be able to change is our attitude to and our interpretation of such actions or events, as part of the formation of a (hopefully better) self[54]. Nehamas in fact provides the answer to his own objection: '[w]hat is then changed is not the past, but its *significance*' (Nehamas, 132, my emphasis). Thus it is best that one live one's life in such a way that one is suitably at peace with it that one could will its eternal return.

[54] This is not, as I shall argue in Chapter 3, an excuse for the sort of behaviour we would view as immoral. There are limits set on our actions by considerations of others and our relations to and with them.

This notion of eternal return provides an antidote to the ascetic ideal in two ways. Firstly, it provides us with a different means of valuing and giving meaning to our suffering. Instead of taking our suffering to be our own fault for failing to live up to the ascetic ideal, we must view it instead as part of our development. Suffering is thus not something for which a culprit needs to be sought in order to discharge our *ressentiment*, but something that we must accept as part of our lives. Instead of engaging in *ressentiment*-driven self-deception, we must engage in its antithesis, self-creation. Secondly, eternal return provides a solution to the problem of the will to nothingness with which Nietzsche ends *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Nietzsche states that 'man would rather will nothingness than not will' (*GM*, III: 28). Adherence to the ascetic ideal amounts to willing nothingness, as the ideal is life-denying and grounded in the otherworldly. Eternal return provides us with something to will other than nothingness. Rather than will nothingness, we should will that any moment of our lives could recur infinitely. This willing is the reverse of a will to nothingness, as it is firmly grounded in this world and how we live our lives in it, allowing us no recourse to the otherworldly and making us completely responsible for ourselves.

This may all seem like a very onerous demand. It seems, as Nehamas says, that we are not sufficiently in control to be able to take such a grave responsibility on our shoulders. It is presumably for this reason that Nietzsche entitled the section in which the demon's question is raised 'The heaviest weight' (*GS*, 341). In order for us to be able to carry this weight, we need self-knowledge. Nietzsche was obviously aware of 'how intense, and how very painful a self-examination is necessary before the question can be answered' (Nehamas, 135), as he describes the occasion of the demons' question as one's 'loneliest loneliness' (*GS*, 341), 'when presumably one would be most likely to be honest with oneself' (Nehamas, 135).

The crucial component of this account of authenticity is that of self-knowledge. A rigorous and intense self-knowledge is necessary if we are to live authentically in accordance with the ideal of eternal return. In all the mentions made so far about self-knowledge, its acquisition has been linked with painstaking self-examination in one's 'loneliest loneliness'. This seems to suggest that authenticity is a purely solitary pursuit. However, viewing authenticity in this way fails to capture a very important aspect of our acquisition of self-knowledge, that of the role played by other agents. In the next chapter

I discuss this role, and its significance in preventing the ideal of authenticity from becoming an ideal that is premised purely on an individual's solitary self-evaluation.

Chapter 3

A model of self-knowledge

Self-knowledge, as we have seen in section 4 of Chapter 2, is the crucial component of the ideal of authenticity presented to us by Nietzsche in his theory of eternal return. Nietzsche draws his readers' attention to the importance of self-knowledge on numerous occasions. So important is the notion of self-knowledge that he begins *On the Genealogy of Morals* with the statement that '[w]e are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge' (*GM*, P: 1). He goes on to state that in fact this should not surprise us: we are unknown to ourselves because '[w]e have never sought ourselves' (*GM*, P: 1). If we have never sought ourselves, made a real attempt at self-knowledge, then 'how could it ever happen that we should find ourselves?' (*GM*, P: 1). Having said this, however, Nietzsche does not provide us with explicit guidelines as to how to go about seeking ourselves.

In this chapter I aim to supplement Nietzsche's account of authenticity by providing a model of self-knowledge that will give us a means to finding the self-knowledge that we need to live authentically according to the ideal of eternal return and that will provide a significant role to others in the acquisition of such self-knowledge. In section 1, I discus the idea that self-knowledge is in fact more than a merely individual pursuit, drawing on David Jopling's account of self-knowledge as a dialogic process. I view Jopling's account as having two components, each of which need more support than Jopling's arguments provide. In section 2, I provide a model of dialogue that is strong enough to support a dialogic view of self-knowledge, drawing on and adding my own modifications to Robert Brandom's theory of assertion. Section 3 provides an account of what sort of relationship I ought to have to the other in such a dialogue, using Levinas' critique of Merleau-Ponty's account of intersubjectivity. In section 4 I revisit the ideal of eternal return, demonstrating how the account of self-knowledge I have given both provides an adequate framework for self-knowledge acquisition of the requisite type, and how this model of self-knowledge tempers the view that authenticity is a lonely individual pursuit.

1. Self-knowledge as a dialogic encounter

As I commented at the end of the previous chapter, all the mentions that have thus far been made of self-knowledge have treated it as a solitary process, 'a struggle of the self with itself' (Jopling, 135). Self-knowledge and its acquisition have been treated (or rather, tacitly assumed to be) projects '*of* the self, *by* the self, and *for* the self' (Jopling, 135). No reference has yet been made to the fact that there is an important element of self-knowledge and the acquisition thereof that is intersubjective. In this section I provide a defence of why this is so and, drawing largely on Jopling's account, provide an account of how the intersubjective aspect of self-knowledge and self-knowledge acquisition operates.

It may at first appear perfectly obvious that when one is admonished to know oneself, the sole arbiter of this knowledge must be oneself, for after all, who could know one better than one knows oneself from the inside, as it were? This appearance is not altogether implausible, and in fact, may seem rather attractive. This view of self-knowledge and self-knowledge acquisition may be termed the individualist view. It is characterised by three main theses. Firstly, '[n]o-one has better access to the bulk of relevant information about my desires, beliefs and traits of character than I do, *even if there are some truths about me that others see more clearly than I do*[35]' (Jopling, 136, my emphasis). This is not to be construed as a statement about having privileged access to one's own mental states, but rather as an acknowledgement that, as compared to others, one 'enjoy[s] a privileged starting point' with respect to knowledge of oneself, as one is simultaneously 'the inquirer and the subject matter upon which the inquiry is directed' (Jopling, 136). In other words, my position when inquiring about myself is unique, in that both the inquiry and its subject matter are in some sense internal to me. In the case of someone else trying to gain knowledge of my self, the inquiry is internal to her, but the subject matter is not. Secondly, 'interpersonal perception is often wildly inaccurate' (Jopling, 136). It will readily be allowed by most that one's perception of others is easily clouded by biases and presuppositions arising from one's relationship with the person in question, one's latent prejudices, one's personal agenda etc. The evidence for this is easily found 'in those cases where different persons describe me in different ways' (Jopling, 136). What the fact that different people may describe me in (possibly vastly)

different ways suggests is that there may be a gap between how I am viewed and what is actually the case. It seems hard to decide whose account, if any, is the correct one. Thirdly, 'the information about me to which other persons have better access than myself is not always immediately relevant for the purposes of addressing the question "Who am I?"' (Jopling, 136). This is a subtle problem, which condenses to the fact that my inquiries aimed at gaining self-knowledge are 'pitched and scaled to my situation and needs' (Jopling, 136), whereas those of others are not. What others have to say about me, my character, my behaviour will tell me a great deal about how they view me, and may help in my inquiries, but will not subsume my self-knowledge. This is because there exists a gap between my knowledge of myself from a first-person point of view and others' knowledge of me from a third-person point of view. Such third-personal knowledge of myself, 'without further translation ... remains knowledge *about* myself' (Jopling, 137) as opposed to knowledge *of* myself.

Given these three theses, the individualist view of self-knowledge may appear both plausible and attractive. However, it is a distorted view. Whilst it may be the case (and I believe that it is) that valuable self-knowledge can be gained by individual self-examination and reflection, this does not subsume all that there is to self-knowledge acquisition. There are other important aspects to the process that must be examined if we are to arrive at an accurate picture of self-knowledge acquisition. Jopling motivates the need for examining aspects other than the purely individual by identifying five reasons why the individualist view offers us a distorted picture of self-knowledge and self-knowledge acquisition. He does not provide a great deal of argument for these reasons, but simply states them as motivating doubt about the validity of the individualist view. I shall state each of Jopling's reasons and then attempt to provide some argument for their plausibility as reasons for abandoning the individualist view of self-knowledge.

1. The self is 'too complexly configured to be accessible to a single finite mind inquiring into itself by itself' (Jopling, 137).

   This is a similar criticism to one of the criticisms of sincerity that I made in section 3 of Chapter 1. The mind is not sufficiently transparent to itself that everything about me can be clear to me. Certain of my motivations, desires, wishes, etc may be (and often are) opaque to me. The fact that I can be deceived about these aspects of

[55] The emphasised passage already begins to show the flaws of the individualist position. A discussion of

myself demonstrates that the self is not as obviously knowable to itself as we might like to believe. It is important to note here that this sort of self-deception need not be pathological. I may, despite trying my best to come to an honest appraisal of myself, still be self-deceived about those aspects of myself that are opaque to me, or to which I do not have access. This, coupled with the fact that, due to the nature of self-deception, I cannot both be self-deceived and attribute self-deception to myself, although others can attribute it to me, should lead us to believe that there is an important role to be played by others in gaining self-knowledge. Further evidence for this position comes from research concerning motivated believing[56]. Such research reveals that subjects in fact often make mistakes in their self-ascriptions and that failures of self-knowledge are more prevalent than we at first believe. As I discussed in section 3 of Chapter 2, self-deception is an important concept in Nietzsche's critique both of *ressentiment* and of the ascetic ideal. Precisely what is wrong with *ressentiment* and with the ascetic ideal is that they induce in the agent a self-deceived state. Thus, if we are to give an account of self-knowledge and its acquisition that is to be of use with respect to Nietzsche's ideal of eternal return, we need to make sure that it provides a mechanism for avoiding self-deception (as far as is possible).

2. Self-understanding is 'incomplete without an understanding of the social and interpersonal conditions influencing the self's moral and psychological development' (Jopling, 137).

   This is a fairly uncontroversial claim. There are aspects of the self that are formed and reinforced through our interactions with others. Such aspects include our moral development and our abilities to relate to persons other than ourselves. Nietzsche emphasises the large role that our sociality plays in our development, especially in our adoption of moral norms and customs. He devotes a very significant portion of the second essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* to this very subject. Here he states that 'where society and the morality of custom at last reveal what they have simply been the means to: we discover that the ripest fruit is the *sovereign individual*' (*GM*, II: 2). Nietzsche would thus be apt to agree that without a proper understanding of the processes involved in these interpersonal aspects of self, a full self-understanding is not possible.

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these flaws follows the exposition of the individualist line.

3. The 'accuracy or inaccuracy of self-understandings has direct effects on the well-being of others' (Jopling, 137).

   This criticism of the individualist view of self-knowledge is a rather indirect one. In the interests of having well functioning societies, we need to have accurate self-understandings, which, according, to Jopling, require a thicker conception of self-knowledge than the purely individualist view outlined above. We need to attempt to make our self-understandings more accurate through the elimination of problems like self-deception. Jopling believes that this is only possible within a framework involving appropriate interactions with other people.

   Of Jopling's reasons for abandoning the individualist view of self-knowledge, this strikes me as being the one that is least strongly tied to the acquisition of self-knowledge. What he claims is that having accurate self-understandings has pragmatic value for the maintenance of successfully functioning communities and societies, because the accuracy or inaccuracy of such understanding directly effects the well-being of other members thereof. Whilst this may be (and almost certainly is) the case, this is not really a strong criticism of the individualist view of self-knowledge acquisition, as it makes no claims about the necessity of others in *gaining* the self-knowledge that will support healthy societies.

4. Knowing about the intersubjective aspects of the self 'is not possible without actually having participated in the appropriate kinds of social relations' (Jopling, 138).

   This point brings to our attention the fact that, in interacting with others in ways in which 'the effects of others' actions and traits of character upon oneself are clearly perceivable' (Jopling, 138), we learn about our own behaviour and character traits. We can then attempt to adapt our behaviour and character traits in ways that either bring us in line with those of others or distance us from them, depending on appropriateness. Once again, this is a slightly indirect criticism of the individualist view. What Jopling seems to be suggesting here is that, in experiencing the effects that flow from other people's character traits, I am able to learn about what sorts of character traits I ought to (or might want to) cultivate.

5. Certain truths about the self 'can only be gained through certain kinds of dialogue with others' (Jopling, 138).

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[56] See, for example, Ziva Kunda 'The Case for Motivated Reasoning' (*Psychological Bulletin*, 108: 3, 1990) and Shelly Taylor and Jonathan Brown 'Illusion and Well-Being: A Social Psychological Perspective on Mental Health (*Psychological Bulletin*, 103: 2, 1988).

> The sort of dialogue that Jopling has in mind here is that which he describes as involving 'feelings of participation, morally reactive attitudes, and mutually responsive emotions' (Jopling, 138). It is this sort of dialogue that is central to his account of self-knowledge as dialogic that I discuss below.

Jopling believes that these five reasons are sufficient to establish the need to look beyond the individualist view of self-knowledge – '[T]hese five considerations suggest that the means to self-knowledge, and the content of self-knowledge, have a clear social dimension; more specifically, that they presuppose standing in appropriate kinds of social relationships' (Jopling, 138). Jopling believes that the individualist picture is 'captivating ... but ... false' (Jopling, 137). He believes that all self-knowledge is 'indissolubly tied' (Jopling, 157) to dialogue. Thus he believes that we must abandon the individualist view entirely. As I have already commented, I believe that there are important individual aspects to self-knowledge. However, I am in agreement with Jopling that there are important parts of the process of gaining self-knowledge that involve other agents. Thus I believe that the individualist account should be supplemented with an account that takes cognisance of the intersubjective aspects of self-knowledge acquisition. To begin this supplementation I outline Jopling's account of self-knowledge as dialogic.

The kinds of social relations that Jopling takes to be 'appropriate' for the acquisition of self-knowledge are a particular type of dialogic relation to the other. Thus Jopling's alternative account to the individualist view of self-knowledge is one that regards self-knowledge and its acquisition as a dialogic process. Jopling begins his account with a discussion of the notion of dialogue. There are many forms of dialogue, 'some superficial or motivated by extrinsic considerations (e.g. controlling the other's opinions, or prolonging the conversation for its own sake), and some leading to misunderstanding or alienation' (Jopling, 152). The type of dialogue that Jopling has in mind as being suited to self-knowledge acquisition is what he terms 'reflective' dialogue (Jopling, 152). He describes reflective dialogue as being characterised by 'an open-textured process based on the response and address of self and other, through which both interlocutors are united by the desire to achieve *mutual and truth-tracking* understanding while *respecting* the moral differences separating them' (Jopling, 152, my emphases). The emphasised phrases in the above quotation highlight the two issues that need to be addressed in an account of self-knowledge as a dialogic encounter. I view these as the two components

of Jopling's account – dialogue must (1) lead to 'mutual and truth-tracking' understanding and (2) be undertaken whilst respecting the difference between interlocutors. However, Jopling does very little to provide us with adequate mechanisms whereby we can successfully achieve these two things. In order to remedy this, in the next two sections I provide the requisite mechanisms that will render the account strong enough to support the need for self-knowledge brought about by the ideal of authenticity presented in section 4 of Chapter 2. Thus, in section 2, I provide an account of how it is that interlocutors can reach an understanding that is both mutual and truth-tracking. In order to do this, I draw on theory from the philosophy of language. In section 3, I provide an account of how it is that agents are to relate to each other so as to preserve respect in the dialogic process, by using Levinas' critique of Merleau-Ponty's account of intersubjectivity.

2. Rules of engagement

Jopling's account of self-knowledge holds that we gain self-knowledge through dialogic encounters with others. The first criterion for an appropriate (i.e. self-knowledge generating) dialogue that he sets out is that it must generate 'mutual and truth-tracking' understanding. By 'mutual', Jopling means that the understanding generated by the dialogue must be one that both participants have access to and share. By 'truth-tracking' I take him to mean that such understanding must present the participants in the dialogue with an accurate picture of their worlds, including themselves. If a proposition tracks the truth, it corresponds to something about the world. If my statement that there is a cricket match being played tomorrow or that you have a generous character is to be truth-tracking, it must in fact be the case that there is a cricket match being played tomorrow or that you are, in fact, a generous person.

If a dialogue of any type, whether conducive to self-knowledge acquisition or not, is to take place, there must of necessity be at least two agents involved. These we may designate as the speaker and the hearer. The speaker and the hearer must have sufficient commonality in reference points and language[57] that it enables them to potentially reach

[57] What Wittgenstein would term 'form of life' (*Lebensform*). See *Philosophical Investigations* (3rd Edition. Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), §§ 241, 242.

an understanding. In order for 'mutual and truth-tracking' understanding to be reached between interlocutors, meaning must be generated by their encounter. Without the generation of meaning, there is no possibility of mutual or truth-tracking understanding occurring. In the event of a meaningless exchange[58], no understanding can be reached by the parties, as there is nothing to be understood. In the section I provide an account of how meaning-generation may take place. I first elucidate Robert Brandom's account of assertion in *Making It Explicit*. I then provide my account of how, from this account of assertion, we may generate and account of meaning[59].

Brandom terms this account the 'deontic[60] scorekeeping model of discursive practice' (Brandom, 141). For Brandom, it is 'only because some performances function as assertions that others deserve to be distinguished as *speech* acts' (Brandom, 172). Without assertions, other forms of speech acts fail to get off the ground. This is because it is from assertions that we generate other speech acts, such as questions. Without assertions, we are unable to make inferences to further assertions. Assertion is thus a necessary condition for the designation of any practice as a speech act.

The 'social practices' which are responsible for the creation of our '*propositional* contents' can be understood 'in terms of practices of giving and asking for *reasons*' (Brandom, 141). These practices together constitute a language game in which the 'fundamental' move is 'making a *claim*' (Brandom, 141) or asserting something. When a performance is treated as an assertion, it is treated as 'the undertaking or acknowledging of a certain kind of *commitment*' (Brandom, 142), which in turn entails the idea of *entitlement*. Commitments and entitlements are types of social statuses, which are attributed 'according to the practical attitudes of society' (Brandom, 142). The types of attitudes that Brandom has in mind are those of 'taking or treating as correct' (Brandom, 137). The notion of reason-giving, together with the attitude of treating propositions as correct, is fundamental to the truth-tracking nature of a dialogue, as we shall see later in this section. These attitudes may be described as 'practical' in the sense that they are the actual attitudes which prevail in a community and which are implemented in its day-to-day dealings.

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[58] Absolutely meaningless exchanges are hard to imagine, but we might plausibly think of an interaction in which the parties are so far removed from each other in language and reference points that neither gains any meaning from the exchange as an example.

[59] My thanks to Dr David Ryan for his insightful comments on an earlier version of this section.

[60] By this, Brandom means having to do with duties. As we shall see in the following subsection, he terms these 'commitments' and 'entitlements'. For further comment, see note 61 on the following page.

Within this language game, we keep track of our own and of others' commitments and entitlements. This makes us what Brandom terms '*deontic scorekeepers*' (Brandom, 142). By this Brandom means that, when we engage each other in dialogue, we keep track of the assertions we make, so as to be able to point out to each other contradictions, lack of evidence, and so forth, within our assertions.

The language game

Our social practices are games in which 'each participant exhibits various deontic statuses' which are altered in some way by every 'practically significant performance' (Brandom, 166). The practical significance of such performances derives from the ways in which they actually change the deontic statuses of the players of the game, who keep score by attributing and undertaking such deontic statuses.

Brandom holds with Wilfrid Sellars' notion a ' "game of giving and asking for reasons" ' (Brandom, 167). Assertions are 'in the fundamental case what reasons are asked for, and what giving a reason always consists in' (Brandom, 167). The commitment that we undertake or attribute by making an assertion can be both something in need of a reason and something that can be given as a reason. Only assertional commitments can be both these things. This is why Brandom views assertions as fundamental to the performance of speech acts.

Commitments and Entitlements

Because discursive practice is normative, it must involve the assessment of moves in the language game as correct or incorrect, or as appropriate or inappropriate. In order to do so, we require certain '*proprieties* of performance' (Brandom, 159). It is the institution by the players of the language game of these proprieties that is 'the ultimate source of meanings' (Brandom, 159). In order to 'pick out what is distinctive of discursive norms' (Brandom, 159), we must refine the general notion of proprieties by acknowledging different types of propriety.

The most fundamental of these types of propriety is the notion of *commitment*. Being committed to something is a deontic status. 'Coordinate' (Brandom, 159) with the notion of commitment is that of *entitlement*. According to Brandom, commitment and entitlement correspond to the more standardly used notions of obligation and

permission[61]. Commitment and entitlement are not simply defined in terms of one another. Commitment is not simply the negation of entitlement or vice versa. The relation between commitment and entitlement makes clear the idea of *incompatibility*. Two claims are incompatible with each other 'if commitment to one precludes entitlement to the other' (Brandom, 160). Thus, if one is committed to a proposition, p, and p and q are incompatible, one is then not entitled to claim that q.

Attribution and Acknowledgement

Our deontic statuses (commitments and entitlements) arise from 'practical attitudes' (Brandom, 161). They do not exist 'out there' as part of the external world, but require people to attribute them. Deontic statuses are therefore social statuses. There are two types of deontic attitudes that can be adopted with respect to our deontic statuses, namely attribution and acknowledgement. We attribute commitments to others and acknowledge the commitments we ourselves have.

If one is licensed to do or to assert something, one is licensed to do so *by* someone or something. This license is constituted 'by attributing ... authority' and 'treating the authorised one as *entitled* to a performance' (Brandom, 161, my emphasis). Someone who undertakes a commitment *does* something that 'makes it appropriate to *attribute* the commitment' to her (Brandom, 162), thereby 'entitling those who attribute that commitment to sanction nonperformance' (Brandom, 163). For Brandom, it is thus the *hearer* who makes it the case that someone has authority. The speaker is authorised by the hearer and her continued participation in the language game depends on the hearer (or the community of hearers).

Through reference to the attitudes of others (i.e. in the community of hearers), we can understand the attitude of the speaker whose deontic status is in question (Brandom, 162). If a hearer attributes a commitment to a speaker, the speaker herself must acknowledge or undertake that commitment. This can, however, only be done if a hearer has already attributed the commitment to the speaker. Thus attributing is the more fundamental of the two types of deontic attitude. In acknowledging her commitment, the speaker entitles the hearer to a particular performance and licenses her to sanction non-

[61] Brandom chooses not to use these terms because they can be read to imply a 'hierarchy of authority' (Brandom, 160), in the sense of who has a right judge someone as obliged or permitted to do something, upon which he feels his account does not depend.

performance. Such sanctioning would be inappropriate unless it had been licensed through the acknowledgement of a commitment (Brandom, 163).

To clarify: if I make the assertion 'It is raining', I thereby commit myself to the proposition that it is raining. In making this commitment, I entitle the hearer to ask me for my reasons for holding the proposition. This is because the hearer attributes the commitment to the proposition to me and I acknowledge my commitment to it. In cases where the speaker fails to acknowledge her commitment, there are two possible scenarios. Either the speaker does not in fact hold a commitment to the proposition and the hearer is mistaken, or the speaker is deceiving herself about her non-commitment to the proposition. So, for example, you may misunderstand my assertion about cricket being played in my garden and mistakenly attribute to me a commitment to there being a cricket (as in the insect) in my garden. In a case such as this, I can provide you with evidence to show that your attribution was mistaken, and refuse to acknowledge such a commitment. In the other scenario, my interlocutor may make an assertion that 'Homosexuality is immoral'. From this I attribute to her a commitment to homophobia. She may, mistakenly, refuse to acknowledge this commitment. However, in this case, the evidence weighs against her and her refusal to acknowledge your commitment is due to self-deception. It is in cases such as these that the practice of imposing sanctions gets a foothold.

Sanctions

The attribution of a commitment or an entitlement to someone can be understood in terms of the 'practical deontic *attitude* of taking or treating someone as committed or entitled' (Brandom, 166), which in turn involves a 'disposition ... to impose *sanctions*' (Brandom, 166). Those who attribute deontic statuses may punish 'those who act in ways they are not (taken to be) entitled to act, and those who do not act in ways they are (taken to be) committed to act' (Brandom, 166). There are two types of sanctions that can be imposed by those with authority. Brandom terms these 'nonnormative' and 'normative' sanctions (Brandom, 166). Nonnormative sanctions involve the negative reinforcement of the punished behaviour, by such means as the infliction of physical pain or by threats of violence. Normative sanctions involve the alteration of the deontic statuses and attitudes of the players in the language game. Of the two types of sanctions, normative sanctions are the more serious, since these can involve the exclusion of a

player from the language game by the withdrawal by the hearer of her authority to have commitments or entitlements. If the speaker is a consistent non-performer, the withdrawal of her authority to have commitments and entitlements may be more far-reaching, possibly coming to encompass her interactions with her community at large.

The example of 'crying wolf' can be used to illustrate the operation of these mechanisms (Brandom, 180). When the boy cries wolf, he is committed to the claim that there is a wolf in the vicinity. His community is entitled to ask him to demonstrate that he is entitled to a commitment to this claim. When he fails to demonstrate his entitlement (as he must do, since he is not entitled to the claim that there is a wolf in the vicinity, as there is no wolf) his community may punish him by making sure that his father gives him a hiding and telling him not to lie about the presence of non-existent wolves. These are nonnormative sanctions. If the boy cries wolf on a number of occasions without there being a wolf, his community may institute normative sanctions. In this instance, they will withdraw his authority to make claims about wolves – he will no longer be entitled to have a commitment to the claim that there is a wolf. His community will no longer believe claims he makes about the presence of wolves. He is thus effectively excluded from their linguistic community.

In my earlier illustration of the self-deceived homophobe above, it is normative sanctions that ought to help her to move beyond her self-deception. Normative sanctions operate by questioning (and in extreme cases, such as the crying wolf example above, by withdrawing) the speaker's authority to make an assertion about a particular subject. By making it clear to her that she is in fact committed to homophobia, through an analysis of her use of words in her assertion and the implications that they have, i.e. what further assertions we may justly infer from them, we aim to make it clear to her that she is self-deceived about her commitments. If she comes to appreciate our reasoning, then she has gained a justified truth-tracking understanding that amounts to self-knowledge.

Analysis of Brandom's account of assertion

Brandom's account of assertion has been analysed as follows:

> By making a claim, a speaker asserts that *p* if and only if (1) she makes a commitment to demonstrate that she has an entitlement to the commitment that *p* if the hearer asks her to do so, and to do so by giving reasons for her belief that

p, and (2) she entitles the hearer to (2.1) ask the speaker to demonstrate that she is entitled to the commitment that *p* and (2.2) penalise the speaker for any failure to do so by (2.2.1) nonnormative sanctions or (2.2.2) normative sanctions.[62]

This analysis provides us with the basic form of Brandom's account of assertion.

What we have thus far is an account of assertion. As I claimed at the beginning of this section, what is needed for the generation of mutual and truth-tracking understanding is the generation of meaning. In the sense in which 'meaning' is meant here, it means the understanding that is generated by our mutual use of words as a linguistic community. I will now modify Brandom's account of assertion to provide my version of an account of meaning that retains the inferential proprieties that are central to Brandom's account of assertion.

Of the ways in which this can be done, it seems that there are two broad approaches. One can either focus on the force of the utterance or on its content. In Brandom's account of the language game, content plays a prominent role in the definition of deontic score. In order to convert Brandom's account of assertion into an account of meaning, I will thus focus on the content aspect or semantics.

Content

According to Brandom, the ways in which the conversational score changes during the various stages of an interchange 'systematically depends on the semantic content' (Brandom, 186) of the assertions involved. This content allows the specification of the 'pragmatic significance' (Brandom, 186) of the speech act.[63] The designation of 'what one associates with expressions' (Brandom, 188) as "contents" is 'at best issuing a promissory note that hints at how what are put forward as her semantic correlates ought to be taken to be relevant to determining how those expressions are correctly used' (Brandom, 188). The specification of the content of an utterance is, within Brandom's

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[62] I owe this analysis of Brandom's account of assertion to David Ryan. The analysis appears in his papers, 'Grice's account of meaning – Brandom's account of assertion: To what extent can the accounts be integrated' (presented at Rhodes University on 8 September 2000) and in 'Theories of Meaning – an Account of their Development' (presented at Rhodes University on 31 May 2001).

[63] Brandom draws on Dummett's notion that there may be a 'uniform pattern of derivation of the use [of a speech act] from the content [thereof]' (Brandom, 187). Whilst he acknowledges that there may in fact not be any such uniform pattern to be found, Brandom's later remarks seem to imply that he is appealing to just such a notion.

theory, inextricably bound up with the *role* played by the content of that utterance, in relation to the content of other utterances, within the language game.

Consider a situation in which two people (*A* and *B*) are participating in a linguistic interchange. *A* is the hearer (whom Brandom designates the scorekeeper) and *B* is the speaker or asserter. The way in which *A*'s score 'ought to be transformed' during the course of the interchange is 'settled by the *content* of *B*'s claim' (Brandom, 190, emphasis mine). Thus when *B* asserts a proposition, *p*, *A* must evaluate *B*'s entitlement to a commitment that *p*, as well as any propositions that are entailed by or incompatible with *p*. If *A* has previously attributed to *B* a commitment to proposition *g*, and *p* and *g* are incompatible, then *A* has to make an adjustment to the commitments and entitlements which she has attributed to *B*. Thus the deontic score undergoes a transformation.

Meaning

Brandom makes a number of references to meaning and what it is that determines the meaning of a proposition in the course of his account of assertion. These comments are useful in the conversion of this account to an account of meaning.

Brandom states that it is the institution of social proprieties by the players of the language game that is 'the ultimate source of meanings' (Brandom, 159). Meaning is thus created in the process of playing the game. He further elaborates this point by appealing more specifically to what he terms 'practical inferential proprieties' (Brandom, 174).

When a speaker makes an assertion that *p*, she is doing two things. Firstly, she is authorising future assertions and the commitments that these entail (both for the speaker and for the audience). Secondly she is '*undertaking* a specific task *responsibility*' (Brandom, 173) to show that she is entitled to her claim and to do so by, for example, 'issuing other assertions to *justify* the original claim' (Brandom, 173). The content of the commitment expressed by the claim that *p* – 'that the authority it claims and the justificatory responsibility it undertakes are specifically "to the effect that *p*" ... - consists in its specific inferential articulation' (Brandom, 173). This 'specific inferential articulation' involves the two things that a speaker does that are mentioned above.

In order to fulfil her justificatory responsibility, a speaker has to give reasons for her entitlement to the commitment to the claim that *p*. In order to do this, she must assert premises from which the claim that *p* follows as a conclusion. If the hearer takes these premises to be correct then she 'implicitly endorse[s] a certain inference' (Brandom, 174). In doing so the 'practical attitude' of the hearer to take the inference as correct 'institute[s] inferential proprieties' (Brandom, 174). It is the institution of these inferential proprieties that 'make noises and marks mean what they mean' (Brandom, 174).

A brief illustrative example should suffice to clarify this. You and I are having a conversation. I make the assertion 'I am a generous person'. You ask me to justify this statement. I am unable to do so. There is no evidence that I can produce from which the conclusion that I am a generous person would follow. On the other hand, you can produce evidence to the contrary – I tend not to help others in need, refuse to tip waiters, will not go out of my way to assist people, even if it does not require much effort on my part. It thus becomes clear that I cannot fulfil my justificatory responsibility and that my assertion is based on a self-deceived (or, at least, incorrect) belief that I hold about myself. We are thus able to see that there is a problem. Through this dialogic exchange, I should, unless I experience a failure of rationality, come to a new piece of truth-tracking self-knowledge: I am not a generous person; in fact, I am rather selfish.

Viewing the process of meaning-generation in this way provides us with a way in which the participants in a dialogue can come to an understanding that is both mutual and truth-tracking. Given that both participants operate according to the same rules of dialogic engagement, their understanding will be mutual. The understanding becomes truth-tracking due to the fact that making assertions and thus generating meaning requires that the speaker be able to offer sufficient proof in favour of those assertions. If an assertion is made for which there is no warrant, the hearer will disbelieve it, and is entitled to institute sanctions to discourage the speaker from making unwarranted assertions in the future. As I have illustrated above, this also puts us in a position to generate new and accurate self-knowledge, through the process of being called to account for assertions that we make about ourselves.

This account provides us with a theoretical basis from which we can now examine the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, so as to determine how they may interact in such a way that they respect each other in the dialogic encounter.

3. Ineradicable difference

Jopling states that the type of dialogue that will lead to self-knowledge must involve respect for the difference between self and other. However, apart from a brief reference to Levinas, he does not explain this requirement very much. In fact, such respect *is* essential to the acquisition of self-knowledge through dialogue, as I will demonstrate in this section.

In this section I examine what Jopling has to say about respect in the context of dialogue. I use his brief reference to Levinas' *Totality and Infinity* as a departure point, since Levinas' work is undoubtedly useful with reference to respecting the otherness of the other. I expand upon this by drawing on Levinas' critique of Merleau-Ponty's account of intersubjectivity in 'On Intersubjectivity: Notes on Merleau-Ponty', as it is in this paper that the necessity of respecting difference in order to gain new self-knowledge is made clear.

In the account of meaning-generation above, I discussed the process of dialogue in terms of the making of assertions and the providing of warrant for these assertions. Another way of viewing this process is to look at it as a process of 'addressing and responding' (Jopling, 152) occurring between interlocutors. In this view, we may term the interlocutors self and other. Here dialogue is an interaction between self and other that takes place through mutual address and response.

This view of dialogue is grounded in the insight that 'to be a person is to stand in a unique set of relations to other persons' (Jopling, 152). What constitutes the uniqueness of these relations is the 'asymmetry' that they have 'with respect to all other forms of relations, particularly relations to things and events' (Jopling, 152-153). According to Jopling, when we interact with things or events, we take certain objective properties to be true of them and subsequently respond in ways that are appropriate, given these objective qualities. When we interact with persons, on the other hand, it is not because

we discern in them objective features like rationality that we treat them appropriately. Rather, 'our treating a creature and responding to it in certain ways is somehow *constitutive* of its being a person' (Jopling, 153). Part of this special way of interacting is 'mastery of the unique form of language of personal reference associated with the first-person and second-person pronouns' (Jopling, 153).

The importance of the mastery of this aspect of language is as follows. When I am involved in a dialogue with another person, I refer to myself as 'I' (the first-person nominative pronoun) and to the other person as 'you' (the second-person nominative pronoun). It is never possible for me to make the other 'I', she always remains 'you'. This immediately draws our attention to the fact that it is the other's difference from me that makes my interaction with her significant. Dialogue taking place between self and other is not 'a union, an empathetic identification, or a blending of the self with the other in some harmonious synthetic whole: it is a relation between two separated terms, the self [I] and the other [you]' (Jopling, 153).

Since Jopling's basis for his respect claim is rather thin, I shall provide a detailed account of how and why respect is important in dialogue. Jopling appeals briefly to Levinas' statement in *Totality and Infinity* that '[d]iscourse is the experience of something absolutely foreign, a pure experience, a traumatism of astonishment' (quoted in Jopling, 153). I shall now demonstrate Levinas' reasons for believing this to be so, via a discussion of what he takes to be the flaws in Merleau-Ponty's theory of intersubjectivity. This version of Levinas' account is important, as it brings to the fore why it is that respect *for difference* is important in the gaining of self-knowledge.

In 'On Intersubjectivity: Notes on Merleau-Ponty', Levinas provides an account in which intersubjectivity or sociality 'does not absorb the difference of strangeness' (Levinas, 103). In order to give this account, Levinas discusses and criticises Merleau-Ponty's account of intersubjectivity, which he believes relies too heavily on the notion of sameness, whilst underemphasising that of difference[64].

Merleau-Ponty's account of intersubjectivity begins by focusing on the body. Our perception of the objective nature of things necessarily involves 'a movement of the

[64] My thanks to Dr Rosalyn Diprose for her comments on an earlier version of this section.

entire body: ... as flesh incarnating thought' (Levinas, 96-97). By this Merleau-Ponty is referring to what he elsewhere[65] termed the 'body-subject' – subjectivity incarnate. Thus, even our perceptions of our own bodies as objective entities (as they are given to medical or biological examination) must be constituted from the powers of the body-subject (Levinas, 97). Hence, in order to constitute the objective body, consciousness has to call on the body (as body-subject) which it is supposed to be constituting as body-object. This appears to be problematic. However, for Merleau-Ponty, the incarnation of thought (as, in Husserlian terms 'apperception' (Levinas, 97), or in Merleau-Ponty's terms, body-subject) is prior to any theoretical or practical position that the subject may assume – it is the primary synthesis (as opposed to beginning with thought and from there attempting to synthesise the body and subjectivity) (Levinas, 97). This original incarnation of thought is meaningfully revealed by the movements of the body, which are essentially signifying, by virtue of being expressive and gestural, and embedded within a specific cultural context.

As yet, it may be unclear what this process has to do with intersubjectivity. However, Merleau-Ponty holds that in order to move from our subjective perception of the sensible qualities of the world (the world as we experience it) to the objective[66] qualities of the world (the world as it is in reality, including certain aspects of ourselves) we need intersubjective agreement about that sensible content (Levinas, 99). The incarnation of thought about objects described above presupposes intersubjectivity. Thus, according to Levinas, the problem with Merleau-Ponty's account is that the incarnation of thought presupposes intersubjectivity and the account of intersubjectivity presupposes intersubjective *agreement*. As we will see below, it is precisely this requirement for agreement that mitigates against respect for difference and thus against the acquisition of new knowledge.

Levinas claims that, for Merleau-Ponty, our relations with others are dependent on the 'carnal structure of sensibility' (Levinas, 100). Thus, intersubjectivity is dependent on embodiment. The prototypical case of this is Merleau-Ponty's example of the 'double touching of one hand touching the other and that, during this touching is touched by the other hand' (Levinas, 99). Merleau-Ponty begins with two hands belonging to the same

[65] For example, in *Phenomenology of Perception*.

person and then extrapolates from these to two hands belonging to different people. According to Levinas, this is not an argument from analogy, as self and other are here both elements of the same 'intercorporeity' (Levinas, 100) – the co-presence of one person's hands (because they belong to the same body) is extended to the situation involving the other (although she has a different body).

Thus, intersubjectivity is not something that I perceive through my interactions with others, but is reconstructed by analogy from the personal case. As Merleau-Ponty puts it: 'I borrow myself from the other; I make him out of my own thoughts: that is not a failure in the perception of others, it *is* the perception of others' (quoted in Levinas, 100, my emphasis). Levinas questions whether this construal of intersubjectivity ever moves beyond "knowledge". By this he means what you *already* know (or think you know). This sort of "knowledge" may be problematic. As we have already seen, we may, despite our best intentions, experience failures of self-knowledge, such as self-deception. Thus, by failing to move beyond "knowledge" in this sense, we do not arrive at new self-knowledge. Whilst Merleau-Ponty's focus is on the pretheoretical, this very fact already ties his account to the theoretical[67], and, according to Levinas, renders it subordinate to it, as a 'shadow of that to which it is related' (Levinas, 100). Thus our encountering of the other in intersubjectivity is, for Merleau-Ponty, 'already or still – knowledge' (Levinas, 101). An account of intersubjectivity that relies on the self's knowledge of the other 'does not break the order of consciousness' (Levinas, 101). In other words, it does not in fact allow the self to relate to the other in ways that acknowledge the difference between them. This is because knowledge, 'cleaving to the *known* ... immediately coincides with what might have been foreign to it' (Levinas, 101). Because knowledge is premised on the known, the familiar, the self coincides with the other - all values given to the other are based on the self's prior knowledge (of itself). Thus what we have is a situation that is the reverse of what Jopling argues for. Instead of dialogue with the other acting as a source of self-knowledge, dialogue with the other serves merely to reinforce the self's prior conception of itself, through a projection thereof onto the other.

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[66] The use of the word 'objective' here is not a metaphysical one. By the objective qualities of the world, Merleau-Ponty means those aspects to which we all (at least potentially) have access, not those qualities that are exist beyond and without any subjectivity.

[67] What Levinas means here is that the pretheoretical already has the theoretical as its reference point. By drawing the contrast between 'theoretical' and 'pretheoretical' one is already tying oneself to the theoretical, since it remains the primary reference point.

Thus, for Levinas (as it would be for Jopling if he were to use this paper of Levinas'), the problem with Merleau-Ponty's account of intersubjectivity is that it assumes intersubjectivity as springing from the self's knowledge of the other (which is in fact subsumed by the self's knowledge of itself), which subsumes the other's difference and renders them into sameness. In opposition to this, Levinas claims that what is essential to intersubjectivity is that which is 'beyond knowledge' (Levinas, 101).

The two hands involved in Merleau-Ponty's prototypical case 'in point of fact do not belong to the same body, nor to a hypothetical or metaphorical intercorporeity' (Levinas, 102). According to Levinas, this is signified in 'the nakedness of the face' (Levinas, 102) of the other and in the expressivity of her body, as embodied in her gestures. 'Beginning with the face – in which the other is approached according to his or her *ineradicable difference* in ethical responsibility – sociality, as the human possibility of approaching the other, the absolutely other, is signified, that is, commanded' (Levinas, 102, my emphasis).

Levinas goes on to state that '[p]erhaps the spiritual only shows ... when being's routine is interrupted: in the strangeness of humans vis-à-vis one another, but [is the strangeness] of humans capable of a sociality in which the bond is *no longer the integration of parts in a whole* (Levinas, 102-103, my emphasis). The notion of sociality as the integration of parts in a whole would clearly be effected by the sort of *metaphorical* intercorporeity to which Levinas believes Merleau-Ponty appeals. According to Levinas, intersubjectivity is effected, not through appeals to sameness or commonality between the self and the other, but through their 'ineradicable difference' (Levinas, 102).

It is this notion of the ineradicable difference between self and other that allows addressive exchanges between self and other to lead to the acquisition of self-knowledge. It is only now, having examined Levinas' account of intersubjectivity contra Merleau-Ponty that the reasons for this are clear. The other's alterity calls into question my self, and my conventional or comfortable self-understandings (Jopling, 162). In the face of such difference, I am called to account for myself to the other. This parallels the notion of justificatory responsibility that grounded my account of meaning as a modification of Brandom's account of assertion. However, not only am I called to justify myself, my beliefs and assertions to the other, I must also respect her. It is true that both mutual and truth-tracking understanding can occur without respect for difference. However,

without respect, such understanding is not sufficient for the gaining of self-knowledge. It is my responsiveness to the other's difference that renders my interaction with her one in which she and I respect each other. If I am responsive to the other's difference, and to her addressing me, then I do not try to subsume her and render her the same as me. Thus I treat her with respect. Without respect for the other's difference, we will not arrive at the type of self-knowledge that can only be gained through dialogic relations with others. It is for this reason that respect for difference plays such an important role in self-knowledge as a dialogic process.

4. Eternal return revisited

We are now able to return to our examination of eternal return. As I argued in section 4 of Chapter 2, what is required when living authentically in accordance with the ideal of eternal return is a rigorous attempt at self-knowledge. We now have an account of self-knowledge that directs us out of our 'loneliest loneliness' and into dialogue with others. As I have argued above, without dialogue, we cannot arrive at a complete[68] self-understanding. Thus, if self-knowledge is an essential component of authenticity, then dialogue itself is necessary for the successful pursuit of the ideal of eternal return. In turn, respect for difference is an essential part of the requisite type of dialogue. Thus, to be a successfully authentic agent, I must engage in dialogue with others that preserves respect for their difference. This renders the 'heaviest weight' one that we do not, in fact, have to bear alone, nor can we in fact bear alone, if we are to be successful in our endeavours to be authentic. Whilst each of us is responsible for ourselves, through our responsiveness to others, we are placed in a position where our resources for dealing with that responsibility in a manner that is not self-deceived are greatly increased.

[68] It is doubtful that such a thing as 'complete' self-knowledge is ever achievable. However, we may view the notion of complete self-knowledge as a regulative ideal – something for which we ought to aim, even if it can never be fully realised.

Postscript

In the first chapter of this thesis, I began by drawing a distinction between ethics and morality. I argued that too narrow a focus on only the moral leads to gaps in our normative theories and thence proposed that we ought to look to an ethical ideal, that of authenticity, to fill these gaps. In the second chapter I laid out Nietzsche's account of authenticity as eternal return. I argued that a fundamental feature of eternal return (and of authenticity in general) is a rigorous search for self-knowledge. In the third chapter I augmented Nietzsche's theory of authenticity with an account of self-knowledge that would be strong enough to support the rigorous self-knowledge acquisition required by Nietzsche's ideal. This account figured the project of acquiring self-knowledge as, at times, requiring a dialogic process that respected the difference between self and other.

There are, however, two questions that arise from the argument in this thesis that I have not answered in it.

The first of these is the question of the relation between ethics and morality. Does advocating a renewed focus on the ethical render the moral obsolete? If we are to take ethical ideals as being important in guiding our lives and how we live them, does this mean that we will take the prescriptions of normative moral theory less seriously?

The above questions open up a new direction in which to take this research, one that is of too great a scope to receive any detailed treatment in a thesis of this length. At this stage, however, I shall make some preliminary comments on what I believe to be the answers to them.

It seems clear to me that focusing on the ethical does not render the moral obsolete. The moral is, after all, as I argued in section 1 of Chapter 1, a subset of the ethical. The two are not mutually exclusive pursuits. On the contrary in fact, a focus on the ethical ought, if it is correctly pursued, to have beneficial effects on our pursuit of the moral. This is because, if we ground our practices in a suitable ethical ideal, our adherence to moral norms gains impetus from the inside, as it were. In other words, given adherence to an ethical ideal such as authenticity, our adoption of moral norms is motivated by internal reasons, not by external imposition. The question of motivation with respect to

the adoption of moral norms is a large and complicated one and one that would require extensive treatment of its own.

As I commented in section 1 of Chapter 1, moral norms tend to deal largely with other-regarding actions. The importance of the moral as a subset of the ethical remains, particularly with respect to this aspect of our actions. Whilst ethical ideals give us important and much-needed guidance with respect to how we ought to live, and the account of self-knowledge that I have provided argues that respect for the difference of the other is essential to self-knowledge acquisition and thus to the successful pursuit of authenticity, there are other aspects of our interactions with others about which we may need directives. Thus, we may argue that, even if we shift the focus from being solely on the realm of the moral, we ought still to take the injunctions of normative theory seriously.

If we view morality in Nozickian fashion as side-constraints, with ethics offering guidance about what goes on within the boundaries set by these constraints, then there seems to be no prima facie reason for viewing a stronger focus on the ethical as a threat to the moral.

The second of these questions is one that I raised and partially dealt with in section 1 of Chapter 2. This is the question of what Nietzsche's attitude to the moral actually is. In Chapter 2 I argued that Nietzsche's primary focus, especially in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, is in fact the ethical. However, it is clear that he did have criticisms of normative moral theories, such as Kantianism and utilitarianism. The question of his attitude to the moral is a complex one, too large to deal with adequately in a project of this size, but which would (and has) provided the basis for new scholarship on how we ought to interpret Nietzsche.

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