After Nietzsche:

Nietzschean Ontology and Semiotics in Christological Metaperspective

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DECLARATION

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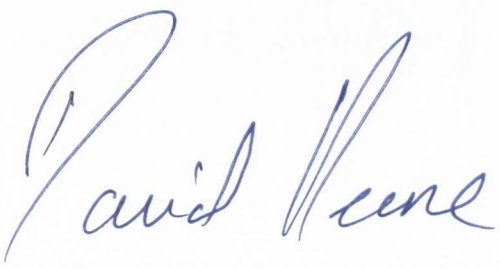

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Abstract

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Nietzschean thought has, for obvious reasons, rarely been engaged with by Christian theology. Nietzsche explicitly offers his theory of values as the precise antithesis of that of Christianity, moreover Nietzschean anthropology and epistemology, marked by an ontology of violence and a perspectival semiotics respectively, provides significantly less common ground with Christian theology than those characteristic of the modernity Nietzsche so vehemently opposes. This dissertation however attempts to outline a theological response to Nietzschean thought in a manner which both incorporates Nietzschean notions of self and sign and retains its identity as a distinctly Christian theology.

To this end the essay has three sections. One attempting to articulate Nietzsche's semiotics and ontology while highlighting the contemporary resonances of such thought, both explicit and implicit, in perspectival epistemology and neo-Darwinian ontologies of violence respectively. Here I illustrate the centrality of Nietzsche's concept of will to power, in terms of its functioning as the basis for Nietzschean ontology and semiotics, which, I argue, issues from such ontology. In the second section I discuss two forms of theological engagements with Nietzsche which manifest what I hold to be the polar flaws in such an engagement in that they either fail to take Nietzschean thought seriously, or allow Nietzschean thought normative status such that it comprises the lexicon from which they seek to construct their theology.

My final section attempts to identify a theological methodology that incorporates such concepts of self and sign while avoiding the flaws manifest in the second section. To this end I offer a close reading of Barth's economy of election which I argue illustrates a Christological imperative to take seriously the ontology seen throughout the trajectory of Nietzschean thought. Barth's Christological anthropology, I demonstrate, can be seen to incorporate a Nietzschean concept of self and sign, a concept it keeps in play but which, it holds, can never provide an exhaustive account of the human condition, as any account which fails to take humanity's status as a humanity elected by God into account represents an impermissible abstraction. Barth, I argue, both takes Nietzschean thought into account, retaining it within the structure of his anthropology, but also refuses it in an anthropology which takes as its norm and source the one human whom God uniquely intended, Jesus. As such for Barth, as I show, the concomitant disharmony between these two accounts of humanity, fallen and reconciled, maps the grammar of the salvific process.

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Summary

This dissertation structures a response to the form of Nietzschean thought which echoes in contemporary perspectival semiotics and ontologies of violence. It comprises three distinct but interrelated sections. Firstly two chapters illustrating the nature of Nietzschean thought showing the basis for Nietzschean semiotics and ontology in his concept of will to power. Both as an explicatory device and in order to highlight the contemporary significance of this form of thought, Nietzsche's own philosophy is illustrated with reference to post-structuralist semiotics, as manifest in Derrida, and contemporary ontologies of violence, as manifest in developments within recent cognitive and neo-Darwinian natural science.

The second section comprises of two chapters which seek to portray the manner in which theology has engaged with such thought, illustrating the utilisation of Nietzsche both in the Radical Theology of Thomas Altizer and the Radical Orthodoxy of John Milbank. I argue that both methods manifest the polar flaws in engaging with Nietzsche in either allowing Nietzschean thought normative status such that it becomes the lexicon through which one seeks to construct a theology, as manifest in Altizer, or simply rejecting Nietzschean thought out of hand after utilising his genealogies in a deconstructive critique of modernity, as is manifest in Milbank. Both manoeuvres, I demonstrate, are facilitated by what I show to be flawed readings of the nature and functioning of will to power in Nietzschean thought.

The final section comprises of three chapters in which I illustrate a theological response to the semiotics and ontology articulated in the first section, which avoids the flaws manifest in section two. As such, a structure is illustrated which both incorporates Nietzschean thought and responds to it while retaining its voice as a

distinctly Christian theology. To this end I engage in a close reading of elements of Barth's theology of language and the self as they manifest themselves within the structure of his doctrine of reconciliation. I illustrate that such a Christological methodology as Barth's incorporates a perspectival semiotics and ontology of violence as one aspect of the economy of election, an aspect however that can never be held as an exhaustive account, as any anthropology which fails to take into account God's gracefilled election of humanity is, for Barth, an impermissible abstraction. By taking seriously the semiotics and ontology of Nietzschean thought and reading it within a Christological metaperspective which confronts it, yet keeps it in play, the trajectory of Nietzschean thought, I argue, can be incorporated into a Christological methodology such as Barth's, which, in so doing, never loses its identity as a distinctively Christian theology.

List of Abbreviations

Works by Nietzsche abbreviated within the text

BGE	*Beyond Good and Evil*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1966.
Z	*Thus Spoke Zarathustr*a. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Viking Penguin, 1966.
BT	*The Birth of Tragedy*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1967.
EH	*Ecce Homo*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1967.
Nachlass	*Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Werke*. eds. Colli, G. and Montinari, M. 30 vols. Berlin/Paris/Milan, 1967ff.
WP	*The Will to Power*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and Richard Hollingdale. Random House: New York 1968.
GS	*The Gay Science*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1974.
D	*Daybreak*. Translated by Richard Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
HaH	*Human all too Human*. Translated by Richard Hollingdale. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
TI	*Twilight of the Idols / The Anti-Christ*. Translated by Richard Hollingdale. London: Penguin, 1990.
A	*Twilight of the Idols / The Anti-Christ*. Translated by Richard Hollingdale. London: Penguin, 1990.
GM	*On the Genealogy of Morality*. Translated by Carol Diethe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Works by Barth abbreviated within the text

CD	*Church Dogmatics*. 12 vols. Translated by G. Bromiley et al. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956-75.

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of this thesis is to begin to articulate a theological response to the form of Nietzschean thought which echoes in post-structuralist semiotics and contemporary ontologies of violence. Nietzsche's impact on contemporary thought is well noted in fields as diverse as political theory[1], depth psychology[2] aesthetics[3], sociology[4], history[5], cognitive science[6] and education[7], yet theological responses to his work are less significant. This is of course for obvious reasons, Nietzsche not only denies the validity of the theological enterprise and the basic tools with which to construct a theology but also articulates a conception of the real which is consciously the exact antithesis of that of Christian theology. There seems then to be no point of intersection with which, like the fields cited above, an engagement with the thought of Nietzsche can be engendered. Also, at the risk of oversimplifying, evangelical elements in Christian theology have largely ignored Nietzschean claims, as the goal is to articulate a semiotics and theory of the self in exclusively theological terms. Liberal elements, traditionally seen as open to dialogue with other disciplines, struggle to identify a common ground with Nietzsche as he, as I shall show, denies the basic shared rationality, interpretative or experiential framework which establishes the basic criteria for 'dialogue'. Nietzschean thought then has never had the impact within Christian theology it has had within the fields cited above.

Two theologies that have attempted to significantly utilise Nietzschean thought are the 'radical theology' of the death of God movement and the 'radical orthodoxy' of John Milbank, both examined in a section of this thesis. They however represent what I hold to be the polar flaws in an encounter with Nietzsche in that they either (a) as is the case with radical theology, assume the normative status of Nietzschean thought

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[1] See Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche contra Rousseau: a Study of Nietzsche's Moral and Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1991) and An *Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker: the Perfect Nihilist.* (Cambridge, 1994).

[2] See *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology.* Jacob Golomg, Weaver Santaniello and Ronald Lehrer (eds.) (New York: S.U.N.Y. Press, 1999).

[3] See Julian Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art.* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[4] See, Bryan Turner, "Nietzsche, Weber, and the Devaluation of Politics." *Sociological Review* 30 (1982): 367-391.

[5] See, Allan Megill, "Foucault, Structuralism, and the Ends of History.", Journal *of Modern History* 51 (September, 1979): 451-503.

[6] See Kenneth R Westphal, "Was Nietzsche a Cognitivist?" *Journal of the History of Philosophy.* 23:1 (1985): 343-63.

[7] See Gary Lemco, *Nietzsche as educator.* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992)

such that it represents the lexicon from which they seek to construct their theology, and, in so doing, sacrifice the identity of the theology identity as *Christian* theology, or (b) as is the case with radical orthodoxy, utilise Nietzsche only as a deconstructive tool against what it holds to be the hegemony of modernity, after which the perspectivist semiotics and differential ontology which structures their critiques is simply denied and never incorporated into the grammar of their theology. What I hope to achieve in this dissertation is an articulation of a theological structure which can both incorporate elements from Nietzschean thought and yet retain its distinctive identity as Christian theology.

The first element of course is to clarify what I mean by Nietzschean thought and I seek in the first two chapters to identify what I believe to be the core understandings of the Nietzschean concepts of truth, sign and the self. The focus is on but not limited to the texts of Nietzsche for two reasons. Firstly, as will be seen in chapter 1, Nietzsche's style explicitly resists systematic classification, to utilise contemporary exponents of elements of Nietzschean thought, however, can allow for a systematic framing of the core concepts that Nietzsche himself often resists. As well as serving a crucial explicatory function, to refer to contemporary exponents of Nietzschean thought helps to place the theological response offered in my final three chapters in a contemporary setting. The two main aspects of Nietzschean thought identified, a radically perspectivist semiotics and an ontology of violence, are significant elements within the contemporary climate and therefore the Christological metaperspective offered in the final chapters seeks not simply to offer a theological response to Nietzsche but to figures as diverse as Derrida and Richard Dawkins. The focus then is on the broad trajectory of what I hold to be the core themes in Nietzschean thought and which I show in chapters 1 and 2 to be unified in the Nietzschean notion of will to power, a concept which grounds and interrelates both a post-structuralist semiotics and a differential ontology of power.

It is this identification of the Nietzschean understanding of self and sign in terms of will to power which I attempt to view in light of a theological metaperspective in my final chapters. It is also that understanding of Nietzschean thought which challenges the theological utilisations of Nietzsche as offered by the radical theology of Thomas Altizer and the radical orthodoxy of John Milbank. The ease with which Nietzschean thought is accepted as normative in radical theology and jettisoned in elements of radical orthodoxy, is facilitated by what I will show to be a limited reading of the will

to power. A proper reading of the will to power, as I undertake in chapter 2, shows it to be at the core of Nietzsche's ontology of violence, which is understood as functioning in a very different way than presumed by Altizer and to a lesser extent Milbank. For Altizer the affirmation of life central to Nietzschean thought finds parallel in the Christian narratives, a proper analysis of the will to power however reveals the nature of life affirmed, the play of force against force, blindly seeking power, to be entirely alien to such affirmation in Christian theology. Milbank utilises Nietzschean thought in attempting to deconstruct the epistemological and ontological foundations of modernity but can never incorporate such elements within the particular form of Christian epistemology and ontology he seeks to provide. He proceeds through simply denying the validity of the analyses he uses to assail modernity as they are, interpreting them in light of their own radical relativism, but "one more mythos"[8]. Nietzsche however, manifesting a self contradiction that is the focus of chapter 1, sees his claims for the will to power as far more, conceiving of them as having verifiable claims to truth through their mapping the principles of the basic cellular functionings he finds manifest through his engagement with the embryology of Wilhelm Roux from 1883 on. It is in this light that I proceed to interpret Nietzsche's will to power in both chapter 2 and chapter 3, albeit here in light of a more contemporary analysis of basic biological functioning, structured through power and struggle, as manifest in the neo Darwinism of Richard Dawkins. Milbank's limited understanding of Nietzsche's will to power facilitates the ease of his simple rejection of its truth claims as the Nietzschean claims are made on grounds that Milbank never takes into consideration. While a properly perspectival epistemology such as Milbank's can of course deny the validity of any truth claim as one more mythos, a reading of the will to power in light of the way in which Nietzsche seems to have understood it invites far more serious engagement then Milbank provides. In this dissertation rather, the ontology of violence at the core of Nietzsche's understanding of the human subject is never dismissed as one more discourse within competing conceptual frameworks. It keeps Nietzsche's claims for its normative status in play and by taking it seriously sees its functioning within a theological metaperspective which seeks to both affirm and deny its validity.

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[8] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 278-280.

To this end I highlight elements within Christian theology, explicit in the Christological anthropology of Barth, that concur with Nietzsche in his description of what, in Christian terms, is post-lapsarian existence. To retain its distinctive voice Christian theology must keep both this ontology of violence and its scriptural other in play, to do otherwise is to be unfaithful to the scandalous otherness of the Christian story. As such this thesis also seeks to re-invigorate dialectical theology, by highlighting once again the infinite qualitative distinction between Christianity and secular ontologies. Ironically its main strategy is to emphasise the philosophical positions associated with both explicit (Nietzsche) and implicit (post-Nietzschean behaviouristic) ontologies of violence as articulating an understanding of the human condition that should never be shunned by Christian theology. Such understandings must be kept in play by theology, as no Christian doctrine of election should fail to articulate the reality of its other. To take seriously differential ontologies of violence may well be to frame the manner in which dialectical theology can retain a recognisable voice in contemporary theology. A voice that takes seriously the claims of ontologies of violence but more importantly does justice to its own status as a Christian theology. Only by taking seriously the themes introduced by Nietzsche can this radical otherness of Christian ontology be expressed in a fully comprehensible manner amid the contemporary philosophical climate. And so in the final chapters of this thesis I will argue for an appropriation of Nietzschean thought, not on the grounds of the persuasiveness of the Nietzschean perspective, but rather by concentrating upon a Christian anthropology which understands Nietzschean ontologies in light of post-lapsarian humanity. Here I shall argue that many of Nietzsche's claims are already presumed in a Christological anthropology such as Barth's. As such they are accepted as a core element within the human condition but one that cannot be the final word as to consider the human person outside of its status as the human elected by God is, for the Christian, an impermissible abstraction. The human condition as identified by Nietzsche is not, then, seen as alien to a Christian anthropology, as central to such an understanding is both the humanity elected in the man Jesus and the humanity orientated and structured by its fallenness. To give full voice to a Christological account of the human person is to articulate both reconciliation and the fallenness which frames the economy of election. Focussing on the Christological dialectic between fallen and reconciled humanity may well be to allow space for a properly theological perspective on the Nietzschean thought examined in the first section.

The 7 chapters of this dissertation manifest three main sections, two chapters identifying the core elements of Nietzschean thought, two treating of theological attempts to engage with and utilise such thought and three offering a Christological response to the semiotic and ontological elements of Nietzschean thought, identified in chapters one and two, which attempts to avoid the polar flaws manifest in chapters 3 and 4.

In the two chapters on Nietzschean themes I seek to illustrate, with reference to their contemporary expressions, Nietzsche's concepts of language, truth, and the self. The opening chapter, however, initially testifies to the difficulties in articulating systematically a philosophical stance that denies the possibility of systems. Nietzsche's texts do not readily submit to traditional analysis, as they are explicitly self-contradictory. Nor are such contradictions easily diffused. The Nietzschean corpus denied such traditional methods as seeing a linear progression from a certain concept of truth, within the earlier work, developing to a differing concept at a more mature stage. By so doing traditional procedures seek to illustrate the contradictory concepts manifest as merely being different stages within the evolution of the assessed thinker's work. Such procedures however are impossible with Nietzsche. Equally self-contradictory concepts of truth, denying its existence and asserting the truth of the will to power, are explicit from *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) to *Twilight of the Idols* (1889). Another traditional method of dealing with this impasse is to narrow the understanding of that signified by the name "Nietzsche". This method relies on the technique of arriving at a cannon of core Nietzschean texts that portray a consistent understanding of truth. In order to do this other texts are devalued, pushed outside the Nietzschean corpus[9]. Neither of these strategies were acceptable as (a) taking Nietzsche's contradiction out of play leads to a limited understanding of his concepts of truth and language, concepts which I sought to assess in light of contemporary theology, and (b) such strategies could not be pursued without misrepresenting the entirety of Nietzsche's writings. To be faithful to the texts of Nietzsche I would have to analyse the contradictions as they manifested themselves seeking to display their functioning with reference to attempts to systematise them.

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[9] The history of the shifting boundaries of the Nietzschean corpus, particularly after the devaluation of the Nachlass after its use by elements within National Socialism, is noted in the seminal C. P. Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Bioraphie* (Munich, Karl Hanser Verlag, 1978) Vol. 3, The best examination of the debate in English is Bernd Magus, 'Nietzsche's Philosophy in 1888: The Will to Power and the ü*bermensch*', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 24, I (1986), 79-98.

To this end in my first chapter, seeking to elucidate Nietzsche's concept of truth and its basis in his understanding of the functioning of the signifier, I explicate Nietzsche's writings with reference to key scholars who attempt to take Nietzsche's self-contradiction out of play. Demonstrating that the contradictions are not subdued by such readings I show that certain presuppositions which orientate their enquiries, namely an understanding of the signifier as an extenuation of the self, as being contrary to those of Nietzsche. From illustrating Nietzsche's understanding of the relationship between sign and self I hope to show the framework within which Nietzsche's contradiction is based. Nietzsche's contradiction, seen in the beginning of the chapter as a shadow on his philosophy, is shown to be entirely consistent with his perspectivist epistemology, grounded in a plural understanding of the self and structured in accordance with Nietzsche's distinctive semiotic understanding.

This semiotics stems from Nietzsche's understanding of the self and in chapter two I attempt an explication of how, for Nietzsche, the self is structured and orientated by the will to power. Showing the emergence of Nietzsche's understanding of the self against that of Schopenhauer, I illustrate the nature and functioning of the will to power through firstly contrasting it with Schopenhauer's *wille zu leben* and then through examining it in light of its procedural correspondence with Dawkins understanding of the nature and functioning of DNA. By virtue of this I hope firstly to articulate Nietzsche's understanding of how the will to power comes to be identified with the concept of the self. In doing so I hoped to pay due respect to the significance of what Nietzsche himself holds to be his 'materialist' enquiries moving significantly away from the idealist tradition within which Schopenhauer must still, for Nietzsche, be read. Secondly I hope to introduce the contemporary expressions of such behaviourist and materialist enquiries represented, in terms of this work, in the thought of Dawkins and Dennett. The conception of the self structuring its interpretations in terms of utilitarian necessity, which is shown to be the basis of Nietzsche's perspectival epistemology and nihilistic semiotics in chapter 1, is here fully illustrated in terms of its ontological functioning, as the structure of consciousness is, for Nietzsche, conditioned by the organisms blind orientation toward power. Throughout the notion of the will to power is seen as the cohesive element in Nietzsche's thought. It is an element however that theologies dialoguing with postmodernism have been reluctant to engage with. Linguistic and epistemological aspects of Nietzschean and post-Nietzschean thought have often been

incorporated in recent theological analyses[10]. In this thesis however the focus is centred on the ontology that is the basis of Nietzsche's semiotic and epistemological conceptions. It is this ontology unifying both a post-structuralist semiotics and a 'materialist' ontology of violence that I attempt to provide a theological response to in my final three chapters.

Having identified what I hold to be the core elements in Nietzschean thought and highlighting their resonance's within the contemporary philosophical climate I proceed to illustrate two forms of theological engagement with Nietzsche which manifest either an absolute incorporation or an outright dismissal of his thought. The 'death of God theology', associated primarily with Thomas Altizer, is examined as an example of a theology which accepts the normative status of Nietzschean thought at the expense of retaining its own identity as Christian theology. Furthermore I show it to be based upon certain problematic assumptions. Firstly it is based upon a teleological reading of western culture, which attempts to chart the evolution of 'western consciousness'. As such it shares the flaws of all such teleological metanarratives in that it is based upon a sequence of assumptions that are revealed as arbitrary. An example of this would be his choice of *Finnegans Wake* to represent the orientation of modern consciousness. Altizer does this because it is for him "the supreme epic of our century"[11] and shares a status no less significant than that of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in the 13th. If Joyce's last novel has such status as the ultimate representation of our thought then Altizer's cultural analysis needs to be taken seriously. But it only acquires such status for Altizer by virtue of its identification of the Death of God as the event which can unleash the chaotic life affirming reality of eternal recurrence, the sacred in every now. As such it participates in a circular logic wherein Altizer ascertains the death of God through the cultural landmarks he engages with yet these particular landmarks are only designated such by virtue of their proclamation of the death of God. Only when we accept that western culture has evolved toward an understanding of the Death of God does *Finnegans Wake* become the true manifesto of this evolution in modernity. Yet Altizer claims that we have

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[10] Most recently in terms of epistemology in the work of Milbank and linguistically, with specific focus on the thought of Derrida in the groundbreaking, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), by Catherine Pickstock.

[11] Thomas J. J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God: A Theological Genealogy*, (Westminster: John Knox Press 1993) 85 "Thus we can know *Finnegans Wake* as the supreme epic of our century, an epic in which there is a pure coincidence of total chaos and total order, an order which itself is a purely chaotic order, and yet the very chaos of its language embodies a totality of cosmos which had never so fully passed into language itself, or not done so since Dante's *Commedia*".

evolved in such a way based upon the evidence of *Finnegans Wake*. It is a circular logic wherein Altizer assumes what he sets out to prove. Secondly, Altizer utilises Nietzsche's notion of eternal recurrence without ever articulating precisely how it functions. He sees it in a Joycean way wherein it represents life-affirming sacridity against the austere repression of an arid transcendent deity. While such a notion, which amounts to nothing more than conceiving of it as a general life affirming metaphysics may be acceptable in Joyce, a more clearly defined analysis of how it functions is required from Altizer. Yet the concept is never fully explored; and this is just as well because his entire thesis is dependent upon the notion that this mode of existence would be a desirable thing. A cursory reading of how the notion of eternal recurrence functions in Nietzsche, particularly in the *Nachlass,* presents an image alien to the vision supplied by Altizer. It cannot be seen outside of the functioning of the will to power, as the affirmation of this world is ultimately an affirmation of the will to power[12]. To celebrate this play of life, to celebrate the Good is, for Nietzsche, to celebrate an uncoordinated scramble for power "What is good - All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man" (A: 2). In this section I show that to affirm the eternal recurrence is to affirm an ontology of violence. Because of this there can be no *coincidentia oppositorum* between the radically sacred Kingdom of God and the radically profane concept of eternal recurrence. Altizer argues for its validity only as a result of failing to see how the concept of eternal recurrence functions in Nietzsche's thought. Ultimately Altizer's project of 'Radical Theology' is neither radical nor theological. Like so many other liberal theologies Altizer merely arbitrarily assumes a certain notion of modernity and attempts to re-articulate the Christian narrative within its terms. His attempt stands as one more attempt to 'salvage' theology by making it conform to a secular discourse. Far from being radical this strategy has become normative in modernity. He has produced a notion of the Kingdom of God where the signifier 'God' is redundant in that the story he tells is expressed entirely within the terms of a flawed reading of eternal recurrence. As such Radical Theology cannot be seen as a theology as it never attempts to tell a story of God or even of God's relationship with the world. It details a development in human consciousness pointing toward a situation where the de-sacralisation of life opens us up to the sacridity of the banal. There is no room within

[12] "This world is the will to power-and nothing besides" (WP: 1064).

radical theology for a concept of God outside of this affirmation. Moreover that to which this affirmation refers is never really detailed merely being referred to as 'life' or *existenz*. To pursue the notion of eternal recurrence however is to unveil Nietzsche's joyful affirmation of the manifestations of the will to power and as such we see that this notion is precisely the inverse, as Nietzsche well understood, of that reality to which Christian theology refers.

While the study of Altizer attempts to analyse a theological appropriation of Nietzschean thought which conceded to such thought the lexicon with which we seek to articulate Christian theology, chapter three will look at an appropriation which I feel does not take Nietzsche's claims seriously enough. Despite this the work of John Milbank represents, over against approaches such as Altizer, a productive portrayal of Nietzschean themes in light of Christian theology. In *Theology and Social Theory*, to which this thesis is indebted, Milbank seeks to expose the various voices that comprise modernity with reference to the relationship between social theory and 'religion'. Throughout much of the book Nietzschean strategies are employed to deconstruct liberalism, sociological positivism and dialectical materialism. The fourth part, *Theology and Difference*, will be the focus of my critique. It is here that Milbank turns to look at these Nietzschean voices in relation to theology. This serves to bring into focus the two loudest voices in the work; one a 'nihilistic' voice associated with such post-Nietzschean thinkers as Derrida, Heidegger, and Foucault, and the other a 'MacIntyrean voice'. Based, as I argue, upon Milbank's reading of Nietzsche, he chooses the latter, which he then transcends with a third voice, that of a theologically realist 'counter-modern' position. This position, for Milbank, represents the future of Christian theology. It is a theology aware of itself as culturally constructed while offering the transcendental peace of the Triune God. This theology, as Milbank accepts, is an attempt to offer a theologically grounded 'social science' which attempts to out-narrate other discourses, thereby asserting itself as a 'master discourse'. The difference however between McIntyre's 'antique' voice and Milbank's Christian one is largely metaphorical[13]. In fact Milbank's 'counter-modern' position, while renouncing theological attempts to articulate the philosophical discourses of

[13] The lack of differentiation between these two voices, the MacIntyrean and the Christian, is manifest in the review by Richard H. Roberts in *The Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol. 46 No.4 (1993), 531, who equates the MacIntyrean voice with the 'third voice' that of Christian Virtue. This apparent blurring of the lines between Milbank's MacIntyrean voice and his own Christian perspective illustrates the extreme similarity between these supposedly different perspectives.

modernity, may well be merely articulating an Aristotelian – Thomistic pre-modern discourse in their place. By virtue of this Milbank's theology expresses itself as a social science. The pre-modern ontology Milbank accepts allows for a theological sociology that never highlights the radical otherness of the Christian narratives to sociological re-articulations, however well meaning. This ultimately issues from the fact that the human condition as read through these MacIntyrean lenses is never as alien to the ontology of peace offered in the economy of salvation as that which has shaped theologies in a more Pauline tradition. To allow for the normative status of Nietzschean thought creates and re-affirms a radical juxtaposition between the human condition as seen, albeit through an impermissible abstraction, 'in itself' and the human manifest in the one human whom God uniquely intended, the man Jesus. This radical otherness is incompatible with the safe localisation of meaning as society or rite which is manifest in radical orthodoxy. Nietzschean ontologies of violence are ultimately dismissed by Milbank - "The key to the deconstruction of these (Nietzschean genealogies of Power) stories is this …Unless it is clear that this really is a more 'natural' form of life, then the general thesis must fall into doubt, and Nietzsche's genealogy will appear as itself but another perspective: an account of the rise of Christianity, written from the point of view of the paganism which it displaced. And, of course, this cannot possibly be made clear"[14]. By virtue of reading the will to power in light of the nature and functioning of DNA a large section of my third chapter will be devoted to showing that it can, or at least that it can be made considerably clearer than Milbank admits. If it can, and if Nietzschean ontology provides a more convincing anthropology than the MacIntyrean one, than the entire progression of theology in the way Milbank suggests is flawed. From reading Nietzsche's will to power in terms of the developments within Nietzsche's thought after his initial engagement with Wilhelm Roux after 1883, the perspective initially stressed in chapter 2 comes again into focus at this point and after seeing in proper light the nature of Nietzsche's claims for the will to power, it can never be dismissed here with the ease that Milbank displays in *Theology and Social Theory*. Rather in my final chapters I seek to illustrate, on distinctly theological grounds, the manner in which a Nietzschean ontology and semiotics can be re-articulated in light of a Christological meta-perspective. In this understanding I attempt to show that

[14] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory, Beyond Secular Reason*, (London: Blackwell 1990), 282.

Nietzschean thought is, in fact, always already an element of a properly Christocentric doctrine of reconciliation.

To this end I turn to examine elements of Barth's understanding of language (in chapter 5), and the self (in chapters 6 and 7), as they manifest themselves within the structure of his doctrine of reconciliation. In doing so I attempt to respond to the Nietzschean notions of self and sign which were the focus of chapters 1 and 2, rejecting them through offering a Christian counter position but a position which, as is proper to a doctrine of reconciliation, keeps the 'Nietzschean' voice in play as that portrayal of humanity that encounters God in the economy of salvation. In this model, keeping the realties of fallenness and reconciliation in concomitant disharmony, the stability of safe meaning is never restored as it is in a theological restitution of the sign as manifest in the work of Catherine Pickstock or the redeemed *polis* of Milbank's social theory. This openness maps the process of reconciliation which is never only a past reality, but, in a theology such as Barth's, an ongoing process. Neither, in a Barthian grammar of reconciliation, can a theology rest in the stasis of safe meaning as the reality of the 'Nietzschean' ontology which it incorporates is never neglected or left behind. As Barth's doctrine of reconciliation establishes the meaningfulness of signification through the meaningfulness of God who binds human signification to Godself, it does so by never negating the constant participation of a broken semiotics in the fallenness from which it stems. As such a safe restoration of meaning to language is never allowed for as language always and at once participates in both the fallenness and reconciliation which together structure a Christological anthropology. Similarly the human structured by an ontology of violence endemic in Nietzsche and manifest in Barth, is, for Barth, never a comprehensive account of the human person as this human is confronted and transcended in God's becoming human. Only by paying due respect to both these elements can a comprehensive account of reconciliation be provided. By taking seriously the semiotics and ontology of Nietzschean thought and reading it within a Christological perspective which confronts it yet keeps it in play, the trajectory of Nietzschean thought can be incorporated into a theology which never loses its identity as a distinctively Christian theology. In fact to manifest this identity, which involves a humanity that needs to be understood in terms of both its alienation from and participation in God's freedom, may be to precisely incorporate the form of semiotics and ontology found throughout the trajectory of Nietzschean philosophy. A philosophical grammar which can never provide an exhaustive account of the human

person, as any account of the human which does not take into account its status as God's human is an impermissible abstraction, but a grammar which, as well as being rooted in an wholly orthodox Christology such as Barth's, can provide a lexicon from which to draw in contemporary Christology. U v

CHAPTER ONE

NIETZSCHE AND THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH: SEMIOTICS AS THE GROUND OF PERSPECTIVISM

My goal in this chapter is to elucidate Nietzsche's perspectival epistemology in terms of the nihilistic semiotics which gives rise to it and the doctrine of the will to power which grounds it. To this end I will attempt throughout to illustrate it with constant reference to a contradiction, endemic to Nietzschean writing, between affirming certain concepts to be true, as Nietzsche does in relation to his unveiling of will to power and a consistently stressed nihilistic dismissal of all claims to truth. This focus will allow me to identify the fundamental interrelation between Nietzsche's understanding of truth and that of language as well as introducing the core notion of the self which grounds them. As such I will show that while the contradiction in Nietzsche's writing cannot be subdued, the conception that this represents an inconsistency in his thought is dependant on a set of presuppositions which are not shared by Nietzsche. To give voice to these presuppositions I will illustrate the attempts of significant interpreters of Nietzschean thought who strive to take out of play or 'straighten' Nietzsche's self contradiction. This perspective allows both the elucidation of Nietzsche's basic writings on truth and language and also the gradual emergence of the core divergence between the underlying semiotics of Nietzsche and those of his interpreters. From focusing upon this core contradiction then I can, at once, illustrate Nietzsche's perspectival understanding of truth, show, by virtue of articulating Nietzsche's semiotics, the relationship between such thought and the semiotics which have clouded interpretation of his work and most significantly, begin to illustrate the grounding of Nietzschean epistemology and semiotics within Nietzsche's understanding of will to power.

The notion of will to power will throughout be shown to be the central element in Nietzsche's thought, in terms of both the nature of the sign, as will be the focus here and Nietzsche's understanding of the self, as will be the focus of chapter two. It is these Nietzschean notions of sign and self, forged in terms of will to power, that will be examined in terms of endeavours to interpret Nietzsche within a theological framework, namely those of radical theology and radical orthodoxy, as will be the

subjects of chapters 3 and 4. They will also be the content of the Nietzschean voice which I seek to reinterpret within a theological metaperspective in the concluding three chapters. In keeping with the overall strategy which seeks to correlate Nietzschean philosophy with resonance's in the contemporary milieu, in this chapter I will pursue a reading of Nietzschean self contradiction with reference to elements within the contemporary philosophical lexicon, namely the Derridian critique of a semiotics structured in terms of the notion of presence.

I will proceed by firstly examining attempts to take the burden of self contradiction out of Nietzsche's texts as manifest in the highly influential scholarship of Walter Kaufmann and Arthur C. Danto. Having shown that the contradictions in Nietzsche's writings are not subdued by their readings, I will illustrate the grounding of such contradiction in Nietzsche's semiotics, using Derrida to frame the opposition between Nietzschean contradiction, which stems from a nihilistic semiotics, and the understanding of signification in terms of an extenuation of presence, which both Nietzsche and Derrida see as central to what they understand as the 'tradition' of western philosophy. Although never attempting to etiolate the functioning of Nietzschean contradiction, I will begin to illustrate the Nietzschean understanding of will to power, which grounds the contradictions explicit in his texts in an understanding of the organic functioning which both gives rise to and necessitates such a contradictory expression. For Nietzsche organic life, orientated by the will to power, which constitutes for him the real, is at odds with the illusion of the singular perspective which consciousness provides. As such, as will be shown, within Nietzsche's understanding of the sign, words and numbers attempt to represent, identify and house a reality only through utilitarian necessity, as the organism seeks to utilise the tools available to it to interpret and understand its environment. Such attempts however misconstrue the nature of the real for Nietzsche which, in flux, opposes the stasis of stable meaning. The underlying principle for Nietzsche, which manifests itself both in the orientation to identify, for the utilitarian purposes of the organism, the real, and, as the very nature of the real, which it relates to and strives to articulate, is will to power. This chapter will conclude by identifying the will to power as that principle, which, for Nietzsche, opposes what he holds as the illusion of consciousness, the grounding motif of the logic of that tradition that he traces from Platonism through Christianity to Kantianism. A will to power that for Nietzsche lies

at the core of the self, grounding his radical perspectivism, nihilistic semiotics and his identification of the principles orientating the action of the self in the world.

1:1 Nietzsche and Contradiction

The paradoxical nature of Nietzsche's statements on truth, asserting as a truth the very non-existence of truth, has posed a constant problem for his interpreters. To accept Nietzsche's contradictory statements at face value is to accept Nietzsche's status as an illogical thinker whose radical self-contradiction has forced onto the margins of the philosophical tradition[15]. At first glance Nietzsche's writing on truth, so central to his thought, seems self contradictory, incoherent and thus negligible in terms of philosophical value. Time and again he writes against himself, in effect denying his own validity. Taken as a whole it quite simply fails to make logical sense, it is non-sense. In a famous passage Nietzsche sets out the view of truth with which he is most commonly associated;

> "What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms; in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and obligatory. Truths are illusions we have forgotten are illusions."[16]

The actual process by which such illusions transform into being held as 'truths' will be explored later as will the relation between such a view and a Nietzschean semiotics, but at this point we can see the metaphorical nature of claims to truth which Nietzsche takes as their only possible status. Truths are composed and exist in a set perspective "There are no facts only interpretations" (WP: 903), the nature of Nietzsche's understanding of this perspective means that truth claims, as with the perceptions they stem from, are borne of a self which interprets and asserts the nature

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[15] Among key interpreters who have seen Nietzsche in this light are Richard H. Grutzmacher, *Nietzsche* (Leipzig 1917), 143 and Alois Riehl, *Friedrich Nietzsche, Der Kunstler und der Denker* (Stuttgart 1923), 25

[16] Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," in *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's*, edited and translated by Daniel Breazeale. (New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1979), 81.

of reality within the parameters of its own biological and social necessity[17]. This 'reality' then, for Nietzsche, will be both as universal and as individual as the self from which it stems. Universal in terms of it stemming from a functioning of will to power which is the orientation of every self, individual in that this will to power is shaped, often blindly, by the nature of each self's cultural matrix, such that both the actions of "the strong man"[18] and the monastic ascetic are, for Nietzsche, manifestations of the will to power adapted to the individuals experience of its world. By virtue of this process, for Nietzsche, the radical plurality of experience mediates the radical relativism of truth claims as he writes, mocking alternative conceptions, "as though there would be a world left over once we subtracted the perspectival" (WP: 705).

Such perspectives however need not be exclusive and limited to an individual as consensus among groups can and does exist, such consensus though for Nietzsche never negates the arbitrary nature of the perception nor the perspectival nature of the linguistic framework which houses it. One of the purest example of such a normative framework is, for Nietzsche, the world of mathematics, which has a functioning that manifests a stable significatory process and a resulting coherence between such signification and the real. For Nietzsche however manifestation of such coherence is 'an illusion' as he writes "the invention of the law of numbers was made on the basis of the error, dominant even from the earliest times, that there are identical things (but in fact nothing is identical with anything else)" and so "to a world which is *not* our idea the laws of numbers are wholly inapplicable" (HaH: 19). Numbers for Nietzsche represent a language game which has a coherence and absolute functioning within its own terms, the conceptual realm of mathematics, but not outside of them. A number, for Nietzsche, is a term which represents nothing more than the placement of an entity within a preconceived set of rules, the information it transfers about the nature of the object is limited to its functioning within such a linguistic framework.

Throughout this chapter I will illustrate Nietzschean attacks on the possibility of truth in keeping with this attack on "the Law of Numbers" (HaH: 19), consistently identifying a dichotomy between reference and the referent wherein reference is always an arbitrary designation born of a physiological need. 'Truth' for Nietzsche

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[17] The process by which this occurs in Nietzsche will be examined at length in the next chapter which illustrates the way in which the self, for Nietzsche is determined by the biological mechanics of the will to power.

[18] (GM: 13).

represents a process of signification which attempts to represent the real, that which is, life[19]. Such signification however for Nietzsche cannot re-present its destined referent as it superimposes a stability onto both the referent and the self from which it issues, which, for etzsche, is an illicit abstraction. Each of Nietzsche's expressions attempting an undermining of the significatory process however faces a twofold problem. Firstly Nietzsche refuses the possibility of representing that which is, as both the reality re-presented, and the interpreting self, are in flux and orientated by the principle of will to power in a manner which negates the stasis that Nietzsche understands as necessary for identification. Yet Nietzsche himself consistently identifies the will to power as the most potent procedure of the real, identifiable as the entirety of will[20], 'reality'[21], the will of life[22], life itself[23], as such Nietzsche attempts a representation of reality that he himself assails through his writing on the impossibility of signifying that which is. This consistently stressed position manifest throughout the Nietzschean corpus represents just as serious a challenge to Nietzsche's own truth claims as it does to the conceptual frameworks, be they Platonic, Christian or Kantian, that Nietzsche himself attacks. Secondly, Nietzsche's rejection of the possibility of truth is in itself precisely a claim to truth, as Nietzsche makes a definitive truth claim for the non-existence of truth. It represents a definitive and oxymoronical claim about the nature of truth such that it is true to say that there is

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[19] In Heidegger's terminology Nietzsche's dichotomy is not between signification and life, which it seeks to signify, but signification and being. Nietzsche is thus the great critic of metaphysics for Heidegger but in that Nietzsche himself seeks to refer to the real in his doctrine of will to power he is attempting, once again, to refer to that logocentric core, the very ground of being. As such Nietzsche is also for Heidegger "the last great metaphysician", understanding Nietzsche's will to power in terms of Aristotle's *entelecheia*, M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche* Vol. 1 (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul ltd., 1987), 621-55. While Heidegger's interpretation here in terms of *entelecheia* is questionable (see Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche: His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*, Trans. David J. Parent (Chicago: University of Illinois Press 1999), 20 ff. where he shows precisely Nietzsche's rejection of will to power as *entelecheia*, albeit explicitly in terms of its manifestation in Leibniz), Heidegger's identification of Nietzsche's self contradiction is nevertheless entirely justified. Heidegger's use of the term 'being' however serves well his overall purpose but does so through re-directing the enquiry to a term, 'being', that is never central to Nietzsche's texts. Nietzsche's dichotomy between reference and that it seeks to represent is a dichotomy between signification and that which is, the will to power. Rather than understanding will to power abstractly or even ontologically (it has no set substance), Nietzsche holds it as a principle of struggle manifest in the cells of every living thing (and indeed at work in the shaping of the rocks and every non-organic entity). This principle of struggle for Nietzsche is the 'truth' within what is described variously by Nietzsche as reality, will to power, the organic and most commonly 'life', the term 'being' superimposes an orientation of enquiry that rests uneasily with the focus of the texts. Rather life, as it is understood here refers less to a ontological category, being, than to a process, a play of forces both organic and inorganic.

[20] (Z: 2 'Of Self Overcoming').

[21] (BGE: 36).

[22] (GS: 349).

[23] (BGE: 259, WP: 543).

no truth. In attempting to correspond to reality however, in saying "truths are illusions" and meaning it, the statement puts itself under erasure, it denies itself, crosses itself out.

Kaufmann and Sadler's attempts to 'straighten' Nietzsche's contradiction

Nietzsche's assertion, as a truth, of the impossibility of truth is perhaps the initial challenge which stares starkly at Nietzsche's interpreters, this core oxymoron is heightened by Nietzsche's subsequent truth claims for his doctrines of the will to power and the eternal recurrence. What can be made of this oxymoronical truth claim that there is no truth, and the contradiction issuing from the truth claims relating to the will to power and eternal recurrence? As Maudmarie Clark writes "The obvious conclusion to draw is that there is something seriously wrong with Nietzsche's philosophy. At the very least it seems that we must reject either his general claim about truth or the specific claims (especially regarding values) that have established him as a thinker to be reckoned with"[24]. The history of Nietzsche scholarship reveals a concerted attempt to deal with this paradox. For those who wish to maintain him "as a thinker to be reckoned with" sense must be made of his apparent non-sense.

One of the most seductive strategies attempting to "straighten" Nietzsche's writing on truth is associated with Walter Kaufmann[25]. For Kaufmann the contradiction is merely apparent. Nietzsche does not deny the existence of truth; rather he exclusively attacks the old *metaphysical* truths which attempt to correspond to an almost platonic, supernatural worlds of forms. As Nietzsche writes of *Twilight of the Idols* in his *Ecce Homo*, "That which is called "idols" on the title page is simply the old truth that has been believed in hitherto!. In plain English, the twilight of the idols means that the old truth is on its last legs!"(EH p.68). For Kaufmann, Nietzsche's denial of the 'old truth' is a denial of essences, not of basic empirical truth, knowable to the self and signifiable by this self through articulation of the knowledge given through the senses. It is in the sense of empirical truth that, for Kaufmann, Nietzsche puts forward his

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[24] Maudmarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy.* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), 4.

[25] Walter Kaufmann. *Nietzsche Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist.* (Princeton University Press, 4th ed., 1974).

doctrines of the eternal recurrence and the will to power. Nietzsche's concept of truth as fact, not interpretation, participates for Kaufmann in the unveiling of the will to power as he quotes "will to truth" you call it.....? A will to the thinkability of all being! This I call your will. All b ng you want to make thinkable: for you doubt with well founded suspicion, whether it is thinkable. Yet it shall yield and bend for you... smooth it shall become and serve the spirit as its mirror and reflection. That is your entire will... a will to power" (Z: 1, 12). This participation of the will to truth in the will to power for Kaufmann renders truth a physiological orientation and process rather than a metaphysical one. It is not then truth and facticity[26] itself but only a certain conception of truth that Nietzsche attacks.

This basic position, understanding Nietzsche as never rejecting all truth claims, has been reasserted forcefully, albeit with a different focus, in 1995 by Ted Sadler[27] who argues against Deleuze for whom "Nietzsche does not criticise false claims to truth, but truth itself as an ideal"[28]. In direct opposition, Sadler argues "Contra Deleuze and the whole post modernist commentary, Nietzsche does criticise false claims to truth, but not truth itself as an ideal"[29]. Sadler differentiates sharply between Nietzsche's concepts of knowledge and truth, the former being relativistic, the latter a "primal one", "the essence of reality"[30]. As he writes "For Heraclitus, for Plato, for Hegel, the one and the many form an indissoluble unity, and so it is also for Nietzsche"[31]. This linking of Nietzsche to a form of thought characterised by Plato and Hegel is typical of Sadler's highly original reading. Sadler's Nietzsche found himself in a post Kantian world, whose essential lesson was that "Metaphysical knowledge turns out to be impossible while scientific knowledge emerges as strictly subjective"[32]. Nietzsche's concept of truth was forged over and against what for Sadler is the relativistic world of Kantianism. In response Nietzsche becomes the "Philosopher of tragic knowledge"[33] assimilating a Schopenhaurean critique of Kant and conceiving of truth as the physiological orientation leading to the creation of art, which can represent this

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[26] A difficulty arises in the terminology in that Nietzsche for Kaufmann attacks truth in terms of metaphysical logocentric truth but allows for truth in the sense of fact based on empirical evidence. The use of the term fact above attempts to represent truth as correspondence to empirical reality as opposed to truth as absolute metaphysical reality.

[27] Ted Sadler, *Nietzsche: Truth and Redemption*, Cambridge, (1995).

[28] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Athlone Press, London (1983), 35.

[29] Ted Sadler, *Nietzsche: Truth and Redemption*, Cambridge, (1995), 35.

[30] Ted Sadler, *Nietzsche: Truth and Redemption*, Cambridge, (1995), 36.

[31] ibid.

[32] Ted Sadler, *Nietzsche: Truth and Redemption*, 27.

[33] ibid.

truth. Far from being the prophet of perspectivism, Nietzsche responds to Kantian perspectivism with a Dionysian concept of art expressing a core primal truth. It is in this light that Sadler condemns those who put Nietzsche "very misleadingly, on the trajectory of that post-Kantian relativism which culminates in Derrida and other post modernists"[34]. In fact for Sadler "if Nietzsche is to be judged by what the post modernists would regard as properly post Kantian epistemological criteria (the perspectival character of truth) he would appear as pre-Kantian or anti-Kantian"[35].

Sadler's Nietzsche formulates his concept of truth in light of post Kantian perspectivism. It is a concept of truth which in certain key areas is in keeping with that espoused by Kaufmann's Nietzsche. For both Nietzsche does not deny the existence of truth he merely dismisses a certain concept of truth. The difference between Kaufmann and Sadler emerges in their analyses of the kind of truth Nietzsche dismisses. For Kaufmann it is metaphysical truth. By this Kaufmann refers to a numenological tradition from Plato's forms, to Kant's "thing in itself" a notion of truth beyond the phenomenological. Nietzsche's attack is thus an attack on essences, furthermore Kaufmann's Nietzsche, while arguing against metaphysical thinking, is never guilty of it himself as his concept of will to power is, for Kaufmann, never a claim to the core reality of life. For Sadler, Nietzsche attacks certain forms of metaphysical thought but not all, Nietzsche himself asserting life affirming metaphysical concepts such as the fundamental nature of the artistic experience, his notion of eternal recurrence and the doctrine of will to power.

The problems with Kaufmann and Sadler's interpretations

Both Kaufmann and Sadler play crucial roles in Nietzsche scholarship as both saw their role as the explicit restoration of Nietzschean thought after a period of damaging misinterpretation. Kaufmann's seminal *Nietzsche: Philosopher Psychologist Antichrist*[36] strove to defend and articulate a reading of Nietzsche that was crucial in the post war years after the damage done to Nietzschean thought through its

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[34] Ted Sadler, *Nietzsche: Truth and Redemption*, 28.
[35] ibid.
[36] Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950.

association with National Socialism. Sadler defends a Nietzsche he feels has been misinterpreted and wrongly aligned with a "perspectivist trajectory"[37] of thought culminating in French post-structuralism. Both played crucial roles in Nietzsche scholarship and there are certain elements within the analyses of Kaufmann and Sadler that are undeniable. As Kaufmann argues, there is no doubt that Nietzsche's primary focus of attack is "the old truth", the logocentric tradition Nietzsche traces in his *Twilight of the Idols*, the broadly dualistic analysis identifying a conceptual or linguistic realm other than the world, which can house truth. The Platonic absolute of forms, the Christianity which, for Nietzsche, translates and codifies this Platonism becoming itself "Platonism for the masses", through to the philosophy of consciousness[38] which identifies, for Nietzsche, the world of reality with the world as idea.[39] All such understandings for Nietzsche are borne of *resentiment* and are essentially life negating. They are static whereas the real is essentially fluid, they are ephemeral whereas the real is material; they are moral whereas 'life' is essentially beyond morality. This aspect of the approach taken by Kaufmann and Sadler is indisputable.

On the whole their approach however is not completely convincing. The sheer weight of texts in which Nietzsche attacks the notion of truth, both as metaphysical truth and fact, burdens their analysis. Firstly Nietzsche clearly and consciously uses the term "the old truth" in connoting the form of thinking that he attacks in *Twilight* where his primary focus of critique is metaphysics yet, the words Nietzsche uses to identify that which is being attacked in many other cases is *truth*[40] and *fact*[41], referring to the basic authenticity of concepts not their status as *essence*. Because of this, at the very outset, Kaufmann's understanding can only function if Nietzsche's explicit use of the term "truth" in certain attacks can be dismissed as slippage where he more correctly meant *metaphysics*, *essences* or *the old truth*. While truth and fact in these instances seem to represent that which corresponds to reality, the way things are, Kaufmann's interpretation must envision the terms truth and fact as simply signifying a metaphysical entity and therefore statements such that "There is no such thing as an

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[37] See Ted Sadler, *Nietzsche: Truth and Redemption*, 28.

[38] For Nietzsche in turn the philosophy of Kant is a philosophy tainted "with theologian blood" (WP: 530) as Kant is seen by Nietzsche as a 'cunning Christian' "To divide the world into a 'real' and an 'apparent' world, whether in the manner of Christianity or of Kant (which is after all that of a *cunning Christian*)". (T 'Reason' in Philosophy', 6).

[39] (HaH: 19).

[40] "truths are illusions" (TL).

[41] "There are no facts only interpretations" (WP: 903).

established fact, everything fluctuates, everything is intangible, yielding" (WP: 604), represents a utilisation of the term 'fact' where another term connoting 'essence' would have been more appropriate.

It seems obvious however, even in the above citation, that when Nietzsche refers to truths or facts, he employs the terms as referring to the way things are in direct opposition to that which is false, the way things are not. Nietzsche himself utilises this opposition between truth as that which corresponds to the way things are and falsehood, that which does not. In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche writes that science keeps us in a "simplified, thoroughly artificial, suitably constructed and suitably falsified world" (BGE: 25). The concept of falsehood only has currency by virtue of its difference to its other and for Nietzsche the world of science is a false world, an untrue world. Nietzsche, utilising a basic binary opposition, contrasts this falsified world with the way things really are in his doctrines of eternal recurrence and will to power. This juxtaposition of falsehood and truth, illusion and reality saturates his writing which is aimed at the "free thinkers" as opposed to "the herd", those who may see as opposed to those who are blind to the light. Nietzsche in these instances manifests a clear concept of the words "true", that which corresponds to reality, and "false", that which does not.

The distinction between truth, in the sense of fact, and falsehood, plays a central role in Nietzsche's rejection of truth claims as he understands a process where the real is experienced through the senses but only as a fleeting interaction with a transitory reality: "In so far as the senses show becoming, passing away, change, they do not lie"(TI: 'Reason in Philosophy', 2). The attempt to identity this however is to submit that which is transitory to the stability of signification, a process which falsifies the reality experienced. This falsification is not simply the result of the lack of faithfulness of the sign to the reality but as a result of the basic fact that the signification is static rather than in a state of becoming. It falsifies the nature of the real. Nietzsche furthermore identifies the process through which the world is distilled into fallacy "reason is the cause of our falsification of the evidence of our senses" (TI: 'Reason in Philosophy', 2). As such for Nietzsche all conceptualising of the real is always already a falsification: "All perfect acts are unconscious and no longer subject to will; consciousness is the expression of an imperfect and often morbid state in a person. Personal reflection as conditioned by will, as consciousness, as reasoning with dialectics, is a caricature, a kind of self-contradiction - a degree of consciousness

makes perfection impossible" (WP: 289). And so the identification of the metaphysical essence of the real is not, for Nietzsche, the only truth to be denied, rather the basic reality of human consciousness involves an always already falsification of the real. Nietzsche envisions a process whereby the body, part of the material world, is immediate to this world, yet conscious cognisance of sensory stimuli always already 'interprets' this material reality in terms of a utilitarian perspectivism which is a falsification of the real. As he writes in a key passage "Consciousness is the last and latest development of the organic and consequently also the most unfinished and weakest part of it. From consciousness there proceeded countless errors which cause an animal, a man, to perish earlier than necessary [...] If the preservative combination of the instincts were not incomparably stronger, if it did not in general act as regulator, mankind must have perished through its perverse judgements and waking phantasies, its superficiality and credulity, in short through its consciousness" (GS: 11). The material self for Nietzsche, as will be explored in the second chapter, is orientated by its instincts and only on this preconscious level can the real be experienced as it is and participated in, in the sense that the reality of the world can impact itself on the self, conditioning its desires thoughts and actions. Every conscious engagement with this world, for Nietzsche, is always already to falsify the sensory data, to filter it through the category of reason which is born of the distinct individual goals of the organism. Each attempt to consciously know the nature of sensory data is to already falsify such data in terms of the individuals' perspectival needs. Rather than dismissing an old metaphysical notion of truth as Kaufmann claims, Nietzsche assails every claim to truth as it stems from a conscious reasoning which signifies that which has already been altered in the very activity of signification.

While attacking such a notion of truth Nietzsche is identifying a real, the material, the organic, which is opposed to the falsified status of truth claims. Such dualism is found throughout Nietzsche's writing placing him, as Heidegger claimed[42], within the metaphysical tradition[43]. It is a placement which presumes a Nietzschean usage of

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[42] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche (Vol. 1)*. Routledge and Keegan Paul ltd. London. (1987), 621-55.

[43]For Nietzsche metaphysics is essentially "two world theory" (TI: 'Reason' in Philosophy") identifying a real world and a world of signs that attempts to represent this world. As such Nietzsche's "metaphysical" attack on language and consciousness as always already falsifying the real is a self-contradiction as it itself is based on 'two world theory'. Nietzsche argues constantly against such a dichotomy between the real and apparent worlds, as there is, for Nietzsche, no 'real' world. "The apparent world is the only one, the real has only been *lyingly added*" (TI: 'Reason' in Philosophy' 2,

truth as an conception that coheres to the way things really are. Nietzsche precludes the existence of the real, yet more often focuses on the attempts of a truth to re-present this 'reality' (which he denies) to the self or to others. The real world, for Nietzsche, becomes 'a myth' (TI: 'History of an Error') with the attempts to weave a stable linguistic model such that it will cohere with such a world. 'Truth' and 'knowledge' are bound, and both for Nietzsche are assailed "We have no organ at all for knowledge, for 'truth' : we 'know' (or believe or imagine) precisely as much as may be useful in the interest of the human herd, the species : and even what here is called 'usefulness' is in the end only a belief, something imagined and perhaps precisely that most fatal piece of stupidity by which we shall one day perish" (GS: 354). This understanding of truth as perspectival based upon biological necessity will be examined further in an articulation of the grounding of Nietzschean epistemology in the will to power, but we can see here that the notion of truth, as Nietzsche uses it, is not limited to the metaphysical principles of the philosophical traditions but the outcome of the humans interaction with an environment and as such processed in terms of a blind organic necessity. Therefore, for Nietzsche, the "world of which we can become conscious is only a surface and sign world"[44] (GS: 354), which is not to say that it is a negative thing, or a life negating functioning, it is merely false, "without a continual falsification of the world by means of numbers, mankind could not live...to renounce false judgements would be to renounce life" (BGE: 4). What we hold to be true then is rather an "expedient falsification" determined by our organic needs. Such a truth does not cohere to reality as our consciousness represents the process through which reality is filtered for our individual needs and thus falsified[45]. The concept of truth in terms of that which corresponds to reality, to the

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Nietzsche's italics). Such statements of course shadow Nietzsche's identification of the world as will to power, as a claim to reality, thus necessitating the attempts by Kaufmann, Sadler and Danto among many others to alleviate Nietzsche of such contradiction by various means.

[44] Again involving Nietzsche in precisely the form of dualism between the real and apparent worlds that he often precludes.

[45] As we can see from this element within Nietzsche's thought, Nietzsche's understanding of perspectivism as falsification can only be sustained through holding to his ontology of violence which will be examined in chapter two. A Thomistic worldview for example or indeed any that conceived of a teleological harmony between self and created order in terms of nature and orientation would not be forced to interpret such a process, filtering sensory data for the ends of the organism, as necessarily a utilitarian falsification. Although it would of course necessarily be a limited perspective within such a creation theology as Thomas' as immediacy to truth, as God, is unavailable being only accessible in a limited form through *scientia* informed by *sacra doctrina*. In Nietzsche however the perspective is limited in terms of the selfish rage for power of the individual organism and as such limitation is envisaged as an individual perspective relativised exclusively in terms of its own ends. Within an alternative ontology such a limited perspective may be seen as that of a self participating within, as

way things are, even on a basic empirical level, which is at the core of Kaufmanns's understanding, is inadmissible for Nietzsche, as truth is subject to this utilitarian determination, mediated through a consciousness which is always already a falsification.

Truth then represents the illusion wherein we ourselves develop a process of signification which re-presents reality to us, a reality which has no necessary or verifiable correspondence with reality as it is. As such the world of appearance, as things appear to us, is the only world and as for "The real world" it is "an idea no longer of any use, not even a duty any longer – an idea grown useless, superfluous, consequently a refuted idea; let us abolish it!" (TI: 'History of an Error'). This is an abolishment however which, for Nietzsche, never leads to a phenomenologically ordered, infinite deferral of the noumenal as "We have abolished the real world: what is left? The apparent world perhaps?...But No! with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world" (TI: 'History of an Error'). The Nietzschean rejection of truth is not limited to the logocentric metaphysical truth claims Nietzsche assails but is manifest as a rejection of any sign system which attempts to represent reality to the self.

For Heidegger Nietzsche operates within an opposition between the world and the erroneous attempts to codify and make manageable this reality, an attempt which can never represent this reality but which, orientated by our base biological necessity may well serve a crucial function[46]. The contradiction noted by Heidegger stems then from Nietzsche in turn asserting as a truth the will to power as the essence of the real. Kaufmann, in attempting to circumvent this inherent paradox in Nietzsche's concept of truth, ultimately adds to the confusion, by asserting that Nietzsche uses the word truth only to refer to the essential thing in itself, and by stating that Nietzsche's own truths (his doctrines of will to power and eternal recurrence) are not metaphysical, in that they are something other than statements corresponding to the core nature of reality. We have seen that to understand the process by which the self comes to experience, encounter the world and then represent it to itself and others is, for

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opposed to being isolated over and against, the whole. Within such a conception a necessarily limited perspective could be precisely that, a limited perceptive on the whole, for Nietzsche, however, limitation is structured in terms of a utilitarian functioning which is necessarily an expedient falsification as it rages against all otherness, as such the radical plurality of differing individual perspectives necessitates the falsehood of what may be held to be the "pure" re-presentation of the real.

[46] See Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead' In *The Question Concerning Technology,* trans. William Lovitt. (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

Nietzsche, to understand the process by which the biological functioning that is the will to power structures the self to experience, interpret and represent the world in terms of its own utilitarian ends and as such no interpretation or expression, metaphysical or other, can be understood as anything other than perspectival.

Kaufmann's straightening of Nietzschean contradiction cannot escape the weight of Nietzsche's texts wherein time and again Nietzsche attacks a notion of truth that goes beyond a notion of truth as metaphysics. Similarly as will become clear over the course of this chapter and the next, Kaufmann's understanding of the extent of Nietzsche's claims for his doctrine of will to power will be shown to be flawed as for Nietzsche the will to power is the core essence of the real. It is in relation to this area that Sadler's account differs sharply from Kaufmann. Drawing on Heidegger, Sadler accepts that Nietzsche's concepts are metaphysical. For Heidegger however Nietzsche is engaged in sharp polemic against the metaphysical tradition and thus he sees the inherent contradiction. Saddler's Nietzsche, however, differs from Heidegger's in that he is not a critic of *all* metaphysical thought. He writes, "Nietzsche sees Kant above all through Schopenhauerian lenses, i.e. through lenses which still perceive a "metaphysical need"[47]. If Nietzsche does not dismiss metaphysics then there is no contradiction in asserting metaphysical truths.

This view however is in stark contrast to the texts where time and again Nietzsche attacks metaphysics as immoral and above all as an illusion, as he writes "*concerning the psychology of metaphysics*. - this world is only apparent; therefore there must be a real world; this world is conditioned, consequently there must be an unconditioned world, this world is contradictory, consequently there must be a world free from contradiction, this world is evolving, consequently there is somewhere a static world : a host of false conclusions (Blind faith in reason: if A exists, then its opposite B must also exist)" (WP: 579). Metaphysics is thus a fideistic refusal to face the wanton relativism of existence, a pathetic attempt to see truth beyond it, "pain inspires these conclusions, at bottom they are wishes that such a world might exist, the hatred of a world which leads to suffering is likewise revealed by the fact that another and better world is imagined: the resentment of a metaphysician against reality is creative here" (WP: 579). Metaphysics, for Nietzsche, is therefore the fearful response to the ruthlessness of the world "Man seeks "The truth" a world that does not contradict

[47] Ted Sadler, *Nietzsche: Truth and Redemption*, 28.

itself a world that does not deceive that does not change, a real world", (WP: 585). Such thought however is fundamentally immoral "The belief in truth, the need of holding to something which is believed to be true...- Fear and laziness" (WP: 585). The flight from a world of radical relativism by postulating a radically illusory truth within it, this is Nietzsche's understanding of metaphysics. Sadler's claims that Nietzsche was asserting the value of a form of metaphysical thinking, a form of logocentric teleology pertaining to the "primal one" of the tragic philosopher, the essence of the real, is a reading of the texts which fails to resolve the tensions inherent in them as Nietzsche time and again writes against metaphysics as an attempt to conceive of and envision a truth in a reality which refuses to succumb to such an interpretation.

For Sadler Nietzsche attempts to articulate the core truth of reality in itself yet particularly in the *Nachlass*, we can see Nietzsche attacking the notion of things in themselves "The greatest of all fables is the one relating to knowledge. People would like to know how things in themselves are constituted: but behold, there are no things in themselves!"(WP: 555). It is impossible to assert that Nietzsche does not reject the thing in itself, "A "thing in itself" is just as absurd as a "sense in itself" a "meaning in itself" (WP: 551), "The thing in itself is nonsense"(WP: 558). For Sadler Nietzsche only attacks a certain concept of metaphysics, he himself asserting the logocentric truth of the tragic philosopher. It is a thesis that is dependant on a unique reading of Nietzsche's interpretation of post-Kantian perspectivism. Nietzsche, for Sadler, laments the perspectivism he finds in Kant and attempts to precisely safeguard truth claims within what he identifies as the origins of an arid subjectivism. Yet Nietzsche's perspectivism as we have seen, is not contra Kantian but hyper Kantian, he is not as Sadler argues a "pre-Kantian" thinker but rather believed that "Kant's theological bias, his unconscious dogmatism, his moral outlook, ruled, guided and directed him, (WP: 530), it held him back, shielded him from the perspectivism which Nietzsche himself was to fulfil. "It is perhaps just dawning on five or six minds that physics too is only an interpretation and arrangement of the world (according to our own requirements, if I may say so!) and not a explanation of the world" (BGE: p. 44). Rather than attempting to salvage metaphysics from post Kantian relativism, Nietzsche's rejection of the possibility of arriving at a knowledge of truth in favour of a radical perspectivism is total. As he writes "Of what can knowledge consist? -

"Interpretation", the introduction of meaning[48] into things, not "explanation"", "There is no such thing as an established fact, everything fluctuates, everything is intangible, yielding, after all, the most lasting of all things are our opinion" (WP: 604). Knowledge is, as such, a perspectival superimposition of structure onto that which does not submit to conceptual apprehension. Unless the term 'knowledge' is interchangeable with 'knowledge of essences' then Nietzsche is rejecting far more then *das ding in sich*. The Nietzschean world of radical relativism is incompatible with any concept of truth, neither does he reject metaphysics in favour of phenomenological analysis as Kaufmann asserts, rather his dismissal of truth is total. "The physicists believe in a "true world" after their own kind, a fixed systematising of atoms to perform necessary movements, and holding good equally of all creatures, so that, according to them, the "world of appearance" reduces itself to the side of general and generally needed being, which is accessible to every one according to his kind (accessible and also adjusted,- made "subjective"). But here they are in error. The atom which they postulate is arrived at by the logic of that perspective of consciousness, it is in itself therefore a subjective fiction" (WP: 607). Again we see that, for Nietzsche, in that an idea comes to us through the veil of consciousness it is a perspectival abstraction and as such "a subjective fiction". While knowledge arrived at through the "logic of that perspective of consciousness" does not exhaust Nietzsche's understanding of the term knowledge[49], it does exhaust the status of any claims made on behalf of such knowledge[50]. Nietzsche, as will become clearer, holds to an understanding of organic functioning of 'instinct', knowledge manifest and orientated by will to power and as such "we can rise or sink to no other 'reality' the reality of our drives" (BGE: 36). Yet knowledge of such functioning, of such innate knowledge, is attained through the logical reflection of the conscious mind and as such can, according to Nietzsche's classifications, be nothing more than a subjective fiction. Nietzsche rejects all notions of truth in favour of a world of radical relativism,

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[48] For Gaytri Spivak in the translators preface to Derrida's *Of Grammatology* Translated by Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak. (Corrected edition, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) xxiii, the word *sinnhineinlegen,* translated here as "introduction of meaning" can also be translated as "deception through meaning".

[49] In that Nietzsche, as we shall see in the following chapter, has a concept of pre-conscious 'knowledge' orientating the organism, as instinctive knowledge, which is never made conscious, as he writes, "I say you and are proud of the word. But the greater thing is what you will not believe in - your body and its great wisdom: it does not say I but does I." (Z: 4).

[50] By virtue of the fact that such truth claims necessarily involve language, which falsifies and perspectivises sensory data.

the word *truth* then can only refer to an illusion of stability, of fact and as such to a sign that is a falsification. Both Kaufmann and Sadler then, attempt to resolve the inherent contradiction in Nietzsche's rejection of truth. Both attempt to make Nietzsche cohere within the logical boundaries of what Nietzsche holds to be the philosophical tradition but ultimately the confusion remains.

Danto's reading of Nietzsche's pragmatic understanding of truth

Another, in many ways more productive strategy for making sense of Nietzsche's paradoxical assertions is associated with Arthur C. Danto's study *Nietzsche as Philosopher*[51] which recounts, in the preface to the morning side edition, an entry in Dennett's and Lambert's philosophical lexicon under *Arthurdantist,* "*Arthurdantist*, (N), one who straightens the teeth of exotic dogmas, "Little Frederic used to say the most wonderful things before we took him to the arthurdantist", - Frau Nietzsche". This "straightening" represents the basic strategy in Nietzsche scholarship attempting to interpret the texts in order to make them fit within the stable boundaries of the tradition of non-contradiction. Danto ultimately attempts to make Nietzsche more palatable while never explicitly denying the basic contradiction originally stressed by Heidegger. The core difference between Danto and Kaufmann is that Danto operates within a pragmatic interpretation of the term 'truth' as utilised and affirmed by Nietzsche, attempting to interpret Nietzsche as holding to a concept of truth in terms of utility. This is in keeping with Nietzsche's understanding of truth as stemming from a physiological functioning orientating the self to encounter the world in terms of its own organic needs, as such X is true and Y is false if X works and Y does not. Whereas for Kaufmann and Sadler Nietzsche uses the signifier "truth" in a positive sense to refer to that which corresponds to reality, Danto sees Nietzsche as using it only to refer to that map of reality which best facilitates existence. This theory is supported by his view of Nietzsche's understanding of Art, as he writes "The radical character of Nietzsche's thought even in its first significant expression, may be seen in the fact that he is indeed prepared to allow that art has no less a claim than sense or science to objective truth. But this is because neither sense or science can make any

[51] Arthur, C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher.* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1965).

stronger claim on truth than art". For Danto, art's claim to truth is of equal validity with that of science: all are illusions, in the sense that they cannot be said to cohere with a 'reality'. Such illusions however are essential in order to facilitate life, "the illusions of science and sense making life possible, the illusions of art making it bearable"[52]. Such a notion echoes much of the early Nietzsche's references to art particularly in *The Birth of Tragedy*, here art is a physiological need born out of suffering, it is a creativity which does not attempt to make sense of destiny or sculpt a theodicy, it is rather that which occurs through an ability to live with suffering[53]. If the world lacks truth and meaning as the world of Greek tragedy, existing at the whim of fate, did, then that which makes life bearable assumes paramount importance. The category of utility thus enters into Danto's understanding of Nietzsche on truth. Because of this Danto can assert that some of Nietzsche's references to x being true are thus by virtue of x, in Nietzsche's understanding, facilitating life. Danto therefore sees Nietzsche equating truth with a practical benefit, his rejection of truth is of a truth that claims to correspond to reality, his own assertion of truth is an assertion of a concept which best facilitates the progress of an organism in the world.

Again, as I have shown, Nietzsche often does interpret that which is claimed to be true as an expedient falsification borne of biological necessity. Such instances, however, of Nietzsche equating truth with utility do not necessarily represent Nietzsche attempting to make a positive statement about the nature of truth. Such texts rather are more often highlighting the relationship between "truth" and expediency in order to precisely attack claims to truth. An example of this is provided in Nietzsche's attack on logic and the mathematical grammar which issues from it. It centres largely on what he believes to be the error in treating of the similar as being identical, as such the similarity in one unit and a second unit must be extended to identicality in order to preserve the harmony of numerological sequence "it was the prevailing tendency to treat the similar at once as identical, an illogical tendency – for nothing is identical – which first created the foundations of logic" (GS: 111). Nietzsche proceeds to trace this process to the need for preservation as "every degree of caution in reasoning, every sceptical tendency is a great danger for life" and so "No living creatures would have been preserved if ... rather to affirm than to defer

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[52] Arthur, C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher.* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1965), 38.

[53] For a thorough examination of the relationship between art and suffering in the early Nietzsche see Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), Ch. 4.

judgement, rather to err and invent than watch and attend, rather to assert than to deny, rather to judge than to be just, had not been cultivated with extraordinary vigour" (GS: 111). The establishment of a conceptual framework and the faith in the correspondence of such a schema to reality is essential for Nietzsche if the organism is to survive in its encounter with its environment. Nietzsche's reduction of truth to practical necessity represents then, not a positive assertion on the nature of truth, but an undermining of conceptual constructions set forward as corresponding to reality. This becomes more evident when we see that for Nietzsche the utility of a concept is never an establishment of its veracity "We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we are able to live – with the postulation of bodies, lines, surfaces, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content: without these articles of faith nobody could now endure to live! But that does not mean they are something proved and demonstrated. Life is no argument; among the conditions of life could be error" (GS: 121). Error then can be as facilitating to and as preservative of the species as that which Nietzsche would term true "Throughout tremendous periods of time the intellect begot nothing but errors; some of them proved useful and preservative of the species" (GS: 110). For Nietzsche in fact many 'truths' in the sense of that which seems to be useful and preservative have proven within a broader perspective to be life negating, as he writes, "we 'know' (or believe or imagine) precisely as much as may be useful in the interest of the human herd, the species: and even what here is called 'usefulness' is in the end only a belief, something imagined and perhaps precisely that most fatal piece of stupidity by which we shall one day perish" (GS: 354). That which is useful and so in Danto's reading would be designated 'true' cannot be deemed such by Nietzsche as many truths, which have seemingly proved useful and preservative are in fact flawed conceptions which will perhaps prove life negating. The final perspective, which can interpret the usefulness of a concept as opposed to it being a 'fatal piece of stupidity', is lacking for Nietzsche, as there is no absolute perspective can designate a concept more useful, preservative or lasting than any other. It seems obvious then that utility is not the criterion of adequacy through which Nietzsche can designate a concept true, as error and falsehood can be as productive in terms of utility as that which for Nietzsche could be designated true. What is significant is that in order to designate a useful and preservative product of the intellect an "error" Nietzsche must, in contradiction to his claims about truths and absolute perspectives, have an understanding of that which is true which opposes the

veracity of such concepts, yet Nietzsche, as has been shown, denies such an absolute perspective.

While Nietzsche holds that the establishment of a conceptual framework which seems to "be useful in the interest of the human herd" (GS: 354) is an activity central to the human organism he never, despite Danto's claims, allows that the categories of true and false be interchangeable with the supposed success or failure of such conceptual frameworks. For Nietzsche, as mentioned above, a perspective is never attained wherein such a judgement can be made. There are no grounds to make it as he explicitly refuses all teleological goals to history. A concept can only be productive and facilitating if Nietzsche has in mind an understanding of an end, a goal, a telos, which the individual or species is moving toward. Whereas the above quote seems to superimpose a Darwinian understanding onto Nietzsche such that the survival and proliferation of the race is "success", Nietzsche's own understanding of the evolutionary forces, as will be seen below and more specifically in chapter 2, are forged against what he believes to be Darwinian teleology ('Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 14). The will to power, the play of forces which determines life are never limited to a species or even an individual, representing rather a rage for power[54] which is conducted blindly often at the expense of the individual or species[55]. Although power is embodied its functioning is blind to each embodiment, seeking and engaging other force blindly, without goal. By virtue of this there can never be, for Nietzsche, a pragmatic stance such that x proves itself to be 'true' because x is preservative, or within a MacIntyrean understanding, by virtue of x proving the strongest narrative and winning out over rival truth claims in time. Nietzsche time and again denies a frame of reference, a privileged point of perspective from where the utilitarian functioning or longevity of a certain conceptual framework can lead to it be designated with the signifier true. The understanding of a concept as true based upon its utilitarian functioning requires an explicit goal of endeavour, the survival of a species, increased prosperity, which serves as the teleological end, Nietzsche however denies such a goal or orientation through which can be judged the truth of a concept

[54] In alternative understandings of power, power and the acquisition of it would be a teleological goal. In Nietzsche however, as will be shown in following chapters, the will to power can never be equated with a teleological functioning as it is never limited to an individual embodiment being the play of force among the radical plurality of wills to power which structure each seemingly singular will to power. The will to power for Nietzsche is the process through which force engages other force a goal or intentionality cannot be superimposed onto such play of force without misrepresenting it.

[55] This complex element within Nietzsche will be explicated in terms of a comprehensive illustration of the mechanics of the will to power in chapter 2.

by virtue of it facilitating this *telos*. Neither in Nietzsche's understanding could the success of a conceptual framework in 'out living' rival truth claims be held as veracity within a pragmatic understanding, as each passing paradigm functions for a time due to an infinite plurality of forces which can allow for a life negating 'untrue' idea to hold sway as much as a life affirming one.

Within such a stance, Nietzsche's fundamental contradiction which will come into clearer focus in what follows, is again present, as implicit in speaking of a concept being true by virtue of it affirming life, is a concept of life which in itself is ascertained and identified, in contrast to Nietzsche's perspectival understanding of truth. While Nietzsche rejects the survival or the functioning of ideas being equitable with 'truth' by virtue of the impossibility of identifying a goal in the evolution of a species, Nietzsche himself assails notions such as Christianity by virtue of their being life negating. This concept "life" thus becomes the arbiter of the status of conceptual frameworks by virtue of their corresponding to, or being in contradiction with this universal. Thus implicit in the statement that X is erroneous as it manifests resentment against life, is a concept of life which is in itself established, true, a universal. Nietzsche is very clear that this is never limited to creating the environment within which life in terms of progeny is facilitated. Darwinian[56] thinking is rejected by Nietzsche, as he reads Darwin as superimposing a teleological framework onto the evolutionary process "species do not grow more perfect" (Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 14). Yet rather than refusing to identify a clearly established concept of life, Nietzsche's concept of life in terms of the will to power is clearly identified by virtue of what he opposes. The process through which the will to power orientates thought and action in the world is never designed to facilitate life in the sense of the betterment or survival of a species as "struggle for life ... does occur but as the exception ... Where there is a struggle it is a struggle for power" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 14) but this serves to forge a clearly defined concept of will to power over and against the 'teleological' conceptions he reads into Darwin. Rather for Nietzsche "every living thing does everything it can, not to preserve itself but to become more" (WP: 1067). Nietzsche has a clear understanding of the 'life' that is to be facilitated - "Life is will to power and nothing more" (WP: 543). In this sense Christianity is refused by Nietzsche by virtue of it opposing this clearly established

[56] As will be shown in chapters 2 and 4 Nietzsche's own understanding of will to power has more in common within elements in contemporary neo Darwinism than with Darwin himself.

conception of life. Over and against the play of forces Christianity is "life negating", as he writes, "pity on the whole thwarts the law of evolution, which is the law of selection. It preserves what is ripe for destruction, it defends life's disinherited and condemned….. To say it again, this depressive and contagious instinct thwarts those instincts bent on preserving and enhancing the value of life"(A: 7). Danto's introduction of the notion of pragmatic truth then, fails to absolve Nietzsche of self-contradiction; in fact he merely provides another example of it. X can only be said to facilitate life within a stable understanding of what life is (for Nietzsche the will to power). As such the introduction of the notion of pragmatic or utilitarian truth into a reading of Nietzschean contradiction never leads to an understanding of a Nietzschean defence of truth claims based upon their pragmatic out-facilitating of rival truth claims. Rather it serves to introduce the identification by Nietzsche of a truth that coheres to reality, life as will to power, in stark contradiction to his precluding time and again of any such claims to truth.

Nietzsche in fact, as will be explored in Ch. 2, has a clear understanding of the core nature of life understood in terms of will to power, within this framework "nothing is given as real except our world of desires and passions". (BGE: 36). Such desires and passions aspire to power "What is good? – All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man" (A: 2). Such struggle is manifest for Nietzsche in all forms and aspects of life "whether we make a sacrifice for good or ill does not alter the ultimate value of our actions; even if we stake our life, as the martyr does for the sake of his church – it is sacrifice to our desire for power" (GS: 13). This power "wants to express itself, either to ourselves, or to other men" (D: 356). And as such struggle is the content and nature of the real: "I consider life itself instinct for growth, for continuance for accumulation of forces, for Power"(A: 6), Danto cannot absolve Nietzsche from self contradiction as the truth that Nietzsche allows in these instances is precisely an identification of the core nature of reality, precisely the form of identification whose validity Nietzsche himself denies. An understanding of life such that x can be termed true by virtue of it facilitating life contradicts the conceptual perspectivism which is manifest throughout Nietzsche's work. Nietzsche denies even the validity of the tools with which to assert a conception of reality such as the one he himself provides with his doctrine of will to power as Nietzsche's basic understanding of the nature of the sign, as will be explored further, precludes a correlation between such reference and its destined referent.

While they manifest different strategies, the basic goal of Kaufmann, Sadler and Danto is the same. Nietzsche's self contradiction shadows his philosophy and forces it onto the boundaries of the tradition, in attempting to "Straighten" Nietzsche's "exotic" doctrine the interpreters are attempting to accommodate Nietzsche within the linguistic framework of the logic of non-contradiction, which Nietzsche understands to be the most potent procedure of the philosophical tradition he assails in his *Twilight of the Idols*. Neither attempt to absolve Nietzsche of contradiction, either working within a correspondence theory of truth or a pragmatic one, proves adequate. Kaufmann and Sadler interpreting Nietzsche's use of the term 'true' as signifying that which corresponds to reality must refine Nietzsche's application of the term in his attacks on it to a particular form of truth, the texts however, as I have shown, undermine such attempts as Nietzsche time and again assails far more than metaphysical or logocentric truth. Danto's pragmatic theory of truth allows for Nietzsche's absolute rejection of fact (as we shall further see) but stumbles as it cannot allow for the absolute nature of Nietzsche's truth claims on behalf of his understanding of life as will to power. The contradiction in Nietzsche's philosophy cannot be straightened. In the remainder of this chapter however, I will seek to articulate the semiotic and ontological framework within which Nietzsche's contradiction comes to function. I hope to illustrate that the Nietzschean interpreters while attempting to straighten Nietzschean contradiction do so manifesting a different understanding of sign and self than that which frames Nietzsche's texts. Envisioning a unified self, manifest in a unified corpus, that houses a non contradictory conceptual framework, opposes a Nietzschean understanding, both of self, as will be explored in chapter two, and sign, as will be illustrated in what follows. The Nietzschean understanding rather, as will be shown, can allow for such contradiction in a manner in which an understanding dominated by presence, indicative of the interpreters, can not. The aim here, it must be noted, is never to decide, straighten or etiolate the contradiction, rather to trace the manner in which Nietzsche's understanding of the relationship between self, thought and text differs radically from his interpreters and also, by virtue of this, allows for the form of contradiction that the semiotic understandings of the interpreters fails to accommodate. I hope to trace the semiotic presuppositions that ground both the polemical debates within Nietzsche scholarship and those attempts, already seen, to defuse Nietzschean contradiction. From here I may begin to illustrate a semiotic understanding more in keeping with that held by

Nietzsche and within which his contradiction comes to function. From illustrating this understanding of the relationship between self and sign, the nature of Nietzsche's self contradiction can come into clearer focus.

I will proceed by examining a conflict of interpretations between Danto and Richard Schacht[57] as to the nature and functioning of Nietzsche's nihilism. Illustrating the presuppositions and strategies which characterise the debate, I will outline an opposition between the relationship between self and sign that grounds their inquiries and those of Nietzsche. In outlining Nietzsche's understanding of this relationship I hope both to further clarify the nature of Nietzsche's contradiction and to introduce the Nietzschean understanding of the self which will be the focus of the second chapter.

1:2 Nietzsche, Nihilism and the semiotic presuppositions of his Interpreters

The passionate debates within Nietzsche scholarship on the subject of his nihilism testify primarily to the radical polysemanticism of the word nihilism in Nietzsche's hands. To arrive at an understanding of a word in the philosophy of a more traditional thinker is a matter of tracing a line plotting the development of the word through his or her thought. Nietzsche's perspectivism however creates a multiplicity of semantic strings emanating from the signifier nihilism. It seems to have positive significance "nihilism as the denial of the truthful world, of being, might be a divine way of thinking" (WP: 15), and yet it is bound to that which Nietzsche most ardently opposed "it is in one particular interpretation, the Christian moral one, that nihilism is rooted". Nietzsche sets himself up as an opponent of this nihilism enshrined in the platonic and Christian traditions and yet he himself claims to be identifiable as a nihilist, in fact "the first perfect Nihilist of Europe" (WP: preface 3)[58]. The multiplicity of meanings solicited by Nietzsche's use of the word nihilism causes insurmountable problems for the reader attempting to isolate and identify a true meaning. As we have seen in the first part of this chapter, Nietzsche's writings resolutely refuse to be straightened into

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[57] Richard Schacht, "Nietzsche and Nihilism." In *Nietzsche,* edited by Robert Solomon, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1973), 58-82.

[58] Similarly in terms of self identification, "That I have hitherto been a thoroughgoing nihilist I have admitted to myself only recently" (WP: 25).

the logic of binary opposition, and as such the word nihilism is always already imbued with positive and negative values, it is at once Nietzsche's enemy, his other and himself. By virtue of this we must question the concept of unity in terms of thought and the self as applicable to Nietzschean thought. As Derrida writes "Next to Kierkegaard, was not Nietzsche one of the few great thinkers who multiplied his names and played with signatures, identities and masks? Who named himself more than once with several names, and what if this would be the heart of the matter, the cause the *strietfall* [point of dispute] of his thinking". To assert definitively what the signifier 'nihilism' signifies in Nietzsche's philosophy may well be to decide the undecideable. What will be attempted here is to reach an understanding of the ways in which the word functions in his thought in order to facilitate a clearer perspective on Nietzsche's basic understanding of the nature of signifiers. To begin we will look at Nietzsche's nihilism as the *strietfall* between Arthur Danto and Richard Schacht[59] illustrating how the concept of presence with a resultant belief in the monosemanticism of the signifier corrupts both their enquiries, from here having appreciated the diversity of function solicited by the term we can begin to understand more fully Nietzsche's own semiotic understanding and how such a semiotics results from Nietzsche's understanding of the self.

Schacht and Danto on Nietzsche's 'nihilism'

The debate between Schacht and Danto focuses on the question "Was Nietzsche a nihilist?" Any such debate revolves around an identification of the meaning of the term nihilism, either in Nietzsche's own work or in the standard philosophical understanding of the word, and then an attempt to correlate this with a concept of Nietzsche or Nietzsche's philosophy. For Danto Nietzsche's writings correlate to that represented by the word nihilism as he writes "Nihilism is the central concept of his [Nietzsche's] philosophy"[60] and "Nietzsche's is a philosophy of nihilism"[61]. For Schacht "whichever way one chooses to approach the question, the answer to it is that

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[59] See Schacht, Richard. "Nietzsche and Nihilism." In *Nietzsche,* edited by Robert Solomon, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1973), 58-82.
[60] Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher.* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 32.
[61] Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, 80.

Danto is wrong; and that Nietzsche at least from Zarathustra[62] onward was not a deep and total nihilist"[63]. There is no middle ground in this polemical debate between these two notable scholars, either Danto is wrong as Schacht claims or he is not, either Nietzsche is a nihilist or he isn't.

An obvious but central point is of key significance here, the debate from the outset revolves around text interpretation. Its focus is the thought of Nietzsche, which is known through the texts that bare the signature Nietzsche. Nietzsche exists textually, the word Nietzsche in the phrase "Nietzsche argues, holds, believes..." always refers centrally to an interpretation of the texts bearing the signature Nietzsche. The signature is that which binds the texts, giving them corporeal form, a unity, a framework. It attempts to provide the context for each text by relating it to the others within the corpus. It marks the boundaries, the margins of the body giving it a self; a self designated 'Nietzsche'. In that it has this self it has a history, Nietzsche's history. This may be seen in the preceding quote from Schacht "that Nietzsche at least from Zarathustra (1883) onward....", the signature Nietzsche, binding text and self as history, permits the interpretation of the texts in a linear fashion. It gives them a temporal framework creating the impression of progression, development and growth. The debate revolves around this corpus - the texts with the signature Nietzsche and an element within these texts, the signifier nihilism. Both Danto and Schacht must ask themselves whether the texts exposition of the word nihilism can in turn be used to represent the texts as a whole. Each analysis is based upon a fixed and closed understanding of both the corpus and the term. For Danto there is correlation, for Schacht there is not, but in each case the corpus, the body, is a fixed entity, a stable element, as is the signifier nihilism.

These are the two elements in the debate which are of particular interest here, the stability of the context provided by the name, linking as it does the concepts of self and sign, and the notion of stable reference for the signifier. For Nietzsche, as I shall illustrate, the two are inextricably intertwined, the unity of thought and the stability of signification are possibilities which depend on a unified and singular self. These three elements self-thought-sign represent the framework which characterise the inquiries of Schacht and Danto as they attempt to first identify the parameters, the body Nietzsche, which will provide the context within which to engage with the texts, texts

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[62] 1883.
[63] Schacht, Richard. "Nietzsche and Nihilism.", 59.

provided by a single self, bound by a signature testifying to this. If the context cannot be guaranteed by the signature, if the body of texts are not stable, fixed and linear in temporal progression, the parameters of the debate shifts as the static notion of 'Nietzsche' which underpins it is dissolved. Similarly if the word nihili is not bound to a fixed unchanging signified it becomes impossible for either party in the debate to hold that for Nietzsche the word nihilism always signifies x.

For Arthur C. Danto Nietzsche portrays "a deep and total nihilism"[64] in that there is no truth whatsoever which can correspond to reality. All statements presenting a notion of truth as correspondence to reality are, for Nietzsche, false as Danto quotes, "The human intellect has allowed the world of appearance to appear, and exported its erroneous propositions into reality" (HaH: 16) and from the same source, "What we now call the world is the result of errors and fantasies, which, in the total development of organic being, gradually emerged and interbred with one another and have been bequeathed to us as the accumulated treasury of the entire past" (HaH: 16). Nietzsche believes the sum total of intellectual history to be an illusion, as Danto writes, "Nietzsche proclaims time and again that everything is false. He means that there is no order in the world for things to correspond to; there is nothing, in terms of the correspondence theory of truth to which statements can stand in the required relationship in order to be true. In this regard common sense is false and so is any other set of propositions false"[65]. Nietzsche thus assails all notions of truth and order, dismantling them and leaving nothing. In this sense Nietzsche is a nihilist. Ultimately, for Nietzsche, "There are no facts only interpretations" (WP: 903), only perspectives and thus no reality in itself "as though there would be a world left over once we subtracted the perspectival" (WP: 705). From his reading Danto concludes "Nietzsche's is a philosophy of nihilism, insisting that there is no order and a fortiori no moral order in the world" (WP: 40). This is his understanding of nihilism, that there is no order, no meaning and thus no truth in the world. He also holds that Nietzsche "At times spoke of his philosophy as nihilism"[66] and that Nietzsche makes "Unbridled claims on behalf of this extreme nihilism"[67]. Danto as well as designating the corpus *Nietzsche* with the term nihilism writes of Nietzsche designating himself a nihilist.

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[64] Arthur, C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher.* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1965), 31.
[65] Arthur, C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher.* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1965), 40.
[66] Arthur, C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher.* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1965), 22.
[67] Arthur, C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher.* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1965), 33.

It is with Danto's notion that Nietzsche spoke of his philosophy as Nihilism that Schacht first takes issue. He looks at the passages in which Nietzsche writes positively of Nihilism: "It is a measure of strength to what extent we can admit to ourselves, without perishing, the merely apparent character (of things), the necessity of lies. To this extent, Nihilism, as the denial of a truthful world, of being, might be a divine way of thinking"(WP: 15), passages where for Nietzsche "Nihilism...can be a sign of strength, the spirit may have grown so strong that previous goals...have become incommensurate" (WP: 23) and those in which Nietzsche refers to himself as "the first perfect Nihilist of Europe" (WP: preface 3). To deal with these passages Schacht utilises a traditional strategy. He distances and alienates them from the rest of corpus. In light of the rest of the body they become less than Nietzsche. Their participation is seen as parasitic or viral. He writes "But can these passages support the weight of Danto's claims? Two facts ought to raise doubts at once. First they are very nearly the only ones in the entire corpus of Nietzsche's writing which could be cited in direct support of these claims. And second, all of these passages are taken from Nietzsche notebooks which he himself never published"[68]. These passages are, firstly, seen as unnatural and alien presence's on the body called Nietzsche, they are different from the matter which makes up the corpus, therefore they are less than an actual part of the body, or at best a parasitic element. In the second critique their status as baring the signature 'Nietzsche' is questioned as they are not *as* representative of Nietzsche as texts from his published work, not only that but they are different from these texts which compose the body Nietzsche, and can, as is manifest in Danto, contaminate a reading, they are again parasitic, part of, and yet alien to the body.

From the very outset then the debate centres on the boundaries of Nietzsche, the borders, the frame of the texts. It is an attempt to identify the signature Nietzsche, which can provide a context wherein the debate can be decided. Schacht calls into question the authenticity of the signature on the passages which for Danto prove that Nietzsche understood his philosophy as nihilistic. By virtue of this Danto's quotes are suspect evidence, and Schacht's goal is not to prove them false, they unquestionably participate in the body of Nietzschean texts, the goal rather is simply to create an element of doubt. The fact that of the forty quotes used by Schacht to support his

[68] Richard Schacht, "Nietzsche and Nihilism", 59.

claims that Nietzsche did not view himself as a Nihilist, thirty-five come from Nietzsche's unpublished notes testifies to this. He has previously viewed the *Nachlass* as suspect evidence, yet he is willing to diminish his own evidence in order to destabilise Danto's delineation of the corpus. If a safe context cannot be provided for Danto's interpretation by the signature Nietzsche, then it becomes a matter of Schacht simply finding more passages to show that Danto's passages are not constituted by the same material that constitutes the body "Nietzsche". They are thus alien to this body, parasitic, a destabilising presence on the boundaries of the unity.

From the beginning context is the arbiter of the debate as Schacht seeks to alienate the passages that contradict his position. It is the signature that provides and guarantees context which itself allows us to identify and therefore decide. In placing the authenticity of the signature in doubt, Schacht seeks to deprive Danto's quotes of a context and thus render them meaningless. From this position Schacht can flood the concept Nietzsche with passages which by their similarity and numbers prove themselves to be the core material of which the body Nietzsche is constituted. This is the strategy he pursues in the opening part of his attack as he writes "Thus the case for the mature Nietzsche's having conceived his position as one of Nihilism is weak, to say the least, even if one only examines the passages which provide the strongest support for it. It becomes completely untenable, however when one considers the sustained critical analysis to which "Nihilism" is subjected in the large body of notes which make up the first book of the *Will to Power*. It is to this analysis that I now turn"[69]. This, *The Will to Power*, is the same source responsible for Danto's passages which raised the doubt in Schacht on the previous page where he wrote "and second, all of these passages are taken from Nietzsche notebooks, which he himself never published", yet they are now the focal point of his enquiry the sheer weight of the "large body of notes" proving their authenticity. Schacht seeks to bind his citations to the signature creating a unity between text and Nietzsche. The strategies of both Danto and Schacht involve identifying the text as re-presentitive of Nietzsche; Nietzsche's self whose signature binds itself to the text.

At this point we must question the authenticity of such a move. It is based on an understanding of Nietzsche as one, a self, a self who thinks x. If a text is signed by Nietzsche and this signature is authentic, the text is bound to Nietzsche. If a text is

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[69] Richard Schacht, "Nietzsche and Nihilism", 60.

obviously different from the texts authenticated as "Nietzsche" then it must be either representative of a different period or it must be inauthentic, not of Nietzsche. Schacht and Danto must decide from the texts what the signifier 'Nietzsche' signifies and if that self is a nihilist then texts which claim the contrary must be assailed and shown to be not representative of Nietzsche. This is the framework of the debate as for Schacht if Nietzsche holds x then texts which manifest Nietzsche holding y in contradiction to x must be negated. Nietzsche, who is one, a self, can only be, either a nihilist, as Danto claims, or not a nihilist, as Schacht claims, contradicting texts which seem to be signed by Nietzsche must be pushed outside the body in order for a clear defined manifestation of Nietzsche to emerge. Therefore the linear sequence from singular self, to consistent and singular perspective, to mono semantic sign is central to both Schacht and Danto, it is the model which serves as the vital semiotic presupposition of the debate. As such however it is a presupposition that is both problematic in itself and further, as I hope to show, not shared by Nietzsche.

The sign as the extenuation of presence as a semiotic presupposition of Schacht and Danto's enquiries

Both Danto and Schacht, it seems, envision a single Nietzsche, the self represented in its absence by the signature Nietzsche. This signature marks Nietzsche's texts which house his thought. If this signature is attached to a text which does not bare the style and content for which Nietzsche is known then its authenticity is questioned. A reciprocal relationship between the content of the signifier 'Nietzsche' and the texts representative of this name is engendered. The signifier Nietzsche is known as that author of texts who holds x, once this is established (and this can only be established through the texts), then texts that seemingly bare the signature Nietzsche but who do not hold x must be pushed outside the boundary, the corpus *Nietzsche*. The semantic content of the signifier 'Nietzsche', in order for it to function, must have boundaries, an identity. This identity is held in the background of the Schacht/Danto debate as singular, one, Nietzsche. Nietzsche is a nihilist or is not, he cannot be both. This is maintained to such an extent that both scholars clearly and expressly at once acknowledge and attempt to negate texts wherein Nietzsche claims a position

contradictory to the one that for them is representative of the corpus *Nietzsche*. A procedure is engendered which identifies through the texts the proper content of the signifier Nietzsche and, after this has been established, uses this identification to deny the validity of Nietzschean texts which contradict the stability of their identification.

A fundamental presupposition grounds this procedure which is based upon an identification of a linear extenuation of Nietzsche, from the identity, the self *Nietzsche* who holds x, to this thought x, which is housed in the text which is the re-presented self 'Nietzsche'. As Nietzsche is one, a single self, thus the text must also be one and so the belief in the single unified self, manifest and represented in writing, necessitates both the attempts to take Nietzsche's contradiction out of play and the process of defining the corpus *Nietzsche* in terms of its use of the unstable signifier nihilism. Both the Nietzsche at the core, the source of the thought, and texts which re-present this Nietzsche, are taken as incapable of holding two distinct separate and contradictory views on a single subject. This Nietzsche cannot articulate both the existence and non-existence of truth or his own self identification as both a nihilist and the great opponent of nihilism and as such the texts that house this self and bear this signature must either be straightened, as we saw earlier, or have their status as actually being representative of Nietzsche questioned. In the remainder of this chapter, with specific reference to Nietzsche's semiotics, and in chapter 2 in the context of the Nietzschean notion of the self which grounds the procedures which govern the Schacht/Danto debate, this understanding of the relationship between self and sign will be contrasted with that of Nietzsche. I hope to illustrate that the presupposition of a unified self called "Nietzsche", which does thinking and is re-presented through an extenuation of the self Nietzsche in the texts bearing the signature 'Nietzsche', is never shared by Nietzsche himself.

1:3 A Nietzschean understanding of the relation between text and self

To frame the opposition between the underlying principles of the inquiries engaged in by the Nietzschean interpreters featured here and those of Nietzsche himself I will refer to a paper which inaugurated a debate no less polemical than the one engendered

by Schacht against Danto. "Is there a rigorous and scientific concept of the context"[70] was the main question at stake in the Derrida - Austin/Searle debate which still refuses to abate. This debate was inaugurated in 1971[71] by a paper entitled *Signature, Event, Context* in which Derrida argued that "the notion of context harbour[s] behind a certain confusion, very determined philosophical presuppositions" and seeks to "Demonstrate why a context is never absolutely determinable, or rather in what way its determination is never certain or saturated"[72]. The paper represents a landmark in the development of Derrida's understanding of the nature of writing. While the paper centres around an attack on Austin's notion of performative utterances providing safe context, Derrida also relates his concept of writing to that which constitutes what he holds to be the prevailing one in the western philosophical tradition. To this end he examines Condillac's *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* (*Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*), which, for Derrida represents the "properly philosophical interpretation of writing", of which one could not find "in the entire history of philosophy as such, a single counter-example[73],,[74].

There are three main elements which govern Condillac's, and indeed for Derrida, the entire western traditions understanding of the nature of writing - "If men write it is (1) because the have something to communicate (2) Because what they have to communicate is their "thought" their "ideas" their representations. Representative thought precedes and governs communication which transports the "idea", the signified content (3) because men are already capable of communicating and of communicating their thought in continuous fashion they invent the means of communication that is writing"[75](Derrida's emphasis). As in Danto's and Schacht's understanding of Nietzsche's writing on nihilism, here too writing proceeds directly,

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[70] Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context" in *The Margins of Philosophy* Trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 308.

[71] At the Congrès international des sociétés de philosophie de langue francaise, Montreal, August 1971

[72] Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context" in *The Margins of Philosophy* Trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 308.

[73] The validity of Derrida's interpretation and his characterisation of what he holds to be the tradition represented by Condillac is not the focus here. I hope rather that the framing of the relationship between Derrida's semiotics and the understanding of the functioning of context and sign with which he contrasts his own, can be shown to mirror the gulf between the presuppositions that govern the Schacht/Danto debate and those of Nietzsche. In referring to Derrida's paper the gulf between the understanding of semiotic functioning as already seen to be manifest in Nietzsche and that of his interpreters will come into clearer focus.

[74] Jacques Derrida, "Event Signature Context," in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 85.

[75] Jacques Derrida, "Event Signature Context," in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 86.

singularly and uniformly from the thinking self. It is the product and representation of this thinking self. The thought of the self is re-presented in writing, and as such "the birth and progress of writing will follow a direct, simple and continuous line. The history of writing will conform to a law of mechanical economy to gain the most space and time by means of the most convenient abbreviation, it will never have the least effect on the structure and content of the meaning (of ideas) that it will have to vehiculate"[76]. Writing then represents the idea, thereby reflecting the self, without distorting or tarnishing it, it re-presents it. This self/idea/sign relationship is, for Derrida, endemic to western thought. It is the more significantly the framework within which Schacht/Danto debate is conducted. The point of dispute is the seeming contradiction in Nietzsche's writings on nihilism, such contradiction is incompatible with the linear projection from self to thought, to sign. If the text is the re-presented self, then how can this self oppose itself, holding two mutually incompatible, binaurally opposed notions? Nietzsche, who is one, a single self, cannot be represented by a corpus which seems to multiply the self. The authenticity of the texts and the concepts they articulate, their being 'of Nietzsche', is determined by the one signature, representative of the one self, and so texts which are written by a self acknowledged nihilist have their status diminished by Schacht, those that are signed by a virulent opponent of nihilism are denied by Danto[77]. In each argument the self is bound to the sign which represents it. The notion of presence, the self's presence to the sign and vice versa underpins their arguments, it is central to the debate about context and authentication which we have identified. Derrida however introduces an element within the western view of writing which he feels has been lying dormant, and has certainly been alien to the procedures of the Nietzschean interpreters featured here, namely that of absence. The graphic sign's role is to represent the self in the absence of the addressee thus differentiating it from phonic communication[78]. Within

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[76] ibid.

[77] The method of challenging the status of texts by virtue of their status as representing a developmental stage on the way to the establishment of mature positions is open to neither side. The juxtaposition within Nietzschean texts in terms of the simultaneous assertion and denial of truth as discussed throughout this chapter is an element in all of Nietzsche's writings being most stark in precisely his philosophical writings (from *Birth of Tragedy* on) that both sides seek to draw upon.

[78] This concept seems to follow on from Saussure's second principle of the linguistic sign, the linear character of the signal. Derrida, as is so often the case, extends an element of Saussure to breaking point, in this case that "The elements of such signals form a chain. This feature appears immediately when they are represented in writing, and a spatial line of graphic signs is substituted for a succession of sounds in time" De Saussure, Ferdinand, *Course in General Linguistics*, (London: Duckworth, 1983).

the tradition writing is a representation of the self across spatial distance thus an elongation of the *viva voce*, the living voice, the self alive and present in the communicative process. Writing for Derrida in re-presenting, operates precisely through absence as he writes "one writes in order to communicate something to those who are absent. The absence of the sender, the addresser, from the marks that he abandons which are cut off from him and continue to produce effects beyond his presence and beyond the present actuality of his meaning, that is beyond his life itself, this absence, which belongs to the structure of all writing...this absence, is never examined by Condillac"[79]. Condillac's concept of writing, representative of the western tradition, for Derrida, and more significantly here manifest in the enquiries of Danto and Schacht, sees it as a supplementation and elongation of presence as writing "traces" our thought. The traced thing is present at the moment of tracing and it thereby guarantees the representative status of the tracing, writing is thus not construed as an absence of presence but a modification (ontologically) of presence.

A written sign is proffered in the absence of the addressee and for Derrida this absence is never merely delayed presence, as it is in Condillac, or, at the very least this delay, distance and difference must be capable of being brought to an absolute degree. Without this absolute absence writing cannot function as Derrida writes, "It is here that difference as writing could no longer (be) an (ontological) modification of presence. My "written communication" must, if you will, remain legible despite the absolute disappearance of every determined addressee in general for it to function as writing, that is for it to be legible. It must be repeatable, *iterable*, in the absolute absence of the addressee or of the empirically determinable set of addressees. This iterability...structures the mark of writing itself, and does so moreover no matter what type of writing... A writing that was not structurally legible – *iterable* - beyond the death of the addressee would not be writing"[80]. The notions of iterability and absence are introduced by Derrida marking the point of departure with the tradition represented by Condillac. For Derrida all writing in order to be what it is, must be able to function in the total and radical absence of every addressee, it may do this, it

[79] Jacques Derrida, "Event Signature Context," in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 88.
[80] Jacques Derrida, "Event Signature Context," in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 90.

becomes what it is, by virtue of its iterability[81]. Its iterability is that which allows it to be what it is but it is also an unstable element in terms of context and meaning. For Derrida "absence is not a continuous modification of presence"[82] as it for Condillac or indeed Schacht and Danto, for whom Nietzsche's presence to his text allows, and more crucially demands, it to be read as such, presence unifies the text giving it a singular and unified body, a history and a self. As such writing must represent the unified self mirroring the oneness of self and thought. If any one of the three elements in the self/idea/sign triadic elongation becomes fragmented the unity of the other two must collapse also. For Derrida writing exists as "a break in presence, "death", or the possibility of the death of the addressee, inscribed in the structure of the mark". While operating and depending on the always already possible death of the addressee the mark must also represent the absence of its origin - "To write is to produce a mark that will constitute a kind of machine that is in turn productive, that my future disappearance in principle will not prevent from functioning and from yielding, and yielding itself to reading and rewriting". These marks, machines, function in accordance with non-presence "For the written to be written, it must continue to "act" and to be legible even if what is called the author of the writing no longer answers for what he has written, for what he seems to have signed, whether he is provisionally absent, or if he is dead, or if in general he does not support with his absolutely current and present intention or attention, the plenitude of his meaning, or that very thing which seems to be written in his name"[83].

Unlike the tradition represented by Condillac and encompassing Schacht and Danto the author is not present to or re-presented by the text. The text must break from the *viva voce* in order to be understood, it can never be an extenuation of presence as the marks would remain bound to and owned by the scriptor. In order to be legible, marks must be iterable and as such they must refuse ownership. They become communication, if they become communication, when their iterability allows them to become temporarily possessed by the reader, they are taken up by the reader

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[81] Iter – once again, coming from the Sanskrit *itara* meaning other. For Derrida this origin encapsulates the undecideability of writing in a way quite similar to Plato's *pharmarkon*. Like the *pharmarkon* it resists the fixed categorisation of binary opposition. Writing's iterability is its capacity for tracing and sameness but also its capacity for différance and alterity. To do what it does, to be what it is, is to be repeatable, yet within this capability is its radical independence, its otherness, the seeds of its own destruction, which is the very element that allows it to be writing, to communicate.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Jacques Derrida, "Event Signature Context," in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 91.

who imbues them with meaning based upon his/her linguistic framework. Writing exists by virtue of this iterability which resists presence. Because it resists presence, only because it resists presence it may be legible, that is to say it may be understood and misunderstood. Of course the concepts of understanding and misunderstanding are corrupted by the understanding of writing as extenuated presence, rather the marks, the graphic machines, may be experienced - an occurrence entirely dependent on the already existent linguistic framework of the experiencer. Derrida writes of "This essential drifting, due to writing as an iterative structure cut off from all absolute responsibility, from consciousness as the authority of the last analysis, writing orphaned and separated at birth from the assistance of its Father"[84]. Writing therefore breaks free from the self, otherwise it cannot function as writing and exists as a sequence of marks, floating signifiers. It is such by virtue of a force of breaking which is not "an accidental predicate but the very structure of the written"[85], writing, whose engine is its *iterability* cannot participate in the myth of presence, in the self/idea/sign procedure and remain writing. It must in order to be what it is, resist it.

Nietzsche, presence and contradiction

As we have, to an extent, already seen with Nietzsche it is this model rather than that of his interpreters that structures his understanding of the semiotic processes. The understanding of signs as an extenuation of the presence of the self that produces them is alien to Nietzsche's understanding of the nature of the sign and thus the functioning of the text. Language for Nietzsche rather, functions independently in the space between the self and the world, the self and the other and as we will significantly see in chapter 2, the self and its selves. The sign can never function as the re-presentation of the self for Nietzsche as it functions not as a vehicle for the idea of its source but only through coming to be imbued with meaning(s) by its experiencers (A: Foreword, EH: 'Why I write such excellent books', 1). When Nietzsche addresses the question of his writings coming to function in terms of understanding and misunderstanding in these texts the gulf between the texts and their

[84] Jacques Derrida, "Event Signature Context," in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 92.
[85] ibid.

source is firmly established "I am one thing, my writings are another" (EH: 'Why I write such excellent books', 1). The locus of meaning within the Nietzschean texts is not a property engendered by Nietzsche or in a faculty of the words, but in an imbuing of the words with meaning by the readers. By virtue of this "I am not heard today" because "What one has no access to through experience one has no ear for". Therefore Nietzsche understands his texts as functioning "posthumously" (EH: 'Why I Write Such Excellent Books', 1). Precisely in his absence, cut off and functioning only in terms of the lexical framework of the reader. A framework that Nietzsche claims is alien to his own within his contemporary climate (GS: 381, EH: 'Why I am a Destiny', 1, GM: Preface, p.8). The notion of a text as a representation of the thought of its source is therefore not accepted by Nietzsche who understands the process of semiotic functioning in a manner quite different from the conception that frames the enquiries of Danto and Schacht. As such the tracing of a singular self to a singular set of ideas, housed in a unified and stable corpus representative of that self can never be, simply in terms of an understanding of the functioning of the graphic sign, shared by Nietzsche. More significantly it is alien to Nietzsche's general understanding of the nature and functioning of language and, as will be the focus of the next chapter, the Nietzschean understanding of the self.

Nietzsche, in fact, goes further in his explicit deconstruction of the stability of semiotic functioning than Derrida who simply extends De Saussure's understanding of the arbitrary nature of the sign to an absolute alterity between the self and the other, separated by virtue of the semantic abyss between signifier and signified. Nietzsche, as we have seen, sees language as an attempt to establish "a separate world beside the other world, a place it [mankind] took to be so firmly set that, standing upon it, it could lift the rest of the world off its hinges and make itself master of it" (HaH: 11), it is a tool through which humanity seeks to make accessible and control reality. Yet each designation, for Nietzsche, serves as an actual and outright *falsification* of the real in two related ways. Firstly it is born of an interpretation that is structured in terms of the particular needs of an organism at that precise time. As such, each interpretation serves the needs of a self that is for Nietzsche, as will become clear in chapter 2, in flux, a "multiplicity of subjects whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness in general" (WP: 490). Each linguistified interpretation is structured in terms of a perspective which can never characterise the self rather representing only the self at that precise point in time. Language, for

Nietzsche, functions not as the mirror of nature but precisely as that encrypting of experience in a moment that is always past. Because of this the "world of which we can become conscious is only a surface and sign world" (GS: 354) housed in a linguistic framework which is the most potent procedure of reason "which is the cause of the falsification of the evidence of the senses" (TI: 'Reason in Philosophy' 2). Language cannot represent reality to the self as, for Nietzsche, it is static whereas reality is in flux and so "we believe that we know something about the things themselves when we talk of trees, colours, snow, and flowers; and yet we possess nothing but metaphors for things -- metaphors which correspond in no way to the original entities."[86]. The same word, then, for Nietzsche, does not simply represent a machine which produces a different product based upon the experiential lexicon of the addressee, but a machine that functions radically differently in terms of its functioning within the lexicon of the 'self' which serves as its originator. As such the content housed in the designation is incessantly shifting as the self, which is in flux, constantly and consistently imbues it with new content. The impossibility of stable reference for the signifier is, for Nietzsche, not limited to its functioning in terms of the relationship between the self and the other, but is an active element in the very nature of the self/sign relationship. The semiotic machine, for Nietzsche, evolves through the necessity of the human organism and attempts to map the interpretative functionings of such organisms. In this very attempt, for Nietzsche, it condemns itself to a functioning which is always already an interpretation in terms of a utilitarian perspective, as the subject interprets its sensory data in terms of its own, for Nietzsche "organic" and constantly shifting needs. These needs are the engagement between the will to power, orientating the self, and the incessantly shifting cultural matrix which frames it and through which it is structured. As each designation, for Nietzsche, is born of such circumstance it is both a falsification (however necessary) of the real, which is its intended referent, and a signifier which is constantly shifting with the evolving lexical framework of the subject.

Secondly "A philosophical mythology lies concealed in language which breaks out again every moment, however careful one may be otherwise" (GS: 112), this mythology for Nietzsche, mistakes description for explanation (GS: 112) seeing in the

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[86] Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," in *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's*, edited and translated by Daniel Breazeale. (New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1979), 82, 83.

process of naming an actual transmission of information to the designator in relation to the object named. As such belief in "*identical* facts and in *isolated* facts has in language its constant evangelist and advocate" (WS: 11, Nietzsche's italics,)[87]. In fact, for Nietzsche, to use language is to be forced to express oneself in terms of the logic of metaphysics, as such we are always already caught in the "coils of grammar" which is "the metaphysics of the people" (GS: 354). This pervasive attribute of language corrals experience into the logic of non-contradiction. Nietzsche is clear that this emerged through the biological necessity of the organism (GS: 111) as the filtration of sensory data through the linguistic structure of consciousness the "surface and sign world" (GS: 354), has led to the preservation of the species "No living creatures would have been preserved if ... rather to affirm than to defer judgement, rather to err and invent than watch and attend, rather to assert than to deny, rather to judge than to be just, had not been cultivated with extraordinary vigour" (GS: 111). Consciousness, for Nietzsche, forces sensory data into a non-contradictory, harmonised unity which has been necessary for the preservation and the functioning of the organism. Language corrals and codifies this process, not only into the belief in facts which, for Nietzsche, are again the product of taking to be explanations what are merely designations (HaH: 11, WS: 11, HaH: 19, GS: 112) but also in engendering an unavoidable logocentrism superimposing a structure, rationality, a trace of meaning onto the world designated. Nietzsche writes of the "rude fetishism...of the metaphysics of language" wherein "being is everywhere thought in *foisted on*" because of this, for Nietzsche, "we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar" (TI: 'Reason in Philosophy', 5). Nietzsche then, while seeing the falsifying nature of language and indeed consciousness as necessary to the preservation of the species, comes to see its effects as manifestations of a period in human history which needs to be overcome.

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[87] This is the central element within Nietzsche's critique of the sign systems of both mathematics and language in general where the human sees in the process of naming a privileged moment wherein information is imparted or arrived at about the core nature of the object designated. The process of designation is conducted, for Nietzsche, "with the power of the rulers: they say 'this is so and so', and set their seal on everything and every occurrence with a sound and thereby take possession of it as it were" (GM: 1:2). For Nietzsche these metaphorical designations are the genesis of what we come to hold as truths "Truths are illusions we have forgotten are illusions, worn-out metaphors now impotent to stir the senses, coins which have lost their faces and are considered now metal rather than currency"(TL: 64). As Arthur Danto writes, "The difference between (so called) fact and (so called) fiction is virtually quantitative, that being taken as fact which has been repeated a sufficient number of times.".

Because of this for Nietzsche the law of non-contradiction, based in the belief "that one cannot have two opposite sensations at one time", is "crude and false" and simply "a subjective empirical law" (WP: 516). It is superimposed onto the real as the linguistic structure of consciousness corrals various, often contradictory data into a harmony of non contradiction "The course of logical ideas and inferences in our brain today corresponds to a process and struggle among impulses that are, taken singly, very illogical and unjust. We generally experience only the result of this struggle because this primeval mechanism now runs its course so quickly and is so well concealed" (GS: 111). The drive to unify and treat as singular what is in fact a plurality (WP: 485, 574, 785) is, for Nietzsche, at the root of the falsification, however necessary for the organism, that is mediated through consciousness and codified through language. As such "not being able to contradict is proof of incapacity, not of truth (WP: 515). The basic structure of logic, for Nietzsche, is a falsification based upon utilitarian necessity[88] which superimposes a harmonised structure onto the world. This logic whose most potent procedure is non-contradiction is rejected by Nietzsche and by virtue of this the performative contradiction of Nietzsche holding, as a truth, the non-existence of truth, is never a problem within Nietzsche's own understanding. Seeing an opposition within the structure of Nietzsche's assertion is, for Nietzsche, to trace the signifiers used to a stable signified in themselves and so to be orientated through the linguistic process toward metaphysics[89]. Nietzsche strives to lessen this through his aphoristic style which explicitly attempts to collapse the division between form and content, as the words can have no referent outside their own performance. In this light Nietzsche's self contradiction serves to call into question the very logic of non-contradiction that he himself consistently assails[90].

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[88] Again for Nietzsche, as we have seen, this utilitarian necessity is conducted blindly as what the organism is orientated toward may not in fact be in the best interests, in terms of survival or preservation, of the organism.

[89] Rather, for Nietzsche "we have no words to designate what really exists" (Nachlass 14, 37) again the separation in Nietzsche between the world and orbiting semiotic designations is upheld in contradiction to his rejection of two-world theory.

[90] For a comprehensive study of the functioning of such contradiction in terms of the "tradition" of the logic of non-contradiction see Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Style.* Translated by Barbara Harlow. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979. For Derrida Nietzsche's writing on truth is best understood in terms of *undecideability*. An *undecideable* for Derrida is something which disrupts the oppositional play of the logic of non-contradiction. It plays in both sides of the opposition but doesn't fit either. By virtue of this it questions the very principle of opposition. When Nietzsche asserts, as a truth, that there is no truth, these categories, these oppositions are, for Derrida, called into question. It is an undecideable, the ghostly presence, for Derrida, that Nietzsche's writing explicitly strives for. For

A proper understanding of Nietzsche's conception of the nature of language shows that the attempts of key interpreters to 'straighten' or decide Nietzsche's writing are based on certain presuppositions that are alien to Nietzsche himself. The logic of non-contradiction central to the efforts to 'straighten' Nietzsche's notion of truth, and the understanding of the nature of the sign as the re-presentation of the self, are never an element within Nietzsche's understanding of the nature of truth and language. The shadow of contradiction which has been seen to challenge Nietzsche's writing is, rather, entirely in keeping with Nietzsche's understanding of the nature of semiotic functioning and more significantly, as I shall show, is consistent with Nietzsche's understanding of the nature of the self. The debate between Schacht and Danto seeks to trace a unified and singular self, Nietzsche, who manifests a certain unified and singular perspective through a unified corpus whose signifiers re-present that thought which houses the self, the name, Nietzsche. The thought of Nietzsche on truth for the interpreters treated, by virtue of it re-presenting a unified self, can never break into two, opposing itself[91]. I have however already shown how Nietzsche's understanding of the sign necessarily precludes such a reading of Nietzschean positions in terms of an extenuation of presence. For Nietzsche the nature of both interpretation and the sign which attempts to give voice to it, denies the possibility of either a stable signification or a unified and stable self as the process of utilitarian falsification, in terms of the organisms own needs, contaminates the very nature of the sign and falsifies, for Nietzsche, the experience of the real. I will proceed in chapter 2 to illustrate Nietzsche's understanding of the self and will show that the very basis for the straightening attempts of the interpreters featured, the unified concept of the self, is also rejected by Nietzsche. Nietzsche, in grounding his notion of the self in his notion of the will to power, develops what he considers to be an organic account of

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Derrida, undecideability, rejecting the binary oppositions fact/fiction truth/lie alive/dead etc. that structure the oppositional logic of non-contradiction, is a component of western philosophy but one philosophy can never recognise - or it will cease to be philosophy, it is a truth philosophy must refuse to believe. Similarly here, despite many of Nietzsche's interpreters, his writing is such that the comfort of order is never fully restored, its presence disrupts, denies and breaks itself and by virtue of this, for Derrida, it destabilises that within which it participates. For Derrida it participates in the metaphysical tradition becomes part of it and then breaks, puts itself under erasure, through this procedure however it poisons the tradition it both affirms and denies and it does so precisely by virtue of this affirmation and denial which is not two movements, two aspects, but one, the same; it refuses to oppose and thus destabilises the opposition of affirmation and denial.

[91] Again this is only the case if the opposing elements participate co-temporally. If as with Wittgenstein, the radical oppositions can be identified as representative of different periods, the harmony between biography and corpus is maintained. Both are unified as the texts can be seen to map the personal development of the self. With Nietzsche, throughout, the same juxtaposition of contradictory claims are manifest.

the self as a plurality of competing drives "In the case of an animal it is possible to trace all its drives to the will to power, likewise all the function of an organic life to this one source" (WP: 619). This plurality allows for such contradictory notions, as the self can harbour two contradictory concepts by virtue of its plural orientations. In Nietzsche this is not indecision or weakness as the truth is not one position to be decided through rational enquiry, signification, rather, exists as the attempted mapping of a contradictory and unstable stream of sensory data. Nietzsche's writings then of self, concept and sign, participate in a consistent understanding of the relationship of plural self, to the polysemous sign it produces, but can never be re-presented by. Nietzsche's provocative and highly contradictory conceptions of truth and language as have been illustrated throughout this chapter can not be 'straightened' of their contradiction. They do however participate in a consistent philosophy of the relation between self and sign as will be explored further in the following chapter. It will be these understandings of sign and self, seemingly so at odds with theological anthropologies, which I will then read in light of a Christological metaperspective in the final chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

NIETZSCHE AND THE CONCEPT OF THE SELF: THE WILL TO POWER AS AN ONTOLOGY OF VIOLENCE

Having arrived at an understanding of Nietzschean concepts of language and truth in the first chapter, I now come to discuss a Nietzschean notion of self. It has, in common with the first chapter of this section, the goal of elucidating a trajectory of Nietzschean thought from Nietzsche to the present day. The trajectory of Nietzschean thought through the work of such post-structuralist thinkers as Derrida has been well documented and acknowledged not least by these authors themselves[92]. In this chapter I seek to portray a Nietzschean trajectory that is less well noted, echoing in the work of such diverse thinkers as Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett. As I used Derridian concepts to highlight Nietzsche's correspondence with certain semiotic positions in providing the bedrock for his perspectivist epistemology, here I attempt to portray Dawkins' notions of the effects of genetic activity on organisms' behaviour to illustrate the way in which, for Nietzsche, the will to power functions as the bedrock of the self. This strategy is, as I will argue, central to understanding Nietzsche's unsystematic writings on the will to power which resist systematisation by virtue of his style[93]. I also however seek to acknowledge Nietzsche's break from the tradition represented by Schopenhauer by attempting to construe an anthropology in materialist and often behaviourist terms[94]. In showing how Nietzsche's will to power becomes easier to envisage when it is assessed side by side with Dawkins accounts of the effects of genetic functioning, I stress the close proximity of Dawkins theories to

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[92] See Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy and History' in P. Rainbow (ed.), A Foucault Reader, (Middlesex: Penguin 1988) and Jacques Derrida, Spurs. Nietzsche's Styles, Tr. B. Harlow, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

[93] This point, which was central to the first chapter, will be addressed here in 1:1 and 1:2. The unsystematic nature of Nietzsche's philosophy which resists traditional explication has led to critics such as Alois Riehl, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, (Stuttgart, 1923), 25 and Wilhelm Windelband, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, (Tübingen, 1957) 577ff. questioning the philosophical significance of Nietzsche's 'artistic' thought. I will illustrate with reference to Nietzsche's style the difficulty in treating of him within the traditional presuppositions of explication.

[94] "Descartes was the first who with a boldness worthy of reverence, ventured to think of the animal as a machine; our whole science of physiology is devoted to proving this proposition. Nor, logically, do we exclude man, as even Descartes did. Our Knowledge of man today is real precisely to the extent that it is knowledge of him as a machine" (A: 14).

those of Nietzsche. Similarly, after establishing Nietzsche's account of the self as a purely biological functioning, I articulate the manner in which this biological functioning manifests consciousness with reference to Dennett's 'multiple drafts' model of the self[95]. Like Dennett, Nietzsche holds consciousness to be a mere surface phenomenon[96] shielding from view the mechanistic biological functioning within[97]. Dawkins and Dennett are introduced in this chapter then for two reasons, firstly their work helps elucidate the Nietzschean concept of the self that I wish to examine, a concept that resists systematisation by virtue of Nietzsche's style but may be teased out with constant comparison to the more systematic texts of the contemporary thinkers. Secondly I hope to portray the similarity between aspects of the work of Dennett and Dawkins and that of Nietzsche. This I argue is due to Nietzsche's consciously materialistic construal of the self and indeed all life forms as each organism is what it is for Nietzsche by virtue of the will to power[98].

I begin this chapter in highlighting certain core presuppositions of explication, which were central to my critiques in the earlier chapters. Explication presupposes firstly a space between the form of a text and its content. The commentator assists in explicating the content with reference to the form. The second presupposition I highlight is the concept of a unified self, residing as the author of a series of texts. This unified self binds together the texts that bear his name and, as the self is one, the texts also must be non-contradictory. In the last chapter I showed how Nietzsche scholarship has striven to preserve this union between the unified thought of the author and the texts that bear his name, binding them to the single self 'Nietzsche'. I proceed here to reiterate the contention that Nietzsche's explicit style is to bind form and content, his contradiction coming to mean only in the performance of the text as precisely an attack on the law of non-contradiction which shadows it. Therefore the first presupposition, a space between form and content, is missing from Nietzsche's work. As this space between form and content is collapsed the traditional strategies in explicating Nietzsche's texts cannot function as they normally would. By virtue of this I will seek to illustrate the nature and functioning of Nietzsche's understandings

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[95] Dennett, D. C. & Kinsbourne, M. 'Time and the Observer: The Where and When of Consciousness in the Brain'. In *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 15 (2): 183-247.

[96] For Dennett consciousness is an 'Epiphenomena'.

[97] For example see *Twilight of the Idols* 'The Four Great Errors' 3, where Nietzsche writes of such manifestations as "...merely a surface phenomenon of consciousness, an accompaniment to an act which conceals rather than expresses the antecedentia of the act".

[98] As Nietzsche writes, "In the case of an animal it is possible to trace all its drives to the will to power, likewise all the function of an organic life to this one source" (WP: 619).

of the self with reference with more traditional styles which readily submit to explication. With reference to the second presupposition, that of a unified self, which serves to bind the unified concepts contained within a corpus, is the topic I seek to examine in the rest of the chapter.

The pre- ppositions of explication

(A) The themes in Nietzsche's philosophy that I have thus far written about have centred around problems of content which were also and at once problems of form. Writing is, traditionally, a form of expression that expresses a content. It is analysed in terms of these two categories, form and content, which orientates all enquiries into the thought of any particular thinker. Academic enquiries seek to trace back the extenuation of presence that leads from text to thought to thinker, in this case Nietzsche. I am seeking to trace, via Nietzsche's texts, his understanding of the self. As interpreter my goal is to bridge the gap between Nietzsche's texts and his concepts which lie behind them. Explication is the attempt to draw, from the text, the thought which lies veiled within, thought which stems from the author who is the ultimate goal of this explication; I am seeking to portray that which is represented by the signifier *Nietzsche*. Without this linear and unified progression from text to thought to self, the basic grammar of academic discourse cannot function. From this perspective, seeing thought and text as two different stages, separating form and content, statements can be made, for example, as to the success of a thinker in getting his/her point "across". 'Across' here implies a separation, a separation between thought and text. The thought may be expressed either well or poorly in that the space may or may not be bridged, but even in the bridging the space is never dissolved. It is the condition of the possibility of commentary. The commentator inhabits this space and aids the text in transferring the content, which always lies beyond the text distant from the reader and close to the author. The entire procedure seeks to get 'beyond' a text to the 'thought' which is believed to exist, in a form, prior to or *behind* the text. This process and its uses were clearly evident in the debate on Nietzsche's signature discussed in the first chapter. Here we saw that once the central ideas of an author have been accessed through the text they can then be used to destroy other texts which seem to have the same signature. As the self is one and non-contradictory, texts that oppose the ideas contained in core, privileged texts, have their signature derailed.

They do not correlate with those ideas signified by the word "Nietzsche" and therefore may be consigned to the periphery, pushed outside the corpus, the *body* Nietzsche. In such a debate as the strietfall between Danto and Schacht the thought/content is identified with the signature and set against the text/form. For such procedures to function, and these are the procedures of academic enquiry, there must be a space between form and content. This is a central presupposition of explication.

(B) What is ultimately at stake in interpretation is that signified by the name, in this case Nietzsche. It seeks to obtain the use of the name of a thinker by working *back* from text, through the thought behind it, to the thinker, the self *behind* the thought. The form, which ultimately leads to content, can ultimately lead to the self, which is the destination of such academic enquiry. That Nietzsche which is, holds, assigns, thinks, the Nietzsche that functions in such expressions as “In Nietzsche” or “for Nietzsche”, is the orientation of scholarship. The goal of Nietzsche study is to be able to use such expressions, to decide the meaning of the texts and bind this meaning to a self, Nietzsche. It aspires toward the one name that holds a certain position. In the last chapter we saw how a circular procedure is begun positing core propositions of an author and binding them to this name. They establish the name and give it a signified. As such the name Nietzsche becomes identified, and is interchangeable with the core concepts thought to hold this name. This name which is one, unified and singular then serves to protect these propositions which cannot be contradicted by anything that *seems* to be bound to the name Nietzsche. The one, the unified whole of text and signature, cannot contradict itself. As the name is singular, unified and one, it fuels and is fuelled by the concepts that are the product of this unity and thus also are one. Therefore by virtue of this procedure, both name and content, self and thought participate in a linear unified logic of non-contradiction which establish the unity of the name/self which in turn establishes the unity and priority of that set of ideas

The impossibility of explicating Nietzsche's philosophy

(A) The expressed subject of my first chapter was Nietzsche's notion of truth. It was seen however that this subject was inextricably interwoven with semiotic presuppositions and the concepts which govern Nietzsche’s style. Nietzsche’s performative contradiction in asserting the non-existence of truth forces Nietzsche outside the boundary of traditional philosophy based as it is upon the logic of non-

contradiction. It plays with the impossibility of saying that which cannot be said, that there is no truth. It puts itself under erasure, it destroys itself. In doing so it was illustrated that Nietzsche's untruth claims called into question the tradition which cannot allow them to be. The explosion of the text damages that which the text seems part of. The conceptual categories outside the text, both in addresser and addressee, are alien to it. Its possibility denies a content other than itself. Nietzsche's style is his content, and so space between form and content is collapsed. This space central to the task of commentary is denied by the functioning of Nietzsche's texts as they come to mean, not by relating to standard logic accepted outside the text, but only through the interrelation of concepts, motifs and contradictions within the text. Nietzsche's 'exploding logic', his explicit self contradiction in asserting as a truth that there is no truth, functions not by correlating to the logical grammar of binary opposition but precisely by virtue of denying these structures. Its claims are manifest in its performance as opposed to its content, which, as the simultaneous assertion and denial of truth simply puts itself under erasure. It has no functioning which enables it to postulate a thought outside the text as the thought cannot exist outside its textual performance. Nietzsche saying as a truth that there is no truth has no referent outside itself, it has no sense, and as such it is non-sense. It functions to speak of the impossible possibility of the unsayable[99]. It is a semiotic functioning which has no signified outside itself. The first pre-requisite for explicating Nietzsche, a space between form and content wherein the critic can reside is collapsed by the mechanism of Nietzsche's texts. They resist interpretation within such categories.

(B) The second pre-requisite, the notion of the unified self will be the main focus in this chapter. I will proceed in light of the impasse created by Nietzsche's unification of form and content. Nietzsche cannot be read and moulded into systematic set of propositions without an act of pacifying violence toward the text. As an academic exercise however the goal of this text is the understanding of Nietzsche's texts within the categories established by the tradition. This situation cannot be resolved. The systematic writing of Nietzsche's concepts of self and text that I wish to argue for is, in this context, a performative contradiction. This said I will seek to minimise the etiolating violence by not arguing for a unified Nietzschean position accessible

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[99] This interpretation of the functioning of Nietzsche's performative contradictions is based upon Derrida's reading of Nietzsche's *undecideables*. See J. Derrida, *Spurs. Nietzsche's Styles*, Tr. Barbara Harlow, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

through his corpus, which can be upheld as a systematic possibility. Rather I will try to illustrate elements within Nietzsche's writing on the self with reference to other, often more traditional, notions on the self. The writings of Arthur Schopenhauer, Richard Dawkins, and to a lesser extent Daniel Dennett will be used as "host texts". Through understanding Nietzsche's writings in relation to their "systems" I hope Nietzsche's understanding of the self will emerge.

All three portray styles very different to Nietzsche. Their texts, unlike those of Nietzsche, yield to categorisation within the tradition, in that their styles readily submit to explication. Moreover all three thinkers set forward their views within the context of a tradition with a clear self-understanding. Schopenhauer saw himself as Kant's successor in the German idealist tradition and remained (as I shall argue) within the set categories of Kantian epistemology. Dawkins is a thinker with a clear and systematic understanding of his own position, ultimately that of scientific realism. Dennett too, by virtue of what Janice Moulton calls the "adversarial culture of philosophy", (what Dennett himself refers to as his game of "Burden Tennis" with Searle and Nagel) is incessantly clarifying and systematising his own "intentional stance". These thinkers have not exclusively been chosen for their similarity with certain Nietzschean writings, even though in all three there is a considerable overlap, rather the fixity of their thought allows for a representation of these overlapping principles to be contextulised in a manner that Nietzsche himself had no interest in. They also serve to highlight a strand of Nietzschean thought that I am keen to expose, a progression toward a mechanistic, behaviourist and often reductionist analysis of the self[100]. By binding such models of self to the ontology of violence that Nietzsche has become synonymous with, I seek in chapter three to utilise such a 'biological' understanding in arguing for the precise nature of Nietzsche's ontology over and against Milbank's analysis of it as merely 'one more mythos'[101]. Finally as

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[100] Nietzsche's views are not equitable with these three distinct categories of thought, my goal rather is to show Nietzsche's orientation toward a mechanist, behaviourist and reductionist concept of self in stark contrast to the models of self in the German idealist tradition from which he emerged. This said there are elements of all three forms of thought in Nietzsche's identification of the self with the will to power. The self is understood entirely mechanically by Nietzsche as a collectivity of biological processes. These processes determine the behaviour of the organism, although in a very different way from the form of behaviourism associated with Skinner (see this dissertation p.228 and following). It is also reductionist to the point of being a concept of self wholly in terms of one basic principle "The world is will to power and nothing else besides. And you yourself are will to power and nothing else besides" (WP: 1067).

[101] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) 280. I hope to show that while Nietzsche's ontology can be simply refused, as Milbank claims, such a

representative of this ontology I will seek in my final chapters to engage with such analysis in light of a Christological metaperspective.

I will begin in (2:1) by introducing Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will, which is, following Christopher Janaway, his understanding of the self in light of Kantian epistemology[102]. I will portray the similarities and more importantly the differences between his notion of the will and Nietzsche's will to power. By doing so I seek to at once develop an understanding of Nietzsche's will to power and also articulate this understanding as a break with the tradition represented by Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer's initial supplementation of idealist philosophy with materialist critiques is developed and extended by Nietzsche. I will then further develop Nietzsche's understanding with reference to Richard Dawkins understanding of the nature and function of DNA, another seemingly non-metaphysical, universally determinative force. Through Dawkins I attempt to examine the will to power 'in itself' by highlighting the phenotypic correlations between the functioning of the will to power and the manifestations of genetic functioning in certain organisms. By doing so I seek to provide a mechanism that allows a greater and more systematic understanding of how, for Nietzsche, the will to power comes to function as the self. It also serves to place Dawkins' ontology of violence in philosophical perspective, an understanding central to contemporising the discussions in chapters six and seven. Dawkins viral epistemology[103] introduces Dennett whose understanding of consciousness as an epiphenomenon[104] of a genotypic functioning re-articulates the relationship of the mind to the body in Nietzschean texts.

In this chapter I am aiming to illustrate how Nietzsche represents a shift within the tradition represented by Schopenhauer toward a more materialist analysis of the self which echoes in the contemporary analyses of Dawkins and Dennett. I hope to show

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refusal much represent a refusal of the principles of biological struggle which are central to a proper understanding of the will to power.

[102] For a thorough analysis of the relationship between Nietzschean thought and the German idealist tradition see *Nietzsche and Modern German Thought*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, (London: Routledge 1991).

[103] The overlap between the work of Dawkins and Dennett results from Dennett's enquiries into the relationship between evolution and mind. Key texts in this dialogue include Dawkins' 'Viruses of the Mind' in *Dennett and his Critics: Demystifying Mind*, Bo Dahlbom (ed.), (New York: Blackwell 1995) and Daniel. C. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life*, (London: Penguin 1996).

[104] See, Daniel C. Dennett & Marcel Kinsbourne, 'Time and the Observer: The Where and When of Consciousness in the Brain', in *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 15 (2): 183-247, 191.

how this materialist analysis leads Nietzsche to identify the will to power as that grounding source of the self. Ultimately I will be attempting to precisely identify the nature and functioning of the will to power in Nietzsche's understanding. I utilise the work of Dawkins and Dennett not to argue for a biolo cal sophistication, which Nietzsche is most certainly innocent of, rather I feel that it is the only way in which to make precisely clear how Nietzsche conceived of his complex and often misunderstood[105] concept of the will to power as functioning. Again this is not to argue that Nietzsche understood anything of genetics, his concept is never developed to this extent. He was clear however, as I hope to show, that the will to power was a biological functioning orientating the thought and action of every living thing. The way in which it orientates this thought and action invokes Dawkins, the way in which it manifests consciousness invokes Dennett. I hope to portray a manner of seeing the will to power in a way which allows a clearer perspective than the texts of Nietzsche's *Nachlass* often allows. The introduction of Dawkins also allows me to focus again on the trajectory of thought that I seek to assess in light of contemporary theology. Nietzsche's will to power originates an ontology of violence, by understanding Dawkins and Dennett in this light I illustrate a contemporary manifestation of this ontology that has been too little recognised, and that I, in my final chapter seek to understand and interpret in relation to theology today.

2:1 Schopenhauer

For Richard Rorty the current problems in philosophy, resulting from the impasse created by radically different conceptual frameworks, stem, ultimately, from Kant[106]. Kant, for Rorty, perfects and codifies two distinctions that are necessary to develop the notion of alternative conceptual frameworks - the distinction between spontaneity and receptivity and the distinction between necessary and contingent truth. Since Kant we find it almost impossible to avoid thinking of the mind within these categories. As soon as we begin to think within these categories it occurs to us as it did, say, to Hegel "that the all important *a priori* concepts, those which determine what ever our

[105] For an analysis elucidating the history of these misunderstandings see Bernd Magus, 'Nietzsche's Philosophy in 1888: The will to power and the *Übermensch*', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 24, I (1986), 79-98.
[106] Richard Rorty, "The World Well Lost" in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (1972).

experiences or our morals will be, might have been different".[107] To change our concepts is to change what we experience, our "phenomenal Worlds", and thus for Rorty, as indeed for Derrida[108], the conceptual framework established ultimately erodes the root notion of universal conceptual frameworks and thus destroys itself. If we conceive of our perceptions of the world being dependent on our conceptual frameworks, as we do after Kant, then we can imagine, with difficulty, that an alternative conceptual framework results in an altered perception of the world. For Rorty the potential facticity of alternative conceptual frameworks is enough to erode any claim to universal ones.

The problem occurs however in that the grammar with which anyone seeks to conduct epistemological enquiry is Kantian. The grammar of conceptual frameworks whereby necessary *a priori* categories filter receptive, contingent, phenomenological data has never been transcended, such is the status of Kant's achievement. That these conceptual frameworks contain the tools of their own deconstruction is Kant's legacy. Therefore we have the impasse that Rorty illustrates. To do philosophy is to conceptualise epistemological reality within the Kantian lexicon yet when the philosophical enterprises, using these linguistic tools, can't sustain themselves, we are left with bankrupt models for thinking about the mind. For Rorty philosophy must seek to change its lexicon in order to transcend this impasse.[109]

The key point raised in this reference to Rorty is the extent to which Kantian terminology dominates reflection on the mind. Following Christopher Janaway I will argue that Schopenhauer's notion of the will is an attempt to formulate a notion of that self which is impossible after Kant (a concept of the self *in itself*). The problems and inconsistencies that darken Schopenhauer's philosophy stem from a tension between two different lexicons, the lexicon of transcendental philosophy and that of natural science. Through contrast with Schopenhauer I hope to illustrate the move by Nietzsche further away from the lexicon of transcendental philosophy culminating in his materialist model of self.

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[107] Richard Rorty, "The World Well Lost" in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (1972), 649.
[108] Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
[109] For Rorty, as a pragmatist, the model of a remote world as a distant unknowable thing in itself, surrounded by orbiting conceptual frameworks which are assessed as true or false by virtue of their proximation to this *Ding-in-Sich* is unhelpful. Ultimately he proceeds to argue for the use of philosophical models based on their utility within terms of a pragmatic, rather than a coherence, model of truth.

Schopenhauer within Kantian epistemology

Unlike Schopenhauer, the style of Nietzsche's writings make the question as to what exactly he had read or understood in a previous thinker almost unanswerable. His treatment of Kant (particularly WP: 446, 459) seems to indicate that at times Nietzsche views Kant's transcendental subject as having a substantial quality. This however fails to do justice to the sophistication of Kant's thought which Nietzsche either simply misunderstood or sought to vilify in order to present elements within his own thought. How well Nietzsche read or understood Kant is undecideable. In Kant however the "I" does not function in the platonic fashion that Nietzsche often attacks. The "I", rather, is the singular collectivity of *Vorstellungen* unified in oneself as a single subject. Outside of this we can have no knowledge of any numenological self. It is an "I" grounded not ontologically but epistemologically. In this Kant continues on the Cartesian enterprise, yet Kant's writings create a different impression. Descartes' "I" has been read as pointing toward a metaphysics, in that the focus is on the viewer within the Cartesian theatre. It points toward a "ghost in the machine"[110] to echo Gilbert Ryle, as the "I think" sustains but ultimately makes way for the "I am". Kant's epistemology is less metaphysical in that the lexical entries under the subject viewed non-empirically are blank. The *a priori* categories that shape our perceptions are indeed metaphysical categories, but in that they are universal they are not about the "I" as individual, in Kant's understanding of it, rather they are a metaphysical "genus". The *a priori* categories cannot define a particular self, but selfhood in general. The self, that which I am, is based upon the interaction between these categories and sensible data. The sensible data is the individual element. The focus in talking about the "I" then, is not the universal categories but the individual's qualia[111]. The Kantian transcendental subject functions only as the condition of the possibility

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[110] Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind.* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1949) 15-16

[111] This is not to argue for the existence of qualia, merely to state that as a metaphor if functions to describe the truly individual aspect of the I in relation to general a priori categories in Kant. The debate on qualia is never entered into in this chapter. For an articulation of the existence of qualia see P. S. Kircher 'Phenomenal Qualities' in American Philosophy Quarterly 16 123-129 and for a vicious attack on the concept of qualia with specific reference to Thomas Nagle's famous article 'What is it like to be a Bat?' see D. C. Dennett 'Quining Qualia' in *Consciousness in Contemporary Science*, A. Marcel. And E. Bisiach (eds.), (Oxford: university Press 1988) also his 'Instead of Qualia' in *Consciousness in Philosophy and Cognitive Neuroscience*, A. Revoniso and M. Kamppinen (eds.), (Hillsdale: Laurence Erlbaum 1994)

of experience. The facticity of experience requires an experiencer who exists as the collectivity of these *Vorstellungen.*

In the *World as Will and Representation*[112] Schopenhauer remains faithful to this transcendental subject and yet seeks to develop it. Using Kantian epistemology the subject for Schopenhauer is "the bearer of the world, the condition of all appearance of all object".[113] Again, as in Kant, subject and object are mutually exclusive categories always separated by a spatial distance. His primary metaphor is that of the eye which sees out over a spatial distance to an object. This however alienates the subject from its object, "Since the representing I, the subject of knowing, as the necessary correlate of all representations, is their condition, it can never itself become representation or object"[114]. The perennial problem in enquiries into the self since Kant is thus initiated as "when the knower tries to turn itself inwards, in order to know itself, it looks into a total darkness, falls into a complete void".[115] This is the problem that Schopenhauer and indeed all post-Kantian philosophy must face when looking at the question of the self. If the epistemological model used operates within subject/object categories and a spatial distance cannot be arrived at wherein a subject can be distant from itself and thereby perceive itself, then, the subject has no "tools" with which to construct a concept of the self. The "I" that functions only in the "I think" is directed outward, becoming manifest only in the facticity of perception. The active faculties of the self, its transcendental categories, mould its perceptions of the world and its passive, sensory, perceptive faculties have the world imposed upon them. There is no room within this model of Kantian epistemology to know the self in itself, as the word knowledge functions only to describe the *relationship* between empirical data and the subject's *a priori* categories. Following Kant, Schopenhauer finds himself corralled by the language of epistemology into an impasse. The I in itself is off limits within the Kantian epistemological framework, Schopenhauer, then, must push the limits of transcendental philosophy in order to write about the self.

The area of philosophy that does not, for Schopenhauer, receive its due within Kantian thought is physiology "For it is just as true that the knower is a product of

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[112] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* Vol. 2 Trans. E Payne, Oxford Clarendon Press (1974) hereafter WWR.
[113] *The World as Will and Representation,* 46.
[114] Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the fourfold root of sufficient reason* Trans. E Payne, (Illinois: La Salle, 1974), 207.
[115] Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the fourfold root of sufficient reason* Trans. E Payne, (Illinois: La Salle, 1974), 208.

matter as that matter is the mere representation of the knower" (WWR p.13). Schopenhauer seeks to supplement transcendental philosophy with investigations which are "empirical; it takes the world and the animal beings present in it simply as given using them as its starting point." (WWR p.72). As Christopher Janaway writes of Schopenhauer's stance "Materialist explanations of consciousness cannot be total because they must ignore the essential viewpoint of the subject. But that viewpoint alone is also incapable of giving a complete account. We are objects as well as pure subjects. Empirical science must supplement transcendental epistemology."[116] And so Schopenhauer seeks to broaden transcendental philosophy by incorporating empirical inquiries based on the material structure of he human. This is a step that is developed significantly, as I will show, by Nietzsche. By virtue of this however, Schopenhauer attempts to inhabit a lexicon that allows him to speak about the self in itself, and in doing so he inaugurates the problem which Rorty refers to, that of the lexical juxtaposition when discussing epistemology. This difficulty in relating the lexicon of traditional (Kantian) epistemological enquiries to that of cognitive science will be a sub-theme throughout this chapter. It will come particularly into focus in the section on Dawkins where the language of natural science rests uneasily in a text about Nietzsche.

Schopenhauer's difference from Kant

The first element within Schopenhauer's understanding that seems alien to the Kantian lexicon is that Schopenhauer actively seeks a metaphysics of the thing in itself. Schopenhauer's *Willenmetaphysik* seeks to understand the core principal, which functions actively as the self. This core can be perceived, for Schopenhauer, as we are aware of our own actions. What acts? I do and I can see it happening in bodily movement. Furthermore I can identify the source of my actions - my will to act. This *will* is the core root that orientates our being in the world. This marks a further shift from both the platonic identification of self as soul and the Kantian thinking subject. Schopenhauer refuses to allow his account of the self to be exhausted by this transcendental subject as the physicality and "end-directedness" of the will becomes identifiable as our "essence".

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[116] Christopher Janaway, 'Nietzsche the Self and Schopenhauer', in *Nietzsche and Modern German Thought*, Keith Ansell-Pearson (ed.), (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 121/22.

This however seems out of place within the subject/object model of knowing that Schopenhauer never denies. Schopenhauer is forced to argue that the subject knows a distinct subject of willing when the subject acts. Furthermore this acting/willing subject is totally identifiable with the subject that perceives the willed act. Both are I, the I that does and the I that knows that I am doing. Schopenhauer's account labours and stumbles under the yoke of Kantian terminology as in an effort to remain faithful to it he envisions a self that does and an independent self that witnesses this action. In an effort to retain an epistemology of spatial distance, Schopenhauer invokes a model of self consciousness which evokes traditional dualism's between the thinking *I*, and the willing *I* of my animal drives. This dualism functions in platonic texts as well as in Kant, and Schopenhauer's initial foray into an understanding of the physiological essence of the self, in an effort to be epistemologically viable, falls back into these dualisms. This, as we shall see, is not something that Nietzsche does. Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will however is utterly alien to the thought of Plato and Kant in that for Schopenhauer, the I is never located in a spiritual or rational attempt to curb the instinctive will. The triumph of spirit or reason over our instincts is not something that Schopenhauer sees as relevant or even desirable, for Schopenhauer the will, as instinctive biological urge, has primacy. While his attempts to remain within the subject/object categories of Kantian epistemology force him into a dualistic understanding of the relationship between mind and will, Schopenhauer unlike Plato and Kant reverses the opposition through privileging the will. For Schopenhauer it is the will which orientates all other action and as such represents the core essence of the self.

Having seen the way in which Schopenhauer, while staying within the framework of Kantian epistemology, transcends the Kantian subject through incorporating a notion of physiological essence, I will now develop this understanding by discussing what Schopenhauer understood by the notion of will.

Schopenhauer's notion of Will

For Schopenhauer, the will is the drive that manifests itself actively in both consciousness and subconscious behaviour. It is at once a rational choice and a reflex reaction. Ultimately for Schopenhauer the will functions to facilitate the success of a human organism within its environment. It is *Wille-zu-Leben* - the will to life. Each

physiological manifestation of ourselves is the manifestation of our will, "teeth gullet and intestinal canal are objectified hunger; the genitals are objectified sexual impulse" (WWR p.5). Knowing also and its material embodiment, the brain, are manifestations of the "will to know". For Schopenhauer all mental activity is orientated by our will. It is as if Schopenhauer understands the will as fulfilling the same function as Kant's *a priori* categories as all empirical data passes through our own filters of end-directness, the end being sustaining ourselves in the world. Each of our capacities and cognitive limitations/conditionings are manifestations of our will functioning for our own (biological) ends. Thus for Schopenhauer, while we may, like Plato, Descartes, and Kant see ourselves as self conscious subjects of intellect engaged in a battle to subdue pre-rational base drives, we ought to see even our intellect as a manifestation of our will's need to succeed within its environment. The will has primacy over our cognitive functions as our cognitive functions, like the choice to move a limb or even to eat and breathe, are manifestations, consciousness and unconsciousness of our will.

It must be said however that this creates an impression of Schopenhauer as being more Nietzschean than the overall impression of his texts will allow. For example Schopenhauer's aesthetics again slip back into the Kantian lexicon. The aesthetic experience occurs for Schopenhauer by "losing oneself completely in the object in forgetting precisely one's individual, one's own will, and remaining only as pure subject, as clear mirror of the object" (WWR p.178). A Schopenhauerian retention of a Kantian form of aesthetics however confuses and ultimately contradicts his claims for the primacy of the will. The binding of aesthetic judgement to the will seems far more obvious than many of the other claims that Schopenhauer makes yet the focus of Schopenhauer's aesthetics is the object appreciated rather than the appreciating, will-driven subject. Nietzsche's own aesthetics, as I will show, remain bound within the physiological category of the will to power. A will based notion of aesthetics in either a Schopenhauerian or Nietzschean sense of will seems obvious but Schopenhauer seems reluctant to 'relegate' it to this level.

My reading of Schopenhauer is one that owes a lot to the brilliantly lucid study of him by Christopher Janaway[117]. For Janaway however the contradictions we see in Schopenhauer based upon (a) his retention of a basic Kantian epistemological framework while attempting to ascertain metaphysical thing in itself (i.e. the self as

[117] Christopher Janaway, 'Nietzsche the Self and Schopenhauer', in *Nietzsche and Modern German Thought*, Keith Ansell-Pearson (ed.), (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 121/22.

will) and (b) his abandonment of the will despite its primacy, for an aesthetics that is simply romantic; is, in a sense a creative tension. I cannot agree with this. Schopenhauer's Kantianism corrals his philosophy into self-contradiction. Yet, in my first chapter I argued that the self-contradiction inherent in Nietzsche's conception of truth was productive and significant in terms of an understanding of his philosophy of self and sign. The difference is that Nietzsche has no linguistic framework within which he has at his disposal the semiotic tools to say what he wishes to proclaim. His attack is therefore an attack on an all-encompassing tradition, the logic of non-contradiction. There is no way of proclaiming that there is no truth without putting one's statement under erasure on the basic grounds of what we mean by such words as sense and logic. Thus Nietzsche's oxymoronical notions on truth may have a creative purpose. A very generous reading of Schopenhauer coupled with a belief in the ultimate truth of Kant's epistemological framework could possibly argue for Schopenhauer's contradiction to be read in the same light. I however would not. His aesthetics non-creatively contradict his philosophy of will because it is simple, even obvious to extend his notion of will to the realm of aesthetics[118]. By holding up aesthetics over and against the will as a potential will-less enterprise, Schopenhauer undermines, not the tradition that forces the contradiction, but his own attempts to articulate a concept of the self distinct from transcendental philosophy.

Schopenhauer's texts thus represent an element of the lexical confusion that Rorty refers to. For Schopenhauer the grammar of epistemology can never be anything but Kantian. He forces himself into contradiction by consistently attempting to express his notion of the will within a Kantian framework. Here again we come to the sub-theme of this text, the interaction between physiological and philosophical models of the self. Schopenhauer is perhaps the first significant thinker who represents this difficulty, that of inhabiting two lexicons, two grammars through which we may speak to the I. While Schopenhauer's main role in this chapter is to allow for a greater understanding of Nietzsche's notion of will to power through contrast with his concept of Will, he is also significant in that with Schopenhauer physiological understandings of the self begin to function alongside epistemological ones. It is

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[118] Nietzsche's attacks on Schopenhauer's aesthetics are at their most aggressive in *Twilight of the Idols*, 21 and 22 where he writes, "Schopenhauer speaks of beauty with a melancholy ardour – why, in the last resort? Because he see it as a bridge which one may pass over... it is to him redemption from the will". For an example of Nietzsche binding aesthetics to physiology even as early as *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) see Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (Princeton University Press, 1974), Ch. 1.

tempting to say that Schopenhauer opens up the way for Nietzsche to understand the self as entirely corporeal – "body am I, and Soul"- thus speaks the child. And why should one not speak like children? But the awakened and knowing say body am I entirely and nothing else" (Z: "On the Despisers of the Body" 4) and not only as corporeal but as a type of will functioning entirely physiologically "This world is the will to power-and nothing besides; And you yourselves are also this will to power - and nothing besides." (WP: 1067). Schopenhauer represents a further development from ontological models of self, to epistemological models, through to physiological models, albeit combined with Kantian epistemology. This combination represents, as we shall see, a stark difference to Nietzsche whose texts negate the epistemological articulation of the I in favour of the will to power. I will now seek to elucidate Nietzsche's controversial and complex notion of the will to power, noticing primarily its difference from Schopenhauer's *Wille-zu-Leben.*

Nietzsche's difference from Schopenhauer's notion of will

> "the fundamental mistake is simply that, instead of understanding consciousness as a tool and particular aspect of the total life, we posit it as the standard and the condition of life that is of supreme value[119]. It is the erroneous perspective of a *parte ad totem* which is why all philosophies are instinctively trying to imagine a total consciousness, a consciousness involved in all life and will, in all that occurs, a 'spirit ', 'God'. (WP: 707)

Nietzsche here refers to the privileging of consciousness in terms of what Derrida attacks as the 'logocentric' orientation of western philosophy; the binding of word, reason and truth as the teleological destination of all philosophical enquiry, the pairing back of appearances to uncover the singular, unified one. For Nietzsche the transcendental subject that Schopenhauer retains within is simply a further representation of the platonic I, or the Christian soul, prior attempts at establishing an all encompassing truth that consummates philosophy. All three privilege unity over fragmentation, singularity over plurality. They are on the side of the logos, the good, truth, God. These perspectives look away from life to find the truth, reason or God that transcend it. Nietzsche is deeply suspicious of the philosophy of consciousness

[119] It seems probable that Nietzsche wrote this section as an attack on Kantian thought.

seeing it as a philosophy tainted by "theologian blood"[120]. If Christianity is "Platonism for the masses" then, for Nietzsche, transcendental philosophy is Christianity for the post enlightenment intelligentsia. Nietzsche denies the basic tenets of Kantian epistemology which are based upon the interpretative process between subject and object. Nietzsche refuses to write within these categories. The process of interpretation, for Nietzsche, can not be based on an understanding of the relationship between Subject and Object because Subject and Object are, for Nietzsche, already interpretations. This is the key difference between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer re-articulates the I/self/soul as a singular unified collectivity of perceptions while integrating a physiology in his analysis. Nietzsche simply refuses to write within these transcendental categories. The contradiction we have seen in Schopenhauer's concept of the self is thus negated in Nietzsche's work. Any form of correspondence between epistemological concepts and reality is denied by Nietzsche as both transcendental subject and the objects it perceives are interpretations already. The interpretative process, for Nietzsche, can not be understood through a process that is, in itself, always already interpretative.

Nietzsche understands such procedures as manifest selfhood in physiological terms, in a manner not dissimilar from Schopenhauer. "In the case of an animal. It is possible to trace all its drives to the will to power, likewise all the function of an organic life to this one source" (WP: 619) Putting on hold the exact understanding of the will to power we can see here that it functions in similar fashion to the will to... of Schopenhauer's Will to life. The ultimate criterion of truth "is merely the biological unity of...a system of systematic falsification: and since a species of animal knows nothing more important than preserving itself, one might be permitted here to speak of truth."(WP: 584). Nietzsche understands truth as "the adjustment of the world for utilitarian ends (thus in principle an expedient falsification)" (WP: 588). This pragmatic notion of truth[121], summarised by Nietzsche's claim that "truth is the kind of error without which a particular species of life could not live. The value for life is ultimately decisive" (WP: 493), was with Nietzsche even as early as *The Birth of Tragedy*. In *The Birth of Tragedy* we see Nietzsche's understanding of cave painting,

[120] "Kant's theological bias his unconscious dogmatism, his moral outlook, ruled, guided, and directed him" (WP: 530).

[121] It is however an oversimplification to argue as Arthur C. Danto does that Nietzsche had a stable concept of truth functioning in this utilitarian way. My objections to this position, in favour of a reading of Nietzsche's truth claims in terms of their textual functioning have been addressed in the preceding chapter.

the primal expression of the artistic drive, the first metaphorical[122] representation, as stemming from a physiological necessity to make sense of pain and suffering. It is a release valve, a re-configuration of a tragic world in categories that are manageable, definable. As such, representations, for Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, serve a vital physiological function. All truth claims are at best metaphorical interpretations, which functions like cave paintings, making sense of the chaotic procedures of existence.

So far we can see Nietzsche working in a similar manner to Schopenhauer in that knowledge is a function of the will. Like Schopenhauer the will, our base physiological functioning, is the category through which our experience is filtered and expressed as true or false. The first difference is that Nietzsche is more radical. Schopenhauer laboured to maintain basic Kantian categories while pursuing physiological models of the self, Nietzsche simply denies these categories' validity. The Kantian enterprise for Nietzsche is, rather, the modern manifestation of the logocentric orientation of philosophy since Socrates "Reason = Virtue = Happiness means merely one must imitate Socrates and counter the dark desires by producing a permanent daylight - the daylight of reason. One must be prudent, clear, bright at any cost, every yielding of the instincts to the unconscious, leads downwards[123]" (TI: 'The Problem of Socrates', 10). Enlightened reason, proclaiming the Kantian trinity of reason, virtue and, through the antinomy, happiness, attempts for Nietzsche, once again to veil the life affirming forces which sculpt existence, those "dark desires", the instincts. Over and against this conscious, enlightening brightness, Nietzsche proclaims the instincts, "The harshest daylight, rationality at any cost life bright, cold, circumspect, conscious, without instincts, has itself been no more than a form of sickness... To have to combat one's instincts - that is the formula for decadence; as long as life is ascending, happiness and instincts are one" (TI: 'The Problem of Socrates', 11). While the Kantian categorical imperative strove through the antinomy to reconcile virtue and happiness, for Nietzsche to privilege reason or virtue over the instincts is to initiate a sickness detailed elsewhere as resentiment (GM: essay 1)[124].

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[122] " What then is truth? ....A mobile army of metaphors" (TL: 4).

[123] By juxtaposing the will, desire and instincts with processes equating reason with virtue and ultimately happiness, Nietzsche is establishing a position clearly and consciously in opposition to Kantianism.

[124] For a thorough reading of this principle see Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson, (London: Athlone Press 1983).

Nietzsche then, like Schopenhauer, sees the processes which are articulated through such conceptual frameworks as Kantian epistemology as stemming from the will, from a physiological functioning. Nietzsche however, unlike Schopenhauer, sees certain types of conceptual frameworks - by and large those that constitute western philosophy since Plato - as being fundamentally opposed to the will (instincts). Nietzsche, again unlike Schopenhauer, thus refuses to conceive of the self within the epistemological framework of the tradition "The world is will to power and nothing else besides. And you yourself are will to power and nothing else besides" (WP: 1067). There is no room in Nietzsche's thought for concepts of the I within transcendental epistemological categories.

While Schopenhauer writes within the lexicon of transcendental philosophy and can thus, as we have seen, retain a romantic conception of aesthetics, for Nietzsche "Nothing is so conditional, let us say circumscribed as our feeling for the beautiful" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 19). Aesthetic judgement is also a manifestation of the will to power and is seen by Nietzsche in terms of power relations. He writes of an aesthetic judgement, not in terms of a response to intrinsic qualities, as if an object could possess them, but of its functioning in terms of the assertion of the self. Aesthetic judgement is the imbuing of an object with meaning rather deriving meaning from it "Of what can knowledge consist? - 'Interpretation' the introduction of meaning into things, not 'explanation'" (WP: 486) For Nietzsche the relationship between the subject and art represents the functioning of the will to power as the self interprets the aesthetic value of an object in light of its own goals of self enhancement "...species cannot do otherwise than affirm itself alone in the manner. Its deepest instincts, that of Self-preservation and self-aggrandisement is still visible in such sublimated forms" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 19) As such that which represents power in the cultural matrix of the interpreter, be it strength or sophistication, is synonymous with 'the beautiful'. Nietzsche's understanding of the self as a physiological functioning of the will is more radical than Schopenhauer's and in doing so transcends the boundaries of the epistemological framework Schopenhauer writes within. Nietzsche thereby avoids the tensions and contradictions that Schopenhauer's notion of the will labours under.

So far we have seen that Nietzsche and Schopenhauer incorporate and to varying extents privilege the will in their understandings of the self. We have more significantly seen the differences between their fusion of this philosophical

physiology and traditional notions of the I in the form of its immediate other - the transcendental self. I will now discuss the most significant difference between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, the contrast between Schopenhauer's will to life and Nietzsche's will to power.

2:2 The will to power

Now that we have come to discuss th will to power as Nietzsche's understanding of the self we are again faced with the lexical confusion that Schopenhauer has been criticised for. At the very outset I should say that the notion of the will to power, as I read it, is not stable. It has a plurality of meanings, often contradictory. Previously I read such contradictions in light of their grounding in Nietzsche's semiotics rather than in terms of an internal incoherence. Here, as I shall further argue, such plurality and contradiction is entirely consistent with the Nietzschean notion of the self, which I hope will emerge by the end of this chapter.

The contradiction stems from Nietzsche's "metaphysical" truth claims on behalf of the will to power as he understands "all effective forces univocally as the will to power"(A: 2). Nietzsche attacks notions of truth and yet claims "you yourselves are also the will to power -and nothing besides", he attacks notions of good and proclaims "What is good - All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man" (A: 2). The will to power is expressed as that determining force which, like Schopenhauer's *wille zu leben* impels action in all organic life. Nietzsche however mistrusts Schopenhauer's use of the will, which he sees as a further translation of the platonic I, or the transcendental self in the unity of experience. For Schopenhauer the will is ultimately an analysis of the I outside perspectives, as Nietzsche writes "Schopenhauer's interpretation of the 'in-itself' as will was an essential step, but he remained entangled in the moral - Christian ideal"(WP: 1005). Schopenhauer identified it with the I, the self, while still conceiving of the self as a conscious willing entity. Nietzsche's will to power cannot function in this fashion. It determines the self and ultimately is identifiable with it, yet it transcends the self and this is a significant distinction. The self certainly cannot be conceived as a singular unified "I" orientated by this will. With Schopenhauer, Nietzsche can identify the will as that which preserves life "The usefulness of preservation stands as the motive behind the

development of the organs of knowledge, they develop in such a way that their observations suffice for our preservation" (WP: 480). But more than that, for Nietzsche "I consider life itself instinct for growth, for continuance for accumulation of forces, for Power"(A: 6). The will to power does not drive towards the *preservation* of the self and thereby manifest itself as the I, the control centre of the body, it strives for power "every living thing does everything it can not to preserve itself but to become more[125]" (WP: 1067). Because of this "life is merely a special case of the will to power". It is not limited by the boundaries of the *I* even though the *I* is limited to it. The *I* and the life of the *I* does not exhaust the will to power. This is in stark contrast to Schopenhauer's Will to Life, which orientates itself toward preservation of the individual. This is the reason that Schopenhauer can identify the will with the *I*. For Nietzsche a similar move cannot be made, as the will to power is not identifiable with the *I* as it is not limited to it, it transcends it.

While the will to power then exhausts every I, every embodiment of I, it functions independently in such a way as to betray the illusion of unity. It is viewed by Nietzsche as the fundamental principle of all organic life, as well as the embodiment, never the exhaustion, of that principle in the human body. Every experience and interpretation made by this organism is a manifestation of the will to power "and nothing besides". Because of this Nietzsche can view reason as an "expedient classification" of the world for utilitarian ends. All qualia are manifestations of this will to power.

The will to power *in itself*

Before we can understand how the will to power functions in relation to the self, before we narrow our perspective and examine how Nietzsche construed the self, we must appreciate its functioning in itself. *In itself* here is a dangerous phrase and serves only as a metaphor for a more focused perspective on this process. What I would like to do for the purposes of clarity would be to take the will to power out of its manifestations and view it by itself, under a microscope. From this perspective we could understand better (a) what it is, (b) how it is so different from Schopenhauer's notion of will and most importantly (c) how it can function as Nietzsche's

[125] In this passage Nietzsche sought to elucidate his position over and against that of Darwinism.

understanding of the self. This is impossible for many reasons not least of which is the fact that the will to power is never referred to by Nietzsche as either a physical element or a systematic concept. What I propose to do however is to utilise the work of a thinker that, unlike Nietzsche, strives for a systematic clarity albeit based to an extent upon a lack of semiotic sophistication. Richard Dawkins writes of the nature and functioning of DNA in itself in a manner unavailable to Nietzsche. I hope to use Dawkins' account of the effect of genetic functioning on an organism to aid an understanding of the functioning of the will to power. By showing the correlations in these concepts I aim to place Dawkins' thought within the trajectory of post Nietzschean ontologies of violence. DNA is an element which has many similarities with the will to power and by focusing on these similarities we can use Dawkins' concept of DNA as a "Trojan horse" to help us to get inside the notion of will to power. Focusing on these similarities can help us imagine what *in itself* the will to power might look like, and by virtue of this, come to a greater understanding of its specific character and its functioning in/as the self.

Like Nietzsche's will to power, Dawkins writes of the Selfish Gene[126] as a force which comprises the self and yet transcends it. Unlike his forebear Darwin[127] he does not see its functioning as teleological[128] and thus does not incur the wrath Nietzsche displays when he writes of Darwin "Species do not grow more perfect!" (Expeditions

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[126] Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[127] Or at least in Nietzsche's understanding of Darwinism.

[128] It is predominantly in this sense that the lines drawn between Dawkins and other contemporary Darwinists such as Stephen Gould and Richard Lewontin can be misleading. Dawkins accounts of genetic functioning rages against teleological interpretations lending itself more easily to identification with a Nietzschean ontology of violence. By virtue of this he seems alien to the kind of Darwinian thinking attacked by Gould and Lewontin as 'adaptationism' see R. Lewontin "Adaptation", *Scientific American*, 293, no. 3 (September), 213-230. The difference between Dawkins understanding and any form of adaptationism will become clear in the utilisation of him in this chapter. Dawkins however does utilise Dennett's 'intentional stance' a strategy for more clearly being able to understand the orientating properties of genetic functioning by superimposing on biological organisms intentional states. See D. Dennett, *The Intentional Stance* (Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), 237-250. This defensible strategy however is made unpalatable to Gould and Lewontin by virtue of Dennett's binding of such a position to his defence of the "Panglossian Paradigm" "Intentional Systems in Cognitive Ethnology: The 'Panglossian Paradigm' defended," *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, 6, 343-90, which represents the incorporation of adaptationism as an defensible interpretative tool. Such a deliberately incendiary position does much to draw the lines between the diverging factions within the engagement between evolutionary theory and cognitive science, see S. J. Gould and R. Lewontin, "The Spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian Paradigm: A Critique of the Adaptationist Programme," *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, B205, 581-98. Dawkins use of an intentional stance should however be differentiated from any from of Darwinian teleology or adaptationism as the use of Dawkins in terms of *River out of Eden* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1995) (hereafter RE) will make clear. A further clarification of Dawkins' position in relation to such issues of adaptationism and intentionality can be found in R. Dawkins "Good Strategy or Evolutionary Stable Strategy?" in G.W. Barlow and J. Silverberg, eds. *Sociobiology: Beyond Nature/Nurture?* A.A.A.S. Selected Symposium. (Boulder: Westview Press) 1980.

of an Untimely Man', 14)[129]. I intend to highlight three main points in the correlation between Dawkins and Nietzsche. Firstly I aim to further articulate the manner in which Nietzsche's will to power, unlike, Schopenhauer's Will to Life, does not seek the preservation and perfection of an organism but simply more power, even at the cost of the life of the organism it orientates. This I seek to accomplish by acknowledging the manner in which DNA functions in certain organisms, using examples from Dawkins writings. Similarly I seek to show the way in which Nietzsche's concept, also unlike Schopenhauer, denies the 'surface phenomena of consciousness' appreciating the biological functioning, beyond good and evil, which lies at its root, again utilising Dawkins account of how certain seemingly rational or even caring actions in various organisms are little more than the conditioned reflexes of an automaton. Finally I aim to express the way in which for both thinkers these concepts deny the possibility of moral questioning.[130]

To illustrate Dawkins concept of the nature and functioning of DNA in a manner that at once highlights his proximity to an ontology of violence and serves to elucidate Nietzsche's will to power I will refer first to Dawkins' *River from Eden*[131](hereafter RE) particularly a chapter entitled "Gods Utility Function" and secondly to an article entitled "Viruses of the Mind"[132] (hereafter VM).

'Utility function' is a term used by economists to refer to that which is sought to be maximised. If we look at the behaviour of a government we should be able to trace its utility function back to universal welfare, or, in a different system, the continued power of the ruling class. Dawkins seeks to understand an organism by asking what its utility function is, what is it striving to maximise? This also is the type of reasoning through which Nietzsche traces the orientation of each organism back to the will to power as, for Nietzsche, that which is sought to be maximised is always power, "what is happiness? - the feeling that power increases that a resistance is overcome"(A: 2), "I consider life itself instinct for growth, for continuance, for

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35 Nietzsche's pronouncements on Darwinism make it difficult to gauge how much he had read of the principles of Natural selection.

[130] This notion is summed up in a manner suitable to both thinkers in his *On the Genealogy of Morals*, (Tr.) W. Kaufmann and R. Hollingdale (Ed.) (New York: Vintage Books (1989) 45, when he writes "To demand that a strength should not express itself as strength, that it should not be a desire to overcome, a desire to throw down, a desire to become master, a thirst for enemies and resistances and triumphs, is just as absurd as to demand that of weakness that it should express itself as strength".

[131] Richard Dawkins, *River out of Eden*, (London, Oxford, 1993).

[132] Richard Dawkins, "Viruses of the mind", in *Dennett and his Critics*, ed. Bo Dahlbom. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989).

accumulation of forces, for power" (A: 6). For Dawkins "That which is being maximised in the natural world is DNA survival" (RE: p.105). Yet "DNA is not floating free, it is locked up in living bodies and it has to make the most of the levers at its dispos " (RE: p.105). To this end, just like the will to power, DNA does not necessarily strain to sustain individual life, and most certainly not the life of a species; it spurs on toward power over and against others, fundamentally opposed to the herd mentality and pity ethics. As Dawkins writes "Why are forest trees so tall? Simply to overtop rival trees... God's utility function seldom turns out to be the greatest good for the greatest number. Gods utility function betrays its origins in a uncoordinated scramble for selfish gain" (RE: p.121).

This brings me to the first way in which Dawkins helps elucidate Nietzsche's concept of the will to power. We have seen how Nietzsche attacks Schopenhauer for conceiving of existence as a struggle for life, as if life, individual or even collective life, were an end in itself. For Schopenhauer the will orients all action toward the preservation of an organism, the will which functions as the bedrock of the self for Schopenhauer is *Wille zu Leben.* For Nietzsche the "struggle for life... does occur but as the exception..... Where there is a struggle it is a struggle for power" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 14) Whatever it is that Nietzsche means by the will to power[133], and this concept, for him, represents the orientating principle of life, it is something which seeks not to preserve the life of a particular embodiment. Rather it puts the embodiment at risk in its quest for enhancement "every living thing does everything it can, *not to preserve itself but to become more"* (WP: 1067), (my italics). This is a confusing aspect of the will to power to conceive of. We can readily, using the kind of reasoning that Nietzsche warns against,[134] understand the behaviour of an organism in terms of its own preservation. When its evolution puts itself at risk it seems to run contrary to basic evolutionary and utilitarian logic. Examples from Dawkins however help illustrate how this difficulty is a result of, like Schopenhauer, envisioning the will as limited and bound to the organism which embodies it. If we think of peacocks burdened with finery so heavy and cumbersome that it makes them incapable of useful work or male songbirds who while singing attract predators and use up such resources of energy that they have been known to expire in the effort, it can only strike us as strange and inconceivable in terms of Darwinian, or even

[133] Nietzsche's understanding of this concept becomes clear in the remainder of this chapter.
[134] See Twilight of the Idols 2,4.

Schopenhauerian categories. If we understand such phenomena however in terms of the will to power or the maximisation of DNA they make a lot more sense. Any sensible, preserving "utility function" would cut down on plumage and the extent of singing, but as Nietzsche criticises Darwin "species do not grow more perfect" they do not evolve teleologically, the genetic will to power that fuels their actions represent "an uncoordinated scramble for selfish gain". DNA, like the will to power, strives to become more, to enhance itself, even if that involves transcending the self in which it is embodied. What is being maximised is not the individual embodiment rather the DNA that orientates its actions. The illusion of unity as opposed to plurality, of the will as representing a singular I, leads Schopenhauer to identify the self with the will. As we will see in my final section, Nietzsche's will to power leads to an organism being subject to plural influences in a manner not dissimilar from the mechanism through which competing genetic switches orientates (even self-destructive) action in an animal. The will to power then must be seen as not being bound to the individual embodiment. It seeks not preservation but enhancement.

The second main difference in Nietzsche's will to power from Schopenhauer's Will to Life is in Nietzsche's complete break with the philosophy of consciousness. Nietzsche's will to power, his ontology of violence, is mirrored in the natural world portrayed by Natural Selection. This is an ontology that differentiates Nietzsche from Schopenhauer or indeed any exponent of the philosophy of consciousness. The philosophy of consciousness, for Nietzsche, sees a line extending from action back to a rational thought or self from which the action stems. Such a rational ground of action is, for Nietzsche, an illusion which is the result of "mistaking the consequence for the cause" (A: 57). We see the state of consciousness, the "conscious" acting and we postulate that it is its own cause. For Nietzsche however, as we have seen, consciousness is merely a manifestation of the functioning of the will to power. We see the effect and postulate a reality within it which is the cause of such an effect, a reality which is reasonable, moral or divine. The same process may be witnessed in relation to DNA which structures a "program" that leads to certain phenomena. As the will to power leads to consciousness, DNA too orientates an organism, it lies beyond it as the physiological program that directs it. As Nietzsche writes "Behind your thinking and feeling, my brother stands a mighty commander, an unknown wise one - it is called self. It dwells in your body, it is your body"(Z: 1, 4). Nietzsche thus writes of a kind of program that directs action; traditionally it is mistakenly seen as a rational

or moral consciousness by virtue of equating it with a seeming rational or moral act. For Nietzsche such interpretations fail to recognise the biological functioning that lies at its root. To explore this aspect of the will to power I will show examples from Dawkins illustrating how certain actions which initially seem to display consciousness or rationality are little more than conditioned responses to biological stimuli. They are at their most striking in the less complex brains of animals. Traditionally turkey hens were taken to be the most maternal of creatures. Their violent and self-sacrificing protection of their young was identified with a "conscious" or "emotional" state wherein they sought to protect them. Such an interpretation however fails to do justice to the extent to which they are following their "mighty commander" that "dwells in their body", their genetic program. The mechanism that orientates turkey hen's action, their "program" is that they attack transgressors in the vicinity of their nest unless such transgressors manifest the noise of a turkey chick. This process was discovered by the Austrian zoologist Wolfgang Scheidt who documented a turkey savagely attacking and killing each one of her chicks. This action resulted from the fact the animal was deaf. The chicks while looking and moving like turkey chicks fell victim to the mother's automatic and restricted definition of a 'predator'. As Dawkins writes "She was protecting her own children against themselves, and she massacred them all" (RE: p.65). Here we may see how the seemingly 'conscious' or even 'emotional' actions of the hen betray the 'mighty commander' of her genetic program, which creates the surface phenomenon of rational behaviour.

Such behaviour is less frequent in organisms with bigger brains, whose DNA programs are, as we shall see in the final section of this chapter, more plural and sophisticated. Differing programmes give rise to a multiplicity of criterion any one of which can assume primacy over and against the others. Accordingly in smaller brains with less "programs", this behaviour is more frequent. For example when a bee dies it emits oleic acid. Honeybees antenna have been found to be sensitive to only this one chemical and it triggers what is known as "undertaker behaviour"[135] in them, they arrive at the dead bee, the source of the oleic acid, and remove it from the hive. Experiments show that if a drop of oleic acid is placed on a live bee it is still removed, and in order to facilitate the program, stung to death to arrest its obviously live struggle. The program is followed to the letter.

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[135] See Karl Von Frisch, *The Dance Language and Orientation of Bees*, Tr. L. E. Chadwick (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press 1967).

Similarly the 'surface phenomena' of rationality that digger wasps manifest before entering their burrow is shown to be an illusion. Digger Wasps leave their prey at the entrance and proceed to check inside before returning to the hive (digger wasps are colonial). If the prey is moved a few inches from the point where it was carefully left, the digger wasps moves it back to the entrance and, once again checks inside. Her program has been reset to the earlier stage and will keep going in this loop ultimately until she starves. For Dawkins "The wasp behaves like a washing machine that has been set back at an early stage in its program and doesn't 'know' that it has already washed those clothes forty times" (RE: p.67). Its seemingly "sensible" or "rational" strategy of checking inside is the conditioned, potentially fatal, reflex of an automation. For Nietzsche all seeming rationality is ultimately an illusion[136] traceable to the biological functioning of the will to power. Of course, as I shall later discuss, bigger human brains function differently, although perhaps not as differently as we would like. The point of these examples is to illustrate elements of the functioning of DNA that help us understand the will to power. Firstly that supposed rational behaviour, like protecting one's young or "checking" for enemies before bringing in food provide what, for Nietzsche, is "merely a surface phenomenon of consciousness, an accompaniment to an act, which conceals rather than exposes the antecedentia of the act" (TI: 'The Four Great Errors', 3). The antecedentia of the act is the will to power, for Dawkins DNA, seeking to maximise itself. This is the process that orientates all life and unlike Schopenhauer's will to life is never equitable with the individual I. As Nietzsche writes "One is necessary, one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole, one is the whole - there exists nothing which could judge, measure, compare, condemn our being, for that would be to judge, measure, compare, condemn the whole... but nothing exists apart from the whole!" (TI: 'The Four Great Errors', 8). This *whole* is will to power "life is will to power and nothing else besides". The attempt to interpret the play of these forces as evidence of rationality or consciousness is simply mistaken. The second point illustrated by such examples is relevant to Nietzsche's difference from Schopenhauer, that of the difference between the will to life and the will to power. As we see, like the will to power, DNA functions prior to the apparent self, soul or rational subject that appear to be warranted by *seemingly*

[136] See Twilight of the Idols, 'The Problem of Socrates', 10, 11, 'Reason in Philosophy', 2-6, 'Morality as Anti-Nature', 3.

functional, moral or rational actions as neither are limited to the self (which is limited to it) as it seeks power, enhancement rather than preservation.

There is one final element in Dawkins account of the functioning of DNA that helps us to understand the conceptual difficulties in the will to power at this stage, and th is the manner in which it resists all questions of good and evil. Both the will to power and DNA in Dawkins' understanding are meta-moral realties.

For Nietzsche, setting out the proclamation of "we hyperborean's" in *The Antichrist* "Not contentment but more power; not peace at all, but war, not virtue but proficiency" (A: 1) is their agenda. The utility function is not a recipe for peace or anything that has been previously known as virtue "The weak and ill constituted shall perish" (A: 2) because of this "pity on the whole thwarts the law of evolution, which is the law of selection. It preserves what is ripe for destruction, it defends life's disinherited and condemned.... To say it again, this depressive and contagious instinct thwarts those instincts bent on preserving and enhancing the value of life"(A: 7). This principle, life, is understood by Nietzsche such that "I consider life itself instinct for growth for continuance, for accumulation of forces, for power"(A: 6). Such ideas lie at the core of Nietzsche's ontology of violence. The biological principle, the will to power orientates each organism to strive for enhancement and power. It denies the possibility of culpability in the manifestation of its strength (GM: 28-29, 38-71), and thus Christianity with its "pity creed ethics" represents the antithesis of the will to power, "Dionysus versus the crucified".

We may see a similar ontology at work in Dawkins whose reverse engineering of life leads him to conclude that what is being maximised, the utility function of life, is DNA survival, and "this is not a recipe for happiness...So long as DNA is passed on, it does not matter who or what gets hurt in the process" (RE: p.132). As an example of this he gives an account of the means by which a female digger wasp may lay her egg in a caterpillar (or bee) after guiding her sting into each ganglion of its nervous system so as to paralyse it but not kill it. This way the meat keeps fresh guaranteeing her hatching chicks a fresh supply of food when they arrive and eat their way out of the live caterpillar. This fact perplexed Darwin who could not equate it with a moral world created by a loving God. For Dawkins not only can it not be equated, but the very question of virtue or ethics is asinine. Similarly with gazelles or any other animal that at this very moment are been eaten slowly while still living in numbers too terrible to conceive of. We can easily conceive of a gene that would incorporate the

tranquillising of a gazelle or zebra during the suffering, but unless this tranquillising would lead to a greater chance of propagation for that gene, and it wouldn't, we must presume that it doesn't exist. As Dawkins sums up "In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt and some people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it or any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at bottom, no design, no evil, and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference" (RE: p.133). It functions beyond good and evil and seeks strength and power even at the expense of the self that embodies it. We can see then that for both Nietzsche and Dawkins the guiding principle of life is a biological functioning which orientates each embodiment of it to 'an uncoordinated scramble for selfish gain' (RE: p.121). Such functioning transcends questions of morality as for Dawkins, echoing Piet Hein "DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music" (RE: p.133)

There are then three elements of the will to power that become clearer when we see in itself courtesy of the "Trojan horse" of envisioning it in a similar manner to the "Selfish Gene". Firstly, unlike Schopenhauer's notion of the will which remained within subject/object categories and led him to see the will as a physiological, intentional *I*, Nietzsche's will to power cannot be posited as an I from the apparent manifestation of rational or moral actions, these actions for Nietzsche display "merely a surface phenomenon of consciousness, an accompaniment to an act, which conceals rather than exposes the antecedentia of the act" (TI: 'The Four Great Errors', 3). Secondly, unlike Schopenhauer and Darwin (in Nietzsche's reading of him), the will to power is not designed exclusively to preserve life and maintain the self. Evolution is anything but a perfecting agency through which the self advances. An interpretative framework used by Schopenhauer and Darwin which sees an organism's behaviour in terms of personal utility is not necessarily correct. The will to power, although entirely comprising the self, is not limited to it, and does not care about putting the individual embodiment at risk, caring only enhancement and power (WP: 1067), about DNA maximisation "every living thing does everything it can not to preserve itself but to become more"(WP: 1067). Finally, seeing the will to power in itself helps illustrate how, for Nietzsche, the will to power resists moral interpretation. Moral questioning of the will to power functions like moral questioning of a rock. As such we may see the correlation between these elements in Nietzsche and Dawkins. Both thinkers manifest a meta-moral ontology of violence. The behaviour whose root

is the will to power "neither knows nor cares, it just is", it denies classification in terms of what we have hitherto held to be virtue.

It is important to attempt to understand the will to power in itself to provide a framework within which we can appreciate how it functions. I have used Dawkins who writes, as a realist, of DNA *in itself* outside of a perspectival interpretation in order to offer a perspective that the texts of Nietzsche do not readily submit to. Such biological parallels with Nietzschean thought will be further explored in the following chapter where his biological understanding of the will to power will be illustrated in terms of its historical development through engagement with the embryology of Wilhelm Roux in order to differentiate a proper understanding of Nietzschean thought from the one which facilitates Milbank's dismissal. I have used such biological understandings as those of Dawkins in this chapter merely to provide a mechanism with which to explore the functioning of the will to power. In doing so however I have not only sought to show how, for Nietzsche, the will to power comes to orientate the action of each living thing but also to illustrate the extent to which he represents a movement away from the transcendental subject toward a materialist analysis of the self. I will now seek to further elucidate Nietzsche's concept of the self by examining the move from Descartes understanding of the I as the noumenal viewer within the Cartesian phenomenological theatre to the Nietzschean concept of 'the subject as multiplicity' (WP: 490)

2:3 The body and its selves

We have seen that while Schopenhauer persisted in interpreting the self in epistemological categories, Nietzsche represents an immense development through understanding the I in terms of the body; "I say you and are proud of the word. But the greater thing is what you will not believe in - your body and its great wisdom: it does not say I but does I." (Z: 1, 4). One of the most striking elements in this citation is the notion that the body has wisdom. This is seen as an illicit interaction between wisdom, which is something incorporeal, spiritual or rational, and the body, which is "just matter". Such dualisms have always been with us, and are ground into the very

bedrock of siglia.[137] Such phrases as "my body has a mind of its own" emphasise this idea that we are minds, embodied minds, but minds nonetheless; they are our *I*. Nietzsche's phrase "your body and its great wisdom" strikes us as strange because it denies this habitual dualism. To examine Nietzsche's notion of self I would first like to show the kind of thinking which has traditionally been seen to encapsulate this dualism in the modern era[138], Descartes' concept of self as a *res cogitans* or "thinking thing". I will then go on to show Nietzsche's radical difference from this concept with reference to both the will to power and Daniel Dennett's own attempts to assail this form of thinking. In doing so I hope to complete the illustration of how, for Nietzsche, the biological principle of the will to power can come to function as the self. We have seen it as the bedrock of the I orientating thought and action in an almost deterministic manner that for Nietzsche (and Dawkins) denies moral questioning. I would now seek to supplement this by accounting for the ways in which it provides the manifestation of consciousness and how for Nietzsche this consciousness can never be unified as a singular narrative centre. In doing so I will refer to Daniel Dennett, again seeking the dual goal of helping to systematise Nietzsche's concept and to manifest a contemporary exponent of this variety of Nietzschean thinking.

The shift from the philosophy of being to the philosophy of mind which constitutes much of modern philosophy has been seen[139] to have been inaugurated with Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*. Although enquiries into the nature of the I in terms of its cognitive faculties as opposed to its essential being precede Descartes, Descartes represents the philosophical evolution which grounds the facticity of being in the facticity of the beings self consciousness. As such, in contrast to the onto-theological constructs of the scholastics, the perspective on inquiry into the self in the shifts focus from being a fundamentally ontological question to being an epistemological one. To understand the nature and functioning of the self within Cartesian anthropology is to understand the nature and functioning of a self which is not identifiable with an isness which binds this self to the whole through participation in being itself. Rather this self is pursued through an understanding of it vis-a-vis the processes which orientate it,

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[137] See Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination,* tr. Barbara Johnston (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), 63-171.

[138] For thinkers as diverse as Pickstock and Dennett, Descartes inaugurates this dualism in the modern period.

[139] F. C. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, (Burns, Oates and Washbourne 1953), Vol. 3, it is also an underlying assumption of Dennett's paper to which this section of the chapter is indebted, see Daniel Dennett & Marcel Kinsbourne, 'Time and the Observer: The Where and When of Consciousness in the Brain'. In *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 15 (2): 183-247.

the cognitive functionings of a self-conscious mind. Theologically also it had a huge effect as the self, grounded via the *analogia entis*, in God, was now grounded in the cognitive act. For Descartes that which I am, my *isness,* is established, not through its basis in God's being who establishes the veracity of all being in Godself, but rather through the self's capacity to think and to know that it is thinking, as self conscious thinking agency grounds and illustrates the facticity of my isness. As such the self is for Descartes a *res cogitans*, an entity through which all the sensory data comes together for the perusal of mind. Much emphasis has been placed by such figures as Dennett on the role of the pineal gland in Descartes understanding of the self[140], as the narrative centre which overcomes the mind / body problem. In Descartes the mind / body problem, seen by Dennett as the central problem of contemporary Anglophone philosophy is overcome as a neurological location is established which receives a stable stream of sensory data and processes it into thought. This process, for Dennett's Descartes' fusing material functioning with meta-material mind is identifiable with and as the self. In Descartes a narratival focus of the self's consciousness is established, and thus the Cartesian mind functions for Dennett and Gilbert Ryle as a theatre in which the bodies interaction with the material world can be witnessed and decided on by the self. It is the place wherein the interaction between our material forms and what is established through the cognitive processes as our selves takes place. Here the I processes the body's interactions with objects and the resultant cognitive qualia structure the character of the self.

This image of Descartes utilised by Dennett and Ryle is a very tangible form of what is perhaps a more refined and sophisticated model that we earlier associated with Kant where the I is a collectivity of *vorstellungen.* In both cases the I is not the platonic soul or the medieval ontological entity participating in God's being, but a singular unity of perceptions[141]. Schopenhauer, as we have seen, develops this notion further along the lines of a wholly material concept of the I in his account of the self as will, yet once again seeing the will as unified and singular, an *I*[142]. I have also shown that by virtue of his desire to remain faithful to Kantian epistemology he never

[140] See, Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained.* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991) and "The Self as the Centre of Narrative Gravity." In *Self and Consciousness: Multiple Perspectives*, Eds. Frank S. Kessel, Panela M. Cole and Dale L. Johnson, (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1992) 103-115.

[141] Although Descartes, unlike Kant, incorporated these notions into his *res cogitans* and by virtue of this ontologises it.

[142] This identification of the Schopenhauerian will as a unity was alien to Nietzsche for whom "The old word 'will' only serves to designate a host of partly contradictory, partly congruous stimuli" (A: 14). It is because of this, as I will argue, that Nietzsche advocates a plural concept of self.

transcended the mind/body, subject/object, dualisms. Nietzsche's concept of self must be understood in contrast to these two elements in that (a) as we have seen, it strives to be an entirely materialist analysis and (b) It understands the self as plural rather than singular. The second of these two elements will be developed in what follows as I hope to illustrate how, for Nietzsche, the biological entity that orientates the self actively manifests itself as the self.

Nietzsche saw Descartes' articulation of the self as a development towards a materialist understanding that he himself was to fulfil, "Descartes was the first who with a boldness worthy of reverence, ventured to think of the animal as a machine; our whole science of physiology is devoted to proving this proposition. Nor, logically, do we exclude man, as even Descartes did. Our Knowledge of man today is real precisely to the extent that it is knowledge of him as a machine" (A: 14). Nietzsche's analysis of the self is structured by this insight resisting dualistic notions. As we have seen, over and against Kant he denies the identification of the self with self-consciousness. Yet he also denies the Schopenhauerian notion of the self as singular will, synonymous with the I, "All perfect acts are unconscious and no longer subject to will; consciousness is the expression of an imperfect and often morbid state in a person. Personal reflection as conditioned by will, as consciousness, as reasoning with dialectics, is a caricature, a kind of self-contradiction - a degree of consciousness makes perfection impossible" (WP: 289). Here we can see Nietzsche's fundamental oppositions at work, that between the will to power and that which opposes it, often Christian ethics, at times philosophy of consciousness or the philosophy of will. For Nietzsche all these representations of the I as spirit, reason or will, work against the will to power. As the will to power functions through us "All perfect acts are unconscious".

Consciousness is, for Nietzsche, that self as I, universalised as the concept *man*. This is an idea opposed to the organic functioning of the body. Where the tradition represented by Descartes and maintained by Kant and to a lesser extent Schopenhauer has privileged the incorporeal other, the "ghost in the machine" to echo Ryle, Nietzsche privileges the body, the machine itself "Put briefly: perhaps the entire evolution of the spirit is a question of the body: it is the history of the development of a higher body that emerges into our higher sensibility. The organic is rising to yet higher levels. Our lust for knowledge of nature is a means through which the body desires to protect itself...In the long run it is not a question of man at all: he is to be

overcome" (WP: 676). The concept 'man' is at the core of the concept of selfhood that Nietzsche is writing against. It is a unified singular entity beyond physiological functioning. This man is opposed to the will to power as in each of its manifestations that Nietzsche attacks, I as soul, I as consciousness, I as controlling will, the I is extolled as something other, higher, incorporeal. Nietzsche is fundamentally opposed to the concept of the I, the singular, unified self. Such a concept of man, for Nietzsche, is hostile to life as it rages against the progressive instincts of the will to power. From Aristotle to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche sees the evolution of this hostility, by virtue of which such thinkers are capable of pity which 'thwarts the law of evolution, which is the law of selection.' (A: 7), ultimately "this depressive and contagious instinct thwarts those instincts bent on preserving and enhancing the value of life"(A: 7). Nietzsche's identification of the I with the procedures of biological functioning is total, and it is with this in mind that, for Nietzsche, man is to be overcome.

The self articulated in the thought of Descartes and Kant as a series of perceptions unified in a single mind is rejected by Nietzsche. So too is the I identified with the will which seeks to preserve the life of its embodiment. We have seen that Nietzsche rejects these analyses in favour of seeing all life as manifestations of the will to power. As a biological functioning operating, as we have seen with reference to Dawkins, on its own terms irrespective of the particular organism, its manifestation as the self rejects the concept of singularity and unity. I will now seek to show how the understanding of the will to power understood thus far is commensurate with Nietzsche's concept of 'the subject as multiplicity' (WP: 490)

Two things are of note in the second citation from Nietzsche's *Anti-Christ* in paragraph before last, firstly we see again Nietzsche's distinction between the life denying concept of self and the life affirming notion of self as embodiment of and identification with will to power. Secondly and more significantly we see once again Nietzsche's crossing of the lexical boundaries. Here he is writing of beliefs, theories, ideas, such notions as man, consciousness God and pity, and yet he speaks of these notions as "contagious", as if they can be passed on in a biological way. This is a constant image in Nietzsche's writings where an idea such as Christianity or the

philosophy of consciousness is a sickness[143]. It is a sickness that spreads virally. The entire Nietzschean notion of genealogy is dependent upon this image. Nietzsche's image however incorporates more than the idea of concepts being passed on from generation to generation, it treats concepts as being and functioning like viruses being passed on from person to person.

I will now seek to integrate this concept of Nietzsche's viral epistemology into an analysis of Nietzsche's account of the plural self using the metaphor of the memetics[144]. In the contemporary philosophical lexicon the word "meme"[145] denotes, in many ways, the kind of viral epistemology Nietzsche writes about. It is associated particularly with Daniel Dennett and Richard Dawkins, who both see the epistemological functioning of memes as a phenomenon best understood through association with a genetic model of selfhood, a concept of self which has been shown to parallel, in three central ways, Nietzsche's understanding of the nature and functioning of will to power. Memes are essentially units of information that pass form person to person in a 'viral' fashion. The distinction between a viral gene and a "healthy" gene is essentially that viral genes pass themselves on, not in the traditional sperm and egg fashion, but through quicker routes such as a sneeze or a droplet of blood. Memes similarly pass themselves on in horizontal as well as vertical fashion, across communities rather than down through genealogical lines, evolving basically by being passed on as a gene does, except at a far quicker rate.

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[143] 'The harshest daylight, rationality at any cost, life, bright, cold, circumspect, conscious, without instinct, in opposition to the instincts, has in itself been nothing more that a form of sickness' (TI: The Problem of Socrates, 11).

[144] Which is not to say that memetics is useful only as a metaphor. The actual nature of memes is not examined here. I intend only to use the concept of memes as a metaphor to illustrate elements of Nietzsche's viral epistemology and to show how such an epistemology works well with the understanding of the will to power as a biological functioning. The debates over the exact status of memes have continued since the concept first came into being. It is defended in a realist fashion most notably by Dennett who laments in *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (London: Penguin 1996) that Dawkins has become less vocal in his claims for memes having 'since drawn in his horns slightly' from his original position, p. 361. For an opposing view of memes, seeing them as superfluous to serious debate see S. J. Gould, *Life's Grandeur* (London: Jonathan Cape 1996) Ch. 15. Gould went so far as to term memes 'a meaningless metaphor' on BBC radio's *Start the Week,* Sept. 11th 1996.

[145] Memes entered the philosophical lexicon in 1976 in Dawkins *The Selfish Gene*, and have since gone on to provide an example of a meme. Memes are essentially culture genes or information that is passed on in a virus like fashion. The human brain for Dawkins is designed to soak up this information. A basic example would be school ground "crazes" such as yo-yos, or the fashion for wearing baseball caps back to front that has spread from a core location throughout America around the world. These memes structure and orientate the mind. For Dawkins there are useful memes like science and rationality, and viral, destructive memes like religion. For Dennett and Rorty this division is wrong, as memes cannot be divided into the categories of healthy and viral. Science cannot make any claims to being comprised of "truthful memes". Again their function in this chapter is only to provide a model from Nietzsche's viral epistemology.

For Nietzsche what we call the mind is essentially constituted of ideas that are either diseased or life affirming and both are passed on in a viral fashion. The mind is formed through exposure to such 'memes' which structure and manifest the process through which the organism interprets the world. Nietzsche's genealogy is thus also epidemiology, as dangerous, contagious notions like Platonism pass themselves on, not just in linear fashion, but also in the form identified by Dennett as "leaping genes" or memes. Such epistemology correlates with the quest for power that lies at the core of the Nietzschean self. To illustrate this I will refer briefly to Dennett's understanding to the way in which memes relate to the evolutionary processes.

For Dennett[146] the mind is shaped by evolution to soak up information from its environment and thus provides a safe haven for memes, this is the genetic basis for cultural conditioning. Our conditioning is essentially that which allows us to succeed within our environment and to be accepted in it. As such it is understandable in genetic terms that children on the whole pursue the same worldview as their parents, until at a later date with the need to succeed within a different cultural context, their minds are shaped by differing memes[147]. Using memes as a metaphor we may also recall Nietzsche's opposition to Schopenhauerian aesthetics in clearer light. For Schopenhauer the aesthetic experience transcends the mere functioning of the will, here the subject succeeds in "forgetting precisely one's individual, one's own will, and remaining only as pure subject, as clear mirror of the object" (WWR p.178). For Nietzsche "the beautiful in itself is not even a concept merely a phrase" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 19) and, reversing Schopenhauer for whom the object orientates and is mirrored by the subject, for Nietzsche "Man really mirrors himself in things, that which gives him back his own reflection he considers beautiful" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 19). Ultimately for Nietzsche, aesthetics is a product of the will to power "Its [mans] deepest instinct, that of self preservation and self aggrandisement is still visible in such sublimated forms" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 19)

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[146] See Daniel C. Dennett 'Intentional Systems in Cognitive Ethnology: The Panglossian Paradigm defended' in *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 6 (1983), 387.

[147] While this seems like common sense it should be noted that there is no room with this model of development for ideas such as Kohlberg's stages of moral development. No teleological passage based upon a concept of universal rationality would be accepted by Dennett, which is not to argue for Dennett's position, it is highlighted here as it serves to provide a model of consciousness in keeping with the Nietzschean concept discussed throughout the chapter.

For Dennett, echoing such Nietzschean aesthetics, human beings are essentially, not merely carnivores and herbivores, but informavores, that is to say that our genetic makeup causes us to soak up the information in our environment. This is shaped by the evolutionary process and has the net result that the basic beliefs of our community will structure and orientate our own conceptual frameworks[148]. The human organism, in order to succeed within its environment has learned to adapt itself to this environment, as Daniel Dennett writes,

> "The haven all memes depend on reaching is the human mind, but a human mind is in itself an artefact created when memes restructure a human brain in order to make it a better habitat for Memes. The avenues for entry and departure are modified to suit local conditions, and strengthened by various artificial devices that enhance prolixity and replication: native Chinese minds differ dramatically from native French minds, and literate minds differ from illiterate minds. What Memes provide in return to the organisms in which they reside is an incalculable stone of advantages"[149].

In relation to the difference between Nietzsche's and Schopenhauer's notions of aesthetics, what this simply means is that a child growing up in say, West Belfast, is genetically designed to adapt to and soak up the information in its environment. By doing so it can function within its environment, never being a threat, and securing for itself the support of the community from whence it will seek to procreate. The views and perspectives, political and cultural, the child will come to hold will be structured in accordance with the memetic influences that he or she is exposed to. The assumption of certain memes, that is views and perspectives, is never, for Nietzsche, an *ad hoc* process. Rather the organism is orientated by will to power to strive for enhancement, for Dawkins genetic maximisation. As such, a process is engendered whereby the positions adopted are incorporated into the organisms' worldview with a view to the utilitarian maximisation of the self. To this end, for Nietzsche, all positions adopted, all memes soaked up from our cultural matrix, betray the end goal of the enhancement of the self within the society, the will to power, "whether we make a sacrifice for good or ill does not alter the ultimate value of our actions; even if we stake our life, as the martyr does for the sake of his church – it is sacrifice to our

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[148] This view plus the term "informavores" is Dennett's, it correlates perfectly with Nietzsche in his aesthetic analysis 'that which gives him back his [man] own reflection he considers beautiful' (TI: 88).
[149] Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Exp*lained, (New York: Little, Brown & Co. 1991).

desire for power" (GS: 13). Irrespective of the nature of the political, cultural or aesthetic identification, what it is, essentially, is an identification of that which, for the identifier, connotes power, that which is seen as most high. By virtue of this, whereas a Schopenhauerian aesthetics has as its focus the object and its intrinsic value, for Nietzsche the focus in the aesthetic process is entirely the subject who makes the evaluation. As such it is not surprising that, on a very basic level, that which in our contemporary world connotes power, wealth and sophistication is often imbued with aesthetic value. To this end a positive aesthetic evaluation of a location, a dwelling or even a vehicle is, within this Nietzschean perspective, a betrayal of an identification of that which connotes ultimate value within the perspective of the observer. The genetic orientation that causes the observer to soak up information from that environment binds his value judgements to its ends. "Nothing is so conditional, let us say circumscribed as our feeling for the beautiful" as "...species cannot do otherwise than affirm itself alone in the manner. Its deepest instincts, that of self-preservation and self-aggrandisement is still visible in such sublimated forms" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 19). This process, for the later Nietzsche interpreting in light of his philosophy of power, is at work whether beauty is deemed to reside in a person, a car, a work of art or indeed a piece of music. The organism has been conditioned by its environment to soak up its memetic content such that the organism's identification of power, that which is most valued, is given content, with this given content issues an aesthetic evaluation. This Nietzschean aesthetics would offer the same reading of an identification of, say, a Ferrari and an example of visual art, as beautiful. Both involve an identification of that which constitutes power, be it wealth or sophistication, an identification which stems from the memetic matrix of the identifier. This identification represents for the identifier that which signifies power, for Dawkins the qualitative maximisation of opportunity for genetic replication, and as such, that which each signifies is that which, in the memetic matrix of the individual, is most valued. Within the amalgam of metal and glass in the first instance, or the composition of materials, natural and synthetic in the second, is not, for Nietzsche the source of the aesthetic evaluation. It is in the synonimity of the object with that which for the observer constitutes the most high, that which to them represents power. To an extent this is a 'common sense' aesthetics, in that it is profoundly perspectival, it is however reduced by Nietzsche to a universal aesthetic principle in that the identification of beauty, whether in a person or an object, is always and at once an

identification of power. Not strength, however, as can be seen in Nietzsche's example of the martyr, as the will to power is conditioned by the memetic influences on the individual, and so for the martyr, that which, in memetic terms makes him most honourable and lauded within his memetic matrix, martyrdom for the Christian cause, causes him to meekly surrender his life. This example calls to mind the example of the songbird from Dawkins *River from Eden* mentioned earlier. Driven blindly by its genetic impulses to seek the replication of its DNA it ends its life in the struggle for it. It is in this sense also that, for Nietzsche, Christianity is so often understood as a contagious disease in that it opposes life, as the songbird is orientated by its DNA to risk its life in its attempt to ensure genetic replication, the Christian ascetic, for Nietzsche, in a quest for power turns on power, life itself for Nietzsche, by inverting it through its life negating ethos. Although the Christian is orientated by will to power this orientation is manifest in an opposition to life, its "pity creed ethics" "preserving what is ripe for destruction" (A: 7). As I shall illustrate, this is also an identification that Dawkins shares, seeing Christianity, for different reasons, as a 'viral meme'[150].

Nietzsche's material account of the self can be seen to structure an aesthetics consistent with this account in a manner which Schopenhauer, as Nietzsche laments, can not. The self, orientated by the will to power, structures its perceptions and values through a process wherein the 'memetic' influences are filtered through the will to power. The precise identification of power for Nietzsche is, as such, in flux, as it is dependent on the varying identification provided within the cultural matrix of the identifier. This is the crucial difference between the models provided earlier of organisms with less sophisticated brains than the human, and Nietzsche's model of selfhood. While Dawkins' account can trace each animal action to its need for procreation, which is in effect the need for the manufacture of a capsule for the strands of DNA orientating the action, Nietzsche's model is based upon the relation between this universal principle of will to power and the cultural factors which give the term 'power' semantic content within the framework of each organism. As such memetics provides a model which can further illustrate Nietzsche's position as it allows for the correlation of a perspectival epistemology with an evolutionary model of the self which the more semiotically naïve thought of Dawkins often does not.

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[150] In later chapters I illustrate that this understanding is shared to an extent by Barth in his concept of Christianity as a "Transvaluation of all values" (CD: 4:2 p.169).

Dawkins' use of memetic models have decreased substantially as his accounts articulate a more and more mechanistic account of behaviour, often by virtue of pursuing adversarial positions against positions which utilise 'relativist' arguments in their defence[151]. The Nietzschean model illustrated thus far, however, illustrates the will to power as the primary orientating principle in life which structures, without determining, the thoughts, actions and choices of the subject. The cultural input, radically plural, is what determines the semantic content of the signifier power in Nietzsche's concept. In itself it is simply the facticity of each things wanting "not to preserve itself but to become more"(WP: 1067). This orientation involves an incessant striving of the organism in terms of its own utilitarian, to use a non-Nietzschean term 'selfish'[152] ends. As such the action of the organism is structured through the will to power and as such will rages within the plurality of wills to power that function as the self, it similarly involves the self in opposition to other organisms with whom competition is incessantly engendered. As such, for Nietzsche, every encounter, every transaction involves a victor and a vanquished. Moreover this functioning structures the thoughts and values of each organism as the mind is a collectivity of ideas selected, to a greater or lesser degree of success, from the cultural and linguistic framework of the organism with the goals or enhancing the power of the organism. In this way for Nietzsche, each position, value judgement and aesthetic reaction of the organism is structured in accordance with this will to power.

Moreover, the principle of will to power governs the process wherein the brain filters the basic sensory data which engages it. Within any mind of course there are a vast number of memes competing for dominance. Similarly for Dennett, in his multiple drafts model of the self, there is a multiplicity of neurological stimuli orientating thought at any one time. For Nietzsche the same process of struggle and competition determines the outcome of the race among sensory stimuli to function actively as the mind as "Darwinism is right in pictorial thinking too; the stronger image consumes the weaker one"[153]. The stream of information structured by the brain as, for example, one's field of vision, one's audible environment and so on, is

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[151] See Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 32-33.

[152] It is a non-Nietzschean term in that for Nietzsche the functioning of will to power is beyond moral terminology. It is also such for Dawkins who, however, to fulfil an explicatory function not dissimilar from Dennett's 'intentional stance', allows such adjectival liberties. Its functioning as selfishness is also significant in terms of the Christological metaperspective offered on the thought of Nietzsche in terms of Barth's analysis of the 'fallen man' in chapters 5 and 6.

[153] Ms. PI 20, 190, cited from Wolfgang Müller-Lauter *Nietzsche: His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*, Trans. D. Parent (University of Illinois Press, 1999), 166.

structured, for Nietzsche, in accordance with the utilitarian goals of the subject. Similarly for Dennett the narratival re-telling of the sensory data from the eye by the brain which constitutes the field of vision is the result of a collectivity of perceptions which, conditioned by the past experience, expectation, the context and situation of the observer and so on, are manifest as the conscious experience of the self at any given time. Withdrawing from the minutia of the neurological composition of sensory perception it is obvious that such plural perception, both sensory and through the memetic influences of our cultural matrix, results in plural narratives, any one of which can, at certain times, be in control, and, in effect, function as the I, the acting self. The I as such is "A tremendous assembly of living beings, each one dependant and subjugated and yet in a certain sense in its turn commanding and acting by its own will"[154]. Similarly, for Dennett, "'The stream of consciousness' is not a single, definitive narrative. It is a parallel stream of conflicting and continually revised contents, no one narrative thread can be singled out as canonical - as the true version of conscious experience"[155]. For Nietzsche consciousness manifests a unified perspective but in fact "The course of logical ideas and inferences in our brain today corresponds to a process and struggle among impulses that are, taken singly, very illogical and unjust. We generally experience only the result of this struggle because this primeval mechanism now runs its course so quickly and is so well concealed" (GS: 111). For Nietzsche the subject is a multiplicity of drives all competing for control, a control that functions only in the moment of the action, other than that the subject is in a constant state of becoming. The radical plurality of memes that we are open to "catching" by virtue of the will to power denies the possibility of a linear evolution of a unified self, as the 'mind', structured by and composed of these memes, mirrors this plurality of contradicting perceptions. As we become open to more "viral infection" we are constantly in a state of becoming, never as a single consciousness or will, as seen in the first chapter, but rather as subject to "a host of partly contradictory, partly congruous stimuli" (A: 14). Ultimately for Nietzsche, "Our intellect, our will, as well as our sensations, are dependent on our valuations: these correspond to our

[154] N*achlass* Spring 1884, 25, 436.
[155] A view echoed in Dennett, D. C. & Kinsbourne, M. 'Time and the Observer: The Where and When of Consciousness in the Brain' in *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 15 (2): 183-247, 19.

drives and their conditions for existing. Our drives are reducible to the *will to power*. The will to power is the ultimate fact we come down to"[156](Nietzsche's italics).

By virtue of the functioning of Nietzsche's viral epistemology, his epidemiology, the self, as I have shown, is, for Nietzsche, the result of the will to power structuring the conditions through which we interpret the memetic influences from our cultural matrix and the sensory data which is incessantly and variously structured by the brain. A result that is never singular or unified as the self is "something *complicated* something that is a unit only as a word" (BGE: 19, Nietzsche's italics). It can never be a unity by virtue of the multiplicity of memes competing, and at varying times, gaining dominance. Nietzsche's texts dismiss the notion of the I, the concept of *man* as he writes "The assumption of one single subject is perhaps unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness in general? A kind of aristocracy in "cells" in which dominion resides? To be sure, an aristocracy of equals used to ruling jointly and understanding how to command? *My Hypothesis*: the subject as multiplicity." (WP: 490, Nietzsche's italics).

The introduction of this ontology serves two roles, firstly it completes the picture of Nietzsche's epistemology and semiotics began in chapter 1. The Nietzschean self as a radical plurality of competing drives complexly resists the linear and singular extenuation of presence through which the Nietzschean interpreters treated sought to interpret his texts. The self, for Nietzsche, is a radical plurality of competing drives, constantly shifting, and by virtue of its plurality is capable of holding two contradictory positions simultaneously. The element to be questioned for Nietzsche, in reference to the theme of the first chapter, is not the possibility of contradiction but the ontological, epistemological and semiotic presuppositions that deny the possibility of such a plural and self contradictory self, a self which gives rise to the radical instability of the signifier. This instability is the outcome of the self's composition as a plurality of drives, structured by the will to power, and, as such, each interpretation is an "expedient falsification" (WP: 588) of reality as it is always already constructed in terms of the utilitarian goals of the organism. The content and meaning of the signifiers which result from this designatory encounter can never, for Nietzsche, distil

[156] *Nachlass* 14, 327.

their original content to the self and so, in Nietzsche, not only can signification not function safely between selves but his radical perspectivism represents an analysis wherein the self can never have sufficient immediacy to itself to guarantee the stable functioning of the sign within the self's own lexical framework. The process which determines this situation wherein the self can only encounter the world through utilitarian immediacy, is the will to power, an ontological functioning which grounds what in Nietzsche amounts to an outright semiotic nihilism. The second purpose in articulating Nietzschean ontology of power is to conclude the framework of 'Nietzschean thought' which will be engaged with in the remainder of this dissertation. This semiotics and ontology, illustrated in chapters one and two, will represent the content of the term 'Nietzschean thought' in my analysis of theological engagements with it in the following three chapters. I hope to illustrate, based on this articulation, how a limited reading of Nietzschean will to power darkens the treatment of Nietzsche offered by both radical orthodoxy and radical theology. Finally and most significantly the semiotic nihilism and ontology of violence articulated thus far represents the form of thought I seek, using Barth, to re-interpret within a Christological metaperspective in chapters 5, 6 and 7, focussing on Nietzschean semiotics and ontology respectively. Here I will seek to incorporate such thought as an analysis of self and sign which need not be rejected, as it is in both the liberalism of radical theology and the pre-modernism of radical orthodoxy. Rather, using Barth, I hope to begin to illustrate that such thought can come to function within a Christological anthropology, albeit as a limited and insufficient account of human selfhood, as any account of the human which fails to take into account its status as God's human is an impermissible abstraction.

CHAPTER THREE

NIETZSCHE AND THE RADICAL ORTHODOXY OF JOHN MILBANK

In this chapter and the next I wish to examine two vastly contrasting engagements with Nietzschean thought. Within the context of this dissertation, they represent what I hold to the be the polar flaws in dealing theologically with the thought of Nietzsche, in that they either, as in the case of John Milbank, completely reject the Nietzschean notions of self and sign hitherto illustrated, or, as in the case of Thomas Altizer, allow Nietzschean thought such normative status that it constitutes the lexicon from which he seeks to construct his theology. The result, in both cases, is at once a construction which fails to take seriously the claims of Nietzsche, and, more significantly, fails to recognise the radical otherness of Christological anthropologies to secular ones. Altizer, as will be seen, simply conflates the two, allowing the analysis of such thinkers as Nietzsche to establish the criterion of adequacy and then attempting to forge a mutilated account of the Christian narratives into these terms. Milbank, through a complete rejection of Nietzschean thought, proceeds to pursue a methodology which entirely construes the self within pre-modern terms, arriving at an ontology which fails to see the radical juxtaposition between humanity and the humanity made possible through the real human Jesus. For Milbank the pre-modern and the post-modern are fundamentally intertwined in that they both reject the fundamental presuppositions of modernity, the post-modern rejection leads, for Milbank, to nihilism and violence, the pre-modern, offers instead the peace of, and within, the Triune God. Unlike the theological engagement offered in the Death of God Theology, Milbank's account has, as will perhaps be readily seen, been influential on the direction of this dissertation. Here too I wish to offer a fundamentally orthodox Christian perspective over and against the nihilism and violence of Nietzschean thought. Yet while I am indebted to Milbank the precise form of Milbank's project cannot be repeated here. As I will show in this chapter, the absolute rejection of the veracity of Nietzschean thought allows Milbank to proceed in terms of a semiotic and ontological construction of the human condition which risks repeating the problems of pre-modern theology in failing to see the radical

juxtaposition between humanity and the humanity offered to us through the one human whom God uniquely intended, Jesus Christ. Because of this the semiotic stability and ontological harmony offered in the theological anthropology of Milbank, risks failing to take the reality of natural human sinfulness seriously enough. It is on Christological grounds that the semiotics and ontology manifest in Nietzschean thought are retained in this dissertation and re-interpreted in light of a Christological metaperspective. The Christology of Barth, it will be argued, illustrates a theological methodology which can take seriously the Nietzschean thought hitherto illustrated, while also refusing it through an account of the human which also takes into full consideration its status as *God's* human. This method maintains the dialectic between fallenness and reconciliation proper to any Christological account of self and sign. And so, while this dissertation is indebted to Milbank, it seeks to portray a response to the nihilism and violence endemic in Nietzschean thought through never, as Milbank does, rejecting it out of hand. Rather through keeping it in play an account can be offered which recognises the usefulness of post-Nietzschean thought while interpreting it in light of a Christological metaperspective. A method which, I will come to argue, pays due respect to Nietzschean thought and, more importantly, structures a Christological anthropology which recognises the condition of natural human sinfulness as well as its overcoming in the gracious election of such humanity by God in the man Jesus.

One area which unites the two theological projects assessed at this point in the dissertation is that, as I will argue, the veracity of their treatment of Nietzsche succeeds or fails with their reading of Nietzschean will to power. Altizer, as will be seen, reads it in terms of its affirmation in Nietzschean eternal recurrence and as such correlates it with an incarnational Christology that affirms the beginning of being in every now, only possible after the death of God. Milbank, as will be the focus of this chapter, reads Nietzsche's ontology of violence as being set forward as a truth claim only after the dismissal of all claims to truth and as such, that is, as 'one more mythos'[157], it can be simply rejected using the genealogical arguments manifest throughout the Nietzschean tradition. From a close reading of the actual development of Nietzsche's understanding of the will to power, I hope to conclude a reading of it in terms of the natural sciences begun in the previous chapter. From this perspective I

[157] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 279.

will illustrate that Nietzsche's will to power, for Nietzsche, is never set forward[158] as one more perspective but was understood by Nietzsche as basic, observable, empirical fact. Milbank then, it will be argued, from mis-reading the nature of will to power never assesses it as Nietzsche intended and so his dismissal of it as one more perspective is never a manoeuvre as simple as he claims. It will not be argued here, despite this, that will to power cannot be dismissed as one more mythos, as indeed all truth claims can, what will be argued rather is that reading it as Nietzsche understood it allows it to make a much stronger claim than Milbank allows. The ease of his dismissal is questioned through the reading I wish to offer as it is facilitated by what I will show to be a fundamentally limited reading of will to power.

3:1 Milbank's reading of Nietzsche

The theological project of John Milbank, inaugurated with his *Theology and Social Theory,*[159] seeks to articulate what he calls a Christian 'counter-modern' position in light of the descent of the Kantian project into the nihilistic abyss of postmodernism[160]. This position, in common with such contemporary theology as that of Stanley Hauerwas, agrees with and utilises postmodern critique in an attempt to deconstruct fundamental tenets of modernity. This deconstruction[161] centres largely upon the unveiling of what it holds to be the arbitrary assumptions of secular modernity. The core concepts of liberal humanism, for Milbank, require a thinly veiled fideism to secure their validity. Concepts such as human rights, freedom and public reason, for Milbank, as for Hauerwas, are free-standing assertions which fail to validate themselves in positivist terms. As such they exist as dogmas within the covert 'religion' of modernity. It is through a genealogical analysis that Milbank proceeds to illustrate that the linguistic framework of modernity is no less 'mythological' than the pre-modern 'Christendom' it seeks to supplant. Nietzsche thus occupies a central position in Milbank's theology, as it is ultimately through his genealogical and perspectival methods that Milbank performs this deconstruction. It is Nietzsche who first attacks the enlightenment as being merely a re-articulation of platonic/Christian

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[158] Albeit, as seen in chapter one, in stark contradiction to his constant dismissal of truth claims.
[159] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990)
[160] Ibid., 75-101.
[161] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 9-177.

doctrine for modernity and Milbank firstly seeks to utilise him in revealing modernity to be one more mythological sign system.

Milbank secondly seeks to show the inexorable evolution of the secular toward nihilism in order to then argue on pragmatic grounds against it. Here too Nietzsche is central as Milbank traces the history of the secular, from the Kantian turn to the ontology of violence that he claims it leads to. Kant, as Nietzsche properly understood, binds epistemology to subjectivity and morality, by virtue of the antinomy of practical reason, to God. Once Kant's epistemology and morality are bound to these absolutes by the architectonic of the Kantian system, it stands or falls for Nietzsche, as for Milbank, on the objective acceptance of these absolutes. Nietzsche denies the conceptual absolutes and proclaims the death of God to found both conceptual relativism[162] and ethical nihilism. Milbank thus asserts that Nietzschean nihilism is the 'truth' which the project of modernity leads too. Nietzsche is therefore central, as he represents not only the method with which Milbank attacks the secular but also the purest, most complete representation of the secular.

The focus of my examination here will be the way in which Milbank proceeds to dispose of the Nietzschean critiques he uses. Nietzschean critique, Milbank argues, reveals each discourse of modernity to be a competing linguistic framework not capable of making any more objective truth claims than the others. Yet after using Nietzschean philosophy to arrive at this understanding he must then show (in order to transcend nihilism) that Nietzschean thought is also simply a perspective, "one more mythos"[163]. Only then, within the field of competing mythologies, can Milbank seek to pursue his project of 'out-narrating' other discourses ultimately reasserting theology "as a master discourse"[164]. This process of disposing of the Nietzschean critiques Milbank performs in the pivotal chapter 10 of *Theology and Social Theory*.

It is this procedure that I will examine in this chapter. I will identify two strands of Milbank's 'deconstruction' in relation to (a) 'genealogy' and (b) 'differential ontology'[165] although they are interwoven. In Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morality* (the

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[162]Milbank only examines the latter process.

[163] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason,* 279.

[164] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason,* 6.

[165] To gain an understanding of way in which Milbank uses these terms we may note that he holds the primary texts of (a) to be Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morality* and *The Will to Power*; Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*; Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, the primary texts of (b) being Heidegger's *Being and Time*; Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (also perhaps *Dissemination* of which Milbank uses

text upon which Milbank draws in his critique) Nietzsche unveils the differential ontology which will come to characterise all subsequent postmodernism. It is essentially an understanding of difference rather than sameness, competition rather than complementarity, defining interpersonal relations. As such, violence between such differences, the stronger dominating the weaker, characterises all interaction and transaction. The method Nietzsche uses to arrive at this understanding is genealogy, characterised as a tracing of the evolution of ideas from the standpoint of a 'baseless suspicion'. There is a considerable overlap in Milbank's critique, as to destabilise the differential ontology is to throw a shadow on the method of genealogy that uncovers it and to illustrate the perspectival nature of genealogy is to undermine the differential ontology is uncovers. Milbank seeks to turn Nietzschean genealogy on itself as to destabilise one element of an architectonic system is to infiltrate and undermine the whole[166]. Rather than structure fatal refutations of Nietzschean philosophy, Milbank loosens core conceptual threads within the overall fabric. This is, in terms of Milbank's project, a consistent enterprise as it is central to his claims that no discourse can be more objectively correct than others. He identifies the foundational structures in the Nietzschean architectonic and attempts to destabilise them in order to reveal genealogy and differential ontology as merely perspectival truth claims.

Proceeding by isolating the core trajectory of what he calls the 'major Nietzscheans'[167] his goal in chapter 10 is to show that Nietzsche's 'historicist or genealogical aspect raises the spectre of a human world inevitably dominated by violence without being able to make the ghost more solid in historicist terms alone'[168]. It follows however that to portray such a strategy as centring on two different points of critique, genealogy and differential ontology as I will proceed to do, is to tease out two strands that are interwoven. With a large amount of repetition he casts doubt on the facticity of differential ontology as a means of destabilising the normative status of genealogy and uses this critique of genealogy to then, in turn, assail the truth claims of ontologies of difference. Isolating these two manoeuvres however is the only way to systematically represent Milbank's strategy and to show as I will proceed to do in

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'Plato's Pharmacy' most extensively) and 'Violence and Metaphysics'; Delueuze's *Différence et Répétition* and the *Logique du Sens* and Lyotard's *The Differend.*

[166] This is perhaps why *The Genealogy of Morality* is Milbank's source as it represents, with the possible exception of the Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche's only openly systematic work.

[167] 'I am concerned with what is common to the outlook of the major Nietzscheans, and I deliberately treat the writings of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Deleuze, Lyotard, Foucault and Derrida as elaborations of a single nihilistic philosophy, paying relatively less attention to their divergences of opinion'. Ibid.

[168] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 278.

the main part of this chapter, the points upon which I believe Milbank's analysis and subsequent theological project founders.

In the first part of this chapter I will illustrate the mechanics of Milbank's dismissal of Nietzschean thought. I will begin (3:1) with genealogy which Milbank seeks to undermine by asserting that it proceeds as a performative contradiction, in that it articulates every conceptual schema as perspectival while proceeding to argue for the primary reality of existence as the will to power. Secondly, (3:2) I will show how he seeks to question this understanding of existence as struggle for power and then claim that if it is not objectively more plausible than other interpretations, then the method that uncovers it (i.e. genealogy) may not be anything more than a perspective, manifesting a particular, polemical, position. I will then (3:3) seek to portray Milbank's destabilising of Nietzsche's differential ontology. He does so in two ways, firstly, by simply on pragmatic grounds refusing to accept the truth of an ideology whose "practical expression must be fascism"[169] and secondly, (3:4) by examining Nietzsche's understanding of Christianity in terms of *resentiment* and asceticism; for Milbank this understanding is based upon the arbitrary assumption of differential ontology being reality. By simply switching the transcendental codes Milbank seeks to question whether this ontology is more normative than a Christian ontology of peace. Nietzsche, for Milbank, presumes the facticity of differential ontologies by virtue of an arbitrary choice to conceive of differences as fundamentally opposed rather than analogically related. It is this analogical relating of differences that Milbank claims is endemic to Christianity.

Genealogy

Milbank sets out to deconstruct the truth claims of Nietzschean genealogy in order to show that the final most complete from of secularism is merely another mythology, the perspectival story of Christianity told from a pagan point of view. Central to Milbank's focus on Nietzsche is his belief that Nietzsche represents the purest form of suspicion, as he writes 'For the secular postmodernists Nietzsche has become the only true master of suspicion, the thinker of a 'baseless suspicion' which rests, unlike the suspicion of Marx, Freud and sociology, on no foundationalist presuppositions'.[170]

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[169] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 279.

[170] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 278. His own position, as I will articulate, differs from 'the secular postmodernists' in that for him Nietzsche's 'baseless suspicion' is in fact a

Milbank proceeds to illustrate however that the genealogical method, characterised as a 'baseless suspicion', may not be as neutral in its critique as its proponents would have us believe. This is the first element in his deconstruction, that rather than a pure hermeneutics of suspicion, genealogy in fact approaches texts from its own embedded perspective. The acid test which for Milbank determines this is the ontology of violence that Nietzschean genealogy claims to uncover. If this is, for Milbank, less than persuasive, then the method which 'uncovers' it may be re-interpreted. In this light Milbank claims to expose it, not as a disinterested analysis which reveals the ahistorical truth that life is a struggle for power, but rather as a polemic against Christianity arbitrarily based upon the foundation of this preconceived understanding of life as will to power.

His first critique of Nietzschean genealogy is not dissimilar to Heidegger's attack on Nietzsche as 'the last metaphysician'[171] which identifies the performative contradiction examined in chapter one. Milbank holds that Nietzschean genealogy exposes all truth claims as perspectival but more than that goes on to trace each perspective back to a manifestation of power. This identification of the workings of power however, it holds up as more than perspectival. An inherent performative contradiction is therefore exposed between the historicist genealogy and the truth claim for the differential ontology of violence that it claims to reveal. This, for Milbank, is the key to the deconstruction of the stories which Nietzsche and those thinkers in his debt seek to tell. It sees Genealogy as assuming what it sets out to prove namely that the history of culture is a history of power and violence. This becomes clear if Nietzsche's identifications of history as violence are in fact arbitrary and unsubstantiated. Genealogy is then revealed as a polemic rather than a 'baseless suspicion'. Ultimately for Milbank "It will be argued that differential ontology is but one more *mythos,* and that the postmodern realisation that discourses of truth are so many incommensurable language games does not ineluctably impose upon us the conclusion that the ultimate, over-arching game is the play of force, fate and chance"[172]. Because of this Nietzschean genealogy is but another mythological sign system no more solid than the platonic, Christian or modern systems it relativises. If

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polemic against Christianity based upon an entirely arbitrary concept of life as a selfish struggle for power and enhancement.

[171] see Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, Trans. W Lovitt, (New York: Harper 1977), 82.

[172] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 279.

Milbank can show this then he can jettison the genealogical method and proceed with his theological realism.

Genealogy as Polemic

Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morality* is dedicated to exposing the fundamental concepts of morality and revealing their being based upon an historical evolution. More than this however Nietzsche's Genealogy goes on to witness to the relationships of power that sculpt and determine this history. While philosophical and ethical frameworks exist for Nietzsche as interpretations, the displacement of one framework by another can be objectively witnessed and described. Nietzsche, like Foucault after him[173], seeks to demonstrate the nature of these paradigmatical shifts which are based on the displacement of the weaker linguistic framework by the stronger. It is for Milbank however, not a reduction of morality to the process of its origination, for its own sake, disinterestedly, but rather being subtitled *An Attack*,[174]is a clear polemic against one reading of history from the perspective of another, no less arbitrary, one. In this Milbank sees Nietzsche framing the key ambiguity of all genealogical method in that it serves not to deconstruct for reasons of philosophical rigour but as a polemic directed against some "present constellation of power" with the aim of "exploding the 'eternal verities' which it claims to promote"[175].

Nietzsche's genealogy is thus an attack on the history of (Christian) ethics attempting to explain every linguistic framework as a ruse of power. This exposition Nietzsche sees as redemptive. The slave morality, inaugurated with platonic dualism and copper fastened and institutionalised with Christianity, is now with Nietzsche exposed. This unveiling reveals it to be reactive against both life and the human animal and only through their destruction can the way be made clear for the self-transcending Übermensch [176]. It is thus a polemic perpetrated from a set perspective with a teleological aim. Genealogy manifests neutrality in its hermeneutics of suspicion yet "in fact, if the transcendental event, every possible event, is a military

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[173] See Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?' and 'Nietzsche, Genealogy and History' and 'Truth and Power' in *The Foucault Reader,* Paul Rainbow (ed.) (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 32-75.

[174] Milbank goes on to write and 'he means, of course, an attack on Christianity' 281 but this is a simplistic reduction as Nietzsche is attacking what he feels to be a slave morality of which Christianity is the greatest exponent. Kantianism 78-81, 172, 28, Hegelianism 172, 96, Platonism 107-108, 121, 185-186, 193, and Judaism 34, 114, 158, 34-35, 155, are just some of the other targets in Nietzsche's polemic.

[175] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 281.

[176] For Nietzsche, as we have seen in the previous chapter the 'self' is something to be overcome.

move of assertive difference over against 'the other', then cultures closer to realising this truth will come to be celebrated as more 'natural', more spontaneous cultures"[177]. Nietzsche then, for Milbank, privileges certain cultures over others as they correspond to what he identifies as 'natural'. They are, for Nietzsche more natural, in that in these cultures life is being affirmed, life here being the struggle for power "I consider life itself instinct for growth, for continuance for accumulation of forces, for Power"(A: 6). Nietzsche thus works within an objective criterion of what 'natural' life is and qualitative evaluations become possible based upon a culture or ideologies correspondence to this absolute. This interpretation introduces the core of Milbank's critique of Nietzschean genealogy "Unless it is clear that this really is a more 'natural' form of life, then the general thesis must fall into doubt, and Nietzsche's genealogy will appear as itself but another perspective: an account of the rise of Christianity, written from the point of view of the paganism it displaced"[178]. For Nietzsche his genealogy reveals, through an account of the subversion of the weaker by the stronger, the essence of life to be a struggle for power. For Milbank if this concept of life is not clearly more persuasive than other accounts then his genealogy is merely an arbitrary polemic. Milbank responds to his own proposition "And, of course, this cannot possibly be made clear"[179].

His task then is to show how Nietzsche's understanding of life as a violent struggle for power is no more persuasive than the discourses it seeks to displace. To this end he seeks to deconstruct certain assumptions Nietzsche makes within the genealogy. Milbank correctly points out that for Nietzsche the universal struggle for power "is not the upshot of a utilitarian necessity to grow stronger and survive, but rather it is the concomitant of a pure will to difference, to self assertion."[180] For Milbank,

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[177] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 282. It is because of this that, particularly in his earlier work, Nietzsche expresses his respect for Homeric Greece cf. *Birth of Tragedy*, "The Greek State" and "Homer on Competition" and also, as Milbank points out, *The Genealogy of Morality*, essay 1.

[178] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 282.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid., Milbank however betrays a misunderstanding which will be shown to be significant later when he writes "This preference for originality, even at the cost of danger, is purely (as Nietzsche admits) a matter of taste....". I have found nowhere in Nietzsche where he 'admits' this. It also contradicts such texts as, WP: 289, WP: 676 and A: 14 where Nietzsche explicitly illustrates that the will to power manifests itself through the human in an unconscious manner "All perfect acts are unconscious and no longer subject to will" (WP: 289). The will to power which orientates all thought and action transcends morality, rationality and subjectivity for Nietzsche, it is rather a reflexive physiological phenomenon "Behind your thinking and feeling, my brother stands a mighty commander, an unknown wise one - it is called self. It dwells in your body, it is your body"(Z: 4). Milbank here betrays the fact that he reads Nietzsche as indicating that a subject has an arbitrary choice for power which, for Milbank, can be

Nietzsche is unable to show that this desire for self assertion "is no more primordially lodged in human existence than the despised desires for security, consolation, mutuality, pleasure and contentment" [181]. For Nietzsche the desire for self assertion is more natural and because of this the strong dominating the weak are no more morally culpable than an eagle swooping down upon its prey (GM: 1, 13)[182]. But Milbank believes Nietzsche fails to see the 'necessary metaphoric tension' in such action. For Milbank not only is the action of the strong akin to that of the eagle "- it consists, precisely, in a totemic identification with the eagles swooping flight". As such "the behaviour of the strong man is never spontaneous, it is always imitative of a cultural paradigm of strength"[183]. Milbank's critique of Nietzsche's claims for the primacy of the will to power centres on this point, that rather than being a 'natural' act the paradigm of power is always *chosen* by the strong who for Milbank "is already an ascetic, for he is already organising his natural energies towards the achievement of this single goal"[184]. Milbank thus sees Nietzsche, in a manner not dissimilar from the way in which he sees positivist sociology, arbitrarily making universal a certain condition of primitive humanity.

This arbitrary universalising undermines Nietzschean genealogy for Milbank, as the strong are not spontaneous in their identification with the paradigm of strength. Rather they choose to inhabit this paradigm revealing that the natural, primordial orientation of the human is not necessarily to assert power over others. If this will to assertive difference is not more natural, then genealogy has, rather than reveal the underling reality of cultural shifts, merely asserted its own interpretation of the nature of these shifts. Moreover it proceeds to assert these arbitrary interpretations as universal. Milbank then uses the arbitrary nature of genealogies 'discoveries' to poison the concept of genealogy and its erroneous claims for normative status. With this understanding Milbank inaugurates the process which, after using Nietzsche to deconstruct the truth claims of the secular, he can now interpret Nietzsche's philosophy as no more determinative than the secular 'mythos' he deconstructs.

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denied. This is however incorrect as for Nietzsche the will to power transcends the subject, it functions through all life and is never subject to a choice of rationality or will, "This world is the will to power- and nothing besides; And you yourselves are also this will to power- and nothing besides". (WP: 1067).

[181] Ibid.

[182] Where Nietzsche goes on to write "it would be as absurd to ask strength *not* to express itself as strength, *not* to be a desire to overthrow, crush, become master, to be a thirst for enemies, resistance and triumphs, as it is to ask weakness to express itself as strength"

[183] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 283.

[184] Ibid.

Differential Ontology

While genealogy represents the first, deconstructive, element of Milbank's critique of Nietzschean philosophy, the second element in his critique is essentially pragmatic. His goal is to establish Nietzsche as the culmination of secular modernity. Throughout *Theology and Social Theory* he traces the evolution of modernity from Kant to the nihilist abyss of Nietzsche and proceeds in chapter 10, essentially on pragmatic grounds, to refuse it. It is however, as I indicated at the outset, a deconstruction of Nietzschean arguments rather than a refutation. Milbank, faithful to his critique of instrumental logic, rejects the possibility of one argument objectively negating another on rational grounds. He is content rather to destabilise Nietzsche's claims which will then in turn allow him to proceed with his aims of simply out narrating other discourses on 'aesthetic' rather than positivist grounds.

As I discussed in chapter 2, for Richard Rorty the trajectory of philosophy, evolving from a tradition of differing systematic claims for an ahistorical truth into a field of competing conceptual schema, none being able to make themselves more solid on objective grounds, is inevitable after Kant[185]. Once Kant binds the epistemological process to certain conceptual absolutes, and thus restrains epistemology within its conceptual framework devoid of ontological or metaphysical pronouncements, it becomes possible to conceive of other 'conceptual absolutes' resulting in entirely different perceptions. Milbank in a similar fashion also traces the seeds of what he calls the 'Postmodern problematic' to the Kantian architectonic. In terms of *The Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Groundwork*, Milbank shares Nietzsche's understanding of this Kantian architectonic. For both, the deconstruction, or even the denial of the truths upon which this architectonic is founded, collapses the entire structure. Nietzsche for example writes of Kant's ethics as 'a theology in disguise' and that it is 'tainted with theologian blood' (WP: 530). This is the case, as, for Nietzsche, Kant must cling to notions such as God and even the immortality of the soul to resolve the antinomy of practical reason wherein happiness and virtue cannot be reconciled within the parameters of life. Only by conceiving of a supreme being and a concept of the subject striving towards virtue eternally can the architectonic hold. The reality of God is the necessary truth upon which the Kantian metaphysics of

[185] R. Rorty "The World Well Lost" in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (1972), 649.

morality depends for its systematic wholeness. To simply negate this 'truth', as Nietzsche does, is to deny the ultimate reality of the Kantian concepts of virtue, duty and freedom. For Milbank, echoing both Foucault and Derrida, this development from Kant to Nietzsche, and thus to postmodernism, is inevitable, for as soon as we reject the notion of a supreme being the 'absolute' concepts of liberal humanism collapse. It is this development, from Kant to postmodern nihilism, that *Theology and Social Theory* sets out to document.

"Postmodernism is", for Milbank, "first and foremost an absolute historicism which overcomes the Kantian delay"[186]. Following Foucault[187] Milbank holds that before Kant finite limitation was understood, by way of analogy, in relation to the infinite. A metaphysic articulating the ahistorical relationship of the finite to the infinite was still considered possible[188]. After Kant this possibility is denied, "supposedly on 'critical' grounds but in fact on the basis of a new dogmatism which redefines finitude in terms of certain positive conditions, such as temporality, closed spatiality and mechanical causality."[189] Rather than attempting to represent the relationship between the infinite and the finite, post Kantian philosophy attempts to analyse reality in terms of the boundaries of finitude within the finite subject[190]. Reality for modernity thus becomes the analysis of certain stable properties that define this subject - freedom, labour, or rationality. Nietzschean genealogy, for Milbank "represents a more absolute historicism because it refuses to tell these Kantian or Hegelian stories...about a constant human subject"[191]. In Nietzschean

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[186] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 280, the phrase "Kantian delay" is George Grant's.

[187] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 312-318.

[188] Foucault it seems has Thomistic *analogia entis* in mind here, imagining Aquinas following Aristotle towards knowing the transcendent based upon an understanding of the interrelational reality of the immanent. Yet, as Milbank seems aware ("Our knowledge of the infinite was considered to be imperfect, but, by the same token, our knowledge of the finite to be limited also" 280) Thomas draws a clear distinction between Aristotelian *scientia*, (the kind of representation Foucault has in mind, and which for Thomas, is always flawed) and the *scientia* of sacred doctrine. As Eugene Rogers writes "Thus Thomas, unlike Aristotle, distinguishes sharply between the knowledge that God has and the knowledge that human beings have in this life...sacred doctrine is a science with believers only" Eugene F. Rodgers Jr. *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Knowledge of God*, (University of Notre Dame Press, 1995) 35. For Thomas knowledge of the infinite is made possible only through grace and is a science *borrowed (Summa Theologica* I.1.2&I.1.8) and as yet unfulfilled in this life (*Summa Theologica* I.1.2). Thus an articulation of the ahistorical reality of the relationship between infinity and finitude is for Thomas never a definitive assertion but an expression of and guide in the ongoing process of sanctification.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Or in terms of theology in the wake of Schleiermacher, to analyse transcendence through immanence.

[191] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 280.

genealogy these core tenets of the philosophy of subjectivity become in turn subjected to a deconstructive analysis which denies a stable content for such signifiers as freedom or reason. The process inaugurated in Kant with the critical deconstruction of the paths from the finite to the infinite, reaches a crescendo with Nietzschean genealogy, which deconstructs the paths from the subject to its finite environment and even to itself thereby inaugurating the 'hypermodern'[192] nihilism of deconstruction.

Once Kant, for Milbank, grounds ethics in the facticity of the will and human freedom, the perspective on questions of ethics shifts from enquiries into moral values as ahistorical truths, to enquiries about the human subject[193]. This shift of focus comes to corrupt ethical enquiry when human subjects cease to be defined in terms of virtue and freedom and rather are uncovered (by Nietzsche) as unequal, mutually dependent persons, subject to and embodying complex strategies of power. The 'Kantian turn' then, for Milbank, leads inevitably into the situation where ethical questions are shadowed by Nietzschean analysis of the self. This analysis leads to an expression of ethics as stemming from, and being genealogically mapped by, the complex evolution of strategies of power. Therefore for Milbank, philosophy after Nietzsche is engaged in an articulation of a reality 'whose practical expression must be fascism'[194]. This is the 'reality' that Milbank seeks to deny on pragmatic grounds. After showing that the tools used by the Nietzscheans to deconstruct the truth claims of 'modernity' in turn deny the possibility of presenting their own concepts as more than perspectival, Milbank simply rejects their perspectival analysis. He does so not by attempting to resuscitate liberal humanism but by seeking to "put forward an alternative *mythos*, equally unfounded, but nonetheless embodying an 'ontology of peace'" (Milbank's italics)[195].

A second critique of differential ontologies stems from manner in which they, rather than the Christian ontologies of peace, are arbitrarily posited as normative. Once

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[192] This term is Lyotard's, who sees postmodernity as essentially an extension of the critical project of modernity. And thus rather than being understood as counter-modern or post-modern the philosophy owing its origins to Nietzsche should be seen as 'hypermodern'.

[193] Milbank's opposition here between ahistorical truth and human subjectivity exposes the fact that he has already rejected the Kantian subject, and the transcendental philosophy which stems form it. He ignores the fact that the launching pad of transcendental philosophy is precisely that the limits of human subjectivity provide a basis for ahistorical truth, as these limits, such as the incapacity to think outside of time, space and language are ahistorical and eternal truths. The transition from ethics being interpreted in terms of ahistorical truth to being interpreted in terms of the human subject is based upon an illicit opposition which Kantians would hold misses the fundamental premise of transcendental philosophy.

[194] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 279.

[195] Ibid.

again Milbank's goal is to show that Nietzsche's understanding is based upon an arbitrary understanding of life as 'naturally' the realm of violence between differences. If this is not the case than his characterisation of Christianity collapses and Milbank can pursue his goal of arguing for Christian theology's normative status. Here we see again Milbank's circular arguments as to deconstruct this identification is to destabilise the truth claim for violence. Revealing this identification to be questionable in turn undermines the normative status of violence, and Milbank's strategy is to oscillate between these elements, destabilising both.

He initiates his critique by asking the question - if power is the universal reality then why is it sometimes concealed? Agonistic societies, idealised by Nietzsche based as they are on competitive struggle, give way to the Platonism for the masses that is Christendom. Milbank reads Nietzsche as answering that through such sublimated forms power has become more effectively itself: with the priestly cast, writes Nietzsche, "has the human mind grown both profound and evil" (GM: 1, 6). Yet Christianity, as Nietzsche diagnosed, represents the total inversion of the will to power, this is the central theme of the first essay of *The Genealogy of Morality*. He establishes this absolute opposition and for Milbank must follow Hegel in that "if every denial of power is a ruse of power then the absolute denial of power must be the final absolute ruse of power"[196]. Once again however, this understanding of Christianity must be "objectively correct, if the nihilist genealogy is to be defended as more than just an interpretation"[197]. This Milbank denies with reference to the categorisation of Christianity in terms of (a) *ressentiment* and (b) asceticism.

Ressentiment and Asceticism

For Nietzsche the natural 'active' state of the human is to participate in the ceaseless activity of the will to power. Upholding the opposition that Milbank highlights Christianity is understood as the diseased 'reactive' force imprisoning this natural predisposition to power in an open manifestation of weakness to others. As such, Christianity, institutionalising and perfecting platonic dualism, represents a constant refusal to accept and participate in the *agon,* which is, for Nietzsche, life. It is the life negating ruse of the weak which equates virtue with pity. This Christian pity "on the

[196] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 286.
[197] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 288.

whole thwarts the law of evolution, which is the law of selection. It preserves what is ripe for destruction, it defends life's disinherited and condemned... To say it again, this depressive and contagious instinct thwarts those instincts bent on preserving and enhancing the value of life"(A: 7). The evolution of life is repressed by the Christian pity ethics, resenting life in order to preserve the weak. It works, for Nietzsche, as the exact opposite of life. Milbank again manifests the same strategy; if he can show that Nietzsche's understanding of life is not more plausible than all others then the entire analysis of 'natural' humanity in terms of a differential ontology is negated.

He begins by differentiating the Christian understanding of 'weakness' from its most pejorative interpretation as given by Nietzsche, the Christian understanding, for Milbank, conceives of weakness not primarily in relation to the other but to God, the source of all charity. The Christian mode of being is characterised by love of God and is authenticated by the transmission of the love to others. This understanding, testifying to the interwoven relationship between God, the individual and the other, is at the core of Milbank's argument here. He proceeds to ask "why should the natural, active, creative, will not be understood, as it is understood by Christianity, as essentially the charitable will?"[198]. What allows Nietzsche to see that violence is equitable with reality? Nietzsche argues that the will to orient oneself toward others is never charitable, as it can never be disinterested. It is always, as he holds in the *Genealogy of Morality*, performed for subtle, selfish reasons. Such reasons always establish an 'economy' of relations with an exchange, fiscal, emotional or physical, which Nietzsche, like Foucault, never sees as 'equal'. There can be no 'true' equation of one value with another, x in return for x, as the fixing of equitables, from price to punishment[199], on a personal or social level, can never be anything but the play of forces[200]. All such exchanges even in such subtle forms as a 'charitable' act of Christian love involve the triumph of the stronger over the weaker.

Milbank however sees this understanding as problematic and asserts that it is based upon the Nietzschean understanding of all difference as oppositional difference. Nietzsche, Milbank correctly points out, conceives of each action, each self assertion of power, as emanating beyond the space of the doer, resulting in "an overlap within

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[198] Ibid.

[199] After *The Genealogy of Morality* Nietzsche rarely articulates this idea again. For a more thorough development and analysis of this early Nietzschean idea see M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Trans. Allan Sheridan (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1977) and also his *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2* Trans. Robert Hurley (Hammondsworth: Penguin 1985) 5-30

[200] Derrida, Lyotard and Deleuze all draw on this idea in their critiques on neo-capitalism.

some area of common space"[201]. By virtue of this, it must be an assertion over and against the other who must be negated if the activity of the strong is towards self affirmation. It is entirely arbitrary, for Milbank, to interpret differential relationships in terms of this negative dialectic. For Milbank, it is equally possible to envisage the relationship between differences as representing sameness, complementarity and analogy rather than difference, opposition and dialectic. As he writes "The question of whether there can be there can be a charitable act, therefore turn(s) out to be ... the question of whether there can be an 'analogy' or a common measure' between differences"[202]. A theocentric understanding of reality as 'creation' for example conceives of an analogical relationship between the transcendent and the immanent. By virtue of this analogy the God of love is loved through the other who represents this God in the Christian understanding. Nietzsche again, by assuming what he appears to prove (that the play of forces is the natural mode of life), arbitrarily negates the possibility of differences being related analogically rather than opposed dialectically. Milbank thus claims to show "The reading of Christianity as *ressentiment* can, therefore, be questioned by a simple switching of the transcendental codes"[203] If we simply choose to see differences analogically related rather than differentially at variance then violence becomes, as it is for Milbank's Augustine, an unnatural intrusion. Violence then, not peace, becomes the reactive, life negating force, and so for Milbank, Nietzsche's reading of Christianity as *ressentiment* is not determinative.

Milbank's analysis of Nietzsche's pejorative characterisation of Christianity as ascetic draws again on his interpretation of the strong mans 'choice' for a paradigm of strength. The strong identify with 'the eagle' of Nietzsche's genealogy and choose this cultural paradigm over others for reasons of 'taste'. Because of this Milbank writes of the Nietzschean heroic type as logically having "involved a certain ascetic disciplining to model the self in a noble, military image"[204]. The strong must ascetically strive for Milbank to inhabit this paradigm of strength. This understanding of the strong as ascetic is not especially at variance with much of Nietzschean writing which highlights the strong as highly individualistic, striving to differentiate the self from 'the herd'. Such images lead to interpretations of the embodiments of power as

[201] The language here betrays Milbank's debt to Delueuze's reading of Nietzsche.
[202] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 289.
[203] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason,* 290.
[204] Ibid.

subjects striving ascetically for preservation. This natural instinct for survival Nietzsche often opposes to concepts of aesthetics "Its deepest instinct, that of self preservation and self aggrandisement is still visible in such sublimated forms" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 19). For Nietzsche, in fact, our entire cognitive capacity owes its development to this need for preservation "The usefulness of preservation stands as the motive behind the development of the organs of knowledge, they develop in such a way that their observations suffice for our preservation" (WP: 480). It is possible then to see in Nietzsche an opposition between aesthetics and preservation[205] which creates the impression of the powerful being ascetic, and this is how Milbank reads him. Milbank thereby identifies asceticism at the core of the reality Nietzsche's genealogy claims to unveil. His second critique of Nietzsche's reading of Christian asceticism is based upon a rejection of the claim by Nietzsche and especially Foucault that Christianity brings with it a negative 'interiority'.

For Nietzsche, Christian/Platonic reaction against life establishes an unnatural struggle between the real 'life affirming' instincts and the invented soul or inner self which seeks to subdue them. Foucault highlights that with Augustine morality becomes understood as a interior battle between the self, as soul, and our inner desires. Such understandings, for Nietzsche, illustrate the struggle against life that characterises the history of Christianity. It inaugurates a perspective that sees moral agency as an ascetic denial of instinctive desires in order to win the favour of a God residing in opposition to this life. It is this Gnostic strain within Christian morality that Nietzsche uses to characterise Christianity in terms of life denying asceticism. This Milbank challenges on historical grounds, claiming simply that unlike the asceticism of the Nietzschean heroic ideals, the Christian understanding of self discipline is, properly understood, mediated through the other. The Christian, unlike Nietzsche and Foucault, does not conceive of differences in opposition and thus a striving for self mastery can be mediated positively through the created order. Only when it is presupposed that life is active by virtue of oppositional difference is asceticism necessarily seen as reactive and life negating.

Milbank undoubtedly represents a highly erudite and lucid interpretation of Nietzsche within a theological metaperspective. This thesis is in his debt and shares many of his analyses of secular modernity. His progression from a rejection of

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[205] I will argue however that such an interpretation would be implausible on the evidence of Nietzsche's understanding of the will to power.

modernity's claims to an assertion of theology's status as metanarrative is also, although in a very different fashion, argued for[206] in the final chapters of this work. The key difference is in Milbank's reading of Nietzsche, which is in stark contrast to my own leading to a divergence in theological paths. This difference in reading Nietzsche and its theological implications will be illustrated in the remainder of this chapter. Milbank's interpretation and consequent rejection of Nietzschean postmodernity is central to the specific form of theology with which he proceeds. After rejecting the normative claims of secular modernity using deconstructive methods he must then, as I have shown, jettison this strategy if he is to deny the normative status of postmodernism in order to pursue his distinctive theological metanarrative. After utilising Nietzschean methods to deny modernity, Milbank must reject them, take them out of play in order to out-narrate other discourses in favour of a theology indebted to MacIntyre. The validity of this manoeuvre will be the subject of the remainder of this chapter

3:2 Milbank's Nietzsche

We have seen how Milbank proceeds in his attempts to establish his goal. For him Nietzschean thought is one more mythos, no more solid than the conceptual frameworks it seeks to displace. Milbank however bases this analysis upon a reading of the will to power which, as I shall show, conceives of it in a manner very different to the reading of it offered in chapter 2 of this dissertation. This distinction is highlighted by Milbank's interpretation of the behaviour of the strong man[207], whom, arbitrarily for Milbank, identifies with the paradigm of strength[208]. Milbank sees a 'metaphoric tension' in acts of strength as the strong are choosing to emulate a notion of strength culturally given. There is already a 'moral delay' for Milbank wherein this identification is made and therefore he cannot agree with Nietzsche that the strong man is no more culpable than the 'eagle swooping down upon its prey' (GM: 13). This analysis serves a crucial function for Milbank in establishing his binary

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[206] With an entirely different theological methodology.

[207] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 283

[208] Milbank's assertion of the arbitrary nature of this identification will be questioned in what follows. I will show how Nietzsche, in holding to a specific understanding of the nature of physiological functioning, cannot designate such an act as arbitrary. Such a position as Milbank's can only be held by denying the nature of the physiological process, as Nietzsche sees them.

opposition between postmodern violence and the city of God, as the option to choose the narrative of strength or to refuse it is with the individual. The will to power, for Milbank, is an activity of the self; it is simply an arbitrary choice for, or an arbitrary will to, power. It resides in the self only as this willing and presumably is subject to a process of interpretation in light of certain criteria as is any other 'choice'. Furthermore Milbank's ontology allows him "To argue that the natural act might be the Christian, (supernatural) charitable act and not the will-to-power"[209] and so for Milbank the will to power can be read as an arbitrary choice which runs against our fundamental nature.

This interpretation marks the point at which Milbank identifies Nietzschean thought as one more mythos to be out-narrated. This identification is the manoeuvre which allows him to simply deny the deconstructive epistemologies and differential ontologies which he utilises in his attack on secular modernity. It is in complete contrast to the reading of the will to power in chapter two where I showed the way in which, for Nietzsche, the will to power functions actively as the self[210]. Here I illustrated how the will to power is a force that functions as the orchestrating momentum in the actions of every living organism. Using the 'Trojan horse' of Dawkins understanding of the 'selfish' functioning of DNA, I explored why Nietzsche conceives of this force as 'biological'. My reading highlighted the materialist and behaviourist aspects of Nietzsche's thought, an aspect of Nietzsche's work and certainly Nietzsche's self understanding which is often ignored, not least by

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[209] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 289.

[210] In chapter two I concentrated on the biological nature of the will to power in order to illustrate Nietzsche's mechanistically physiological understanding of the self. I will proceed further in this area in this section with the goal of showing Nietzsche's engagement with the natural sciences throughout the 1880's. Through illustrating this I hope to show Nietzsche's 'basis' for his ontology and more significantly that this basis is not limited to the genealogical method Milbank assails. Revealing the biological foundations of Nietzsche's philosophy of power negates Milbank's dismissal in so much as his dismissal functions through unveiling the inextricable interwoveness of the method of genealogy and the ontology of violence it purports to reveal. Nietzsche, unlike Foucault, does not arrive at an understanding of history as the play of forces based upon a genealogical deconstruction of the differing epistemes which claim normative status and so Milbank's rejection of genealogy as 'one more mythos' is not as damaging to Nietzsche's philosophy of power as Milbank hopes. Rather Nietzsche's ontology of violence owes less to genealogy than to Nietzsche's engagement with the mechanistic physiology of his day. Such physiologies as that of Wilhelm Roux sculpt Nietzsche's ontology toward accepting struggle as a universal fact, not simply between individual organisms but within such organisms, only then can he write of each organism as "a tremendous assembly of living things each one dependent and subjugated and yet in a certain sense in its turn commanding and acting by its own will" (*Nachlass* June/July 1885). This entirely physiological concept of struggle and the play of forces is the defining characteristic of Nietzsche's will to power. It also differentiates Nietzsche's own philosophy of power from those within the Nietzschean tradition and so Milbank's attack on this tradition by virtue of the principle of genealogy fails to properly engage with Nietzsche's philosophy of power.

Milbank. This area, which I will proceed to explore in further depth, inaugurates the difference in possibilities between my reading of Nietzsche and that of Milbank. In essence Milbank's reading is determined by an analysis of the will to power as a possible choice, an option open to a self who may based upon certain criteria, choose to actualise or deny it. My reading of the will to power focuses on the manner in which, for Nietzsche, it functions as the self; 'it' as I illustrated in chapter 2 and will explore further here, is 'a hierarchy of cells' a biological functioning which functions actively as the I. Any dualism, envisioning a self outside of the will to power is precluded, for Nietzsche in my understanding of the will to power. Milbank, in seeing the trajectory of Nietzschean thought only in terms of his 'postmodern' legacy, reads him exclusively in terms of epistemological relativism and then, turning this method on Nietzsche's own work[211], rejects the will-to-power in light of it. The will to power however is, in direct contradiction of Nietzsche's nihilistic pronouncements, a claim to universal truth. For Nietzsche it is as metaphysical as the theory of gravity, for Nietzsche it is physiological fact[212]. Ignoring this aspect of Nietzsche's understanding of the will to power is what allows Milbank to dismiss it so easily.

I will now proceed to articulate further Nietzsche's 'physiological' understanding of the will to power. I will show the growing influence of natural science on Nietzsche throughout the 1880's based upon his notes from the time and illustrate the impact of this upon his notion of the will to power. We will see the attempts by Nietzsche to inaugurate an ontology based upon the newly developing natural sciences. I will show why the moral delay, conceived of by Milbank and central to his critique of Nietzschean will to power, is absent from Nietzsche's analysis. Ironically Milbank has allowed an image of a Kantian subject, choosing to align itself with a paradigm from its position as thinking agent, to shadow his reading. Such a manoeuvre is, of course, impossible for Nietzsche, as there is no I, self or subject that can, based upon evidence rational or otherwise, choose anything. For Nietzsche rather, as I will illustrate, the self exists as a collectivity, not of *vorstellungen* as in Kant but of drives (*trieb*) issuing from a physiological source (the will to power) and

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[211] See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 283.

[212] Such language and the use of the word 'fact' may seem out of place in light of Nietzsche's writings on such epistemological absolutes. It is however in keeping with Nietzsche's writings in relation to the will to power. His positivistic language in relation to its status as 'truth' is no less strident than his deconstructive assaults on metaphysics, science and all universalising discourses. This contradiction and the manner of its functioning is the main topic of the first chapter of this work.

conditioning our every thought and action. From a proper understanding of Nietzsche's physiological conception of the will to power we can see that Milbank's perspectival dismissal is not as seductive as it first appears.

3:3 Nietzsche's engagement with the Natural Sciences

In chapter two I elucidated Nietzsche's concept of the self by showing how for Nietzsche the principle of the will to power functions as the self. In doing so I highlighted a development in Nietzsche's philosophy away from the tradition of Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer, I argued, remained within the Kantian epistemological framework leading to a series of contradictions that darken his philosophy[213]. Schopenhauer's doctrine of the *Wille zu Leben*, where the will sculpts our biological development "teeth gullet and intestinal canal are objectified hunger; the genitals are objectified sexual impulse"[214], begins to trace a development to our cognitive states from our physiological constitution. Nietzsche however clearly and consciously attempts to break with philosophies of the subject and base a philosophy of the self entirely in the physiological structures of the person, participating in a tradition he traces back to Descartes, "Descartes was the first who with a boldness worthy of reverence, ventured to think of the animal as a machine; our whole science of physiology is devoted to proving this proposition. Nor, logically, do we exclude man, as even Descartes did. Our Knowledge of man today is real precisely to the extent that it is knowledge of him as a machine" (A: 14). Nietzsche's self understanding, within this 'tradition' became more prevalent in his later works and lead to an engagement with mechanistic physiology which became increasingly significant in terms of his developing understanding of his notion of will to power. I will develop this understanding with reference to the specific nature of Nietzsche's understanding of the will to power as physiological and show how such an interpretation denies the possibility of a dismissal such as Milbank's. Milbank, reading Nietzsche in light of 'the major Nietzscheans', interprets his thought in terms of the genealogical method that underpins it. Milbank as I illustrated, deconstructs the genealogical method and in

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[213] It is argued that the opposition between a concept of a body epistemologically determined by physiological necessity and a rational self encountering the world through processed perception in keeping with rational absolutes is never overcome in Schopenhauer.

[214] A. Schopenhauer *The World as Will and Representation* Vol. 2 Trans. E Payne, Oxford Clarendon Press (1974), 5.

doing so collapses the authority of Nietzschean claims. Nietzsche however, unlike the Nietzscheans through whom Milbank reads him, does not base his ontological claims solely on genealogical foundations and as such cannot be read simply, as Milbank reads him, as 'the master of a baseless suspicion'[215]. Nietzsche claims support for his notion of the will to power from both the external natural world and the internal mechanics of physiological functioning. In fact we can trace this development through his notes documenting his readings in the natural sciences which sculpt his concept of the will to power from 1881 on. I will proceed by first examining Nietzsche's understanding of Darwinian natural science and then, further refining an analysis of the will to power, discuss his engagement with mechanistic physiology[216].

Nietzsche's Critique of Darwin

It is difficult to assess the extent and biological sophistication of Nietzsche's understanding of natural science. The problems and possible errors in his understanding, particularly of Darwin, are however, as useful in clarifying his precise understanding of the will to power as the areas in which he seems to show greater erudition. He was certainly a severe critic of Darwin and these criticisms at times indicate a suspect reading of the principles of natural selection. One of his main attacks was based upon his reading of Darwinian evolution as a perfecting agency[217] causing the continuing teleological perfection of each evolving species. This conception stems from a suspect reading of Darwin coupled with a devoted suspicion of all potentially teleological processes. The other major criticism of Darwin, found mainly in his unpublished notes, centres on Nietzsche's contention that the forces that biologically orientate each organism, function mainly from within, at cellular level, rather than solely from the external influences which are discussed in Darwin's *Origin of the Species*[218].

As I have shown, Nietzsche's attack on the Kantian subject stems, mainly, from a rejection of a central location wherein the subject is located. Nietzsche's model of the

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[215] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 278.
[216] Primarily his engagement with the embryology of Wilhelm Roux.
[217] (A: 14)
[218] Nietzsche never directly refers to Darwin's *The Various Contrivances by Which Orchids are Fertilised by Insects* (London: John Murray 1882) and it is probable that he had no knowledge of this work which would have been far more compatible with his Roux based philosophy of will to power.

self consists of a series of competing drives "a kind of a lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all other drives to accept as norm" (WP: 481). Because of this "All our so called consciousness is a more or less fantastic commentary on an unknown, perhaps unknowable but felt text" (D: p.129), and so for Nietzsche the traditional singular subject of traditional philosophy must make way for a biological unity of competing drives. The I in this sense is only a linguistic tool, a metaphor designating a spatial boundary, it is erroneous, for Nietzsche, to see this I as a conscious agent who decides based upon universally identifiable rational criteria to do x or y. For Nietzsche the subject has "merely a surface phenomenon of consciousness, an accompaniment to an act, which conceals rather than exposes the antecedentia of the act" (TI: 'The Four Great Errors', 3). It is in the 'unknown text' the 'antecedentia' where the drives that structure and orientate the self are located. And it is here too, rather than in the organism's environment as Darwin had argued, that Nietzsche seeks to posit the struggle that shapes evolution.

Despite this problem with Darwin, the natural sciences for Nietzsche are nonetheless the best tool with which to inquire into this unknown text for "Nothing remains more incomplete than his image of the totality of drives that constitute man's being" (D: 119). Nietzsche identifies these drives with the will to power "In the case of an animal it is possible to trace all its drives to the will to power, likewise all the function of an organic life to this one source" (WP: 619). This, for Nietzsche, the will to power, is the underlying principle orientating all life "This world is the will to power-and nothing besides; And you yourselves are also this will to power - and nothing besides" (WP: 1067). These 'competing drives' for Nietzsche are the determining factors in the struggle for power that orientates action in the individual and also determines the evolutionary process. Nietzsche's focus is then opposite to that of Darwin (at least in his understanding of Darwin) as he writes in a note on Darwin from 1887 "the essential thing in the life-process is precisely the tremendous shaping power, creating form from within, which uses, exploits the 'external circumstances'"[219]. Nietzsche does not reduce the process of selection to survival within environment as all life manifests the play of forces, between forces within an environment certainly, but rather each competing entity itself is comprised of a multiplicity of competing forces at molecular level[220]. This is the lynchpin of

[219] *Nachlass* end of 86 – spring 87.
[220] The nature of Nietzsche's belief in this principle becomes clearer in section 3.

Nietzsche's philosophy of will to power, in that it represents the universalisation of the notion of struggle within as well as external to the organism[221]. Struggle between entities, at every level, is the underlying truth of existence, "all events, all motion, all becoming..... is a determination of degree and relations of force.. a *struggle*" (WP: 552). Nietzsche does not identify a reason for or pattern to this struggle, conceiving it as the struggle for power for its own sake.

Darwin, for Nietzsche, falls back into the 'problem of philosophers' in positing an effect as a cause (A: 57) and so the results of struggle, the proliferation of the 'victorious' organism's progeny, is seen by Darwin to be the underlying principle, the reason for, as opposed to being, as in Nietzsche's understanding, the mere effect of, struggle. The effect of the struggle for power is the continued existence of the most powerful genetic elements, but Darwin, for Nietzsche, identifies this effect as the underlying *cause* of the struggle. For Nietzsche this is too teleological and etiolates the violence behind the principle of struggle as he writes "every living thing does everything it can not to preserve itself but to become more" (WP: 1067) and so living things seek "Not contentment but more power; not peace at all, but war" (A: 1).

Nietzsche's attack on Darwin then focuses on two main areas. Firstly Darwin, for Nietzsche, locates the factors sculpting the evolution of a species in the surrounding environment, for Nietzsche evolution is the result of factors which originate within. Secondly these factors for Nietzsche cannot be safely given a cause[222]; they stem from a rage for power which occurs when any forces encounter each other. There can be no reason for this struggle e.g. survival of a species, as the opposing forces, as we shall see, do not for Nietzsche have intentional states. The will to power for Nietzsche is never a power for, or a power to, the struggle that determines life is struggle without reason. Darwin's 'teleological' superimposition of structure onto the natural world contradicted the main thesis of Nietzsche's thought i.e. the will to power as the orientating principle of life, and, as such, Nietzsche rejects him.

From Nietzsche's response to Darwin we can more clearly conceive of what he meant by the will to power, most significantly the fact that for Nietzsche it functioned within as well as external to the individual organism. It is already becoming clear that

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[221] I will illustrate in discussing Nietzsche's engagement with the work of Roux's mechanistic physiology. the way in which for Nietzsche such internal competition manifests itself.

[222] Nietzsche does however accept that procreation is "the real achievement of the individual" the "highest expression of power" (*Nachlass* End 1886 – Spring 1887), he differs from Darwin in that he wants to posit this as secondary to the principle of struggle rather than seeing struggle as an effect of the need to procreate.

there is no scope in Nietzsche's anthropology for a 'moral delay' in the Milbankian sense. The person for Nietzsche, existing as a multiplicity of drives, never has the opportunity to 'choose' a paradigm of strength. The orientating factor in human action and evolution occurs 'within' as a series of competing drives determine our activity, As Nietzsche writes "though I certainly learn what I finally do, I do not learn what motive has proved victorious" (D: 129). This principle shadows Milbank's reading of Nietzschean philosophy as Milbank can not legitimately conceive of the Nietzschean subject being faced with any binaurally opposed paradigms. This opposition between Nietzsche's understanding of the strong man being no more culpable than any other natural phenomenon and Milbank's positing of a moral delay wherein Nietzsche's hero identifies with a particular paradigm of strength serves to highlight the way in which reading Nietzsche exclusively in light of recent Nietzscheans can limit our understanding. For Deleuze, Foucault and Derrida[223] upon whom Milbank draws, Nietzschean philosophy represents an acute perspectivism in terms of epistemology, ethics and semiotics, wherein the subject's radical subjectivity denies the possibility of any universalist rationality, morality or semiotic stability. Nietzsche, for Derrida, is the deconstructive *undecideable* whose radical relativism calls into question the logocentric philosophical tradition in which he is viewed[224]. Yet this reading focuses solely on the deconstructive aspect of his work and it is this light that the 'New Nietzsche' of the French neo-Nietzscheans has been understood. To understand Nietzsche's anthropology however is also to incorporate his writings on the will to power, which manifests a positivist and for Derrida, logocentric, grammar which was anathema to these writers mentioned[225]. Milbank has interpreted the 'choice' of the strong man in terms of this 'new Nietzsche' and conceives of a subject, albeit a centreless subject void of a determinative rationality, engaging with a discourse, in this case violence. It is a legitimate reading and one entirely compatible with his

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[223] The works incorporating Nietzsche by these authors which feature in Milbank's interpretation include Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, (London, Athlone, 1983) Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Travistock, 1970) and Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (London: R.K.P., 1978).

[224] See Jacques Derrida, *Spurs, Nietzsche's Styles* (London: Athlone, 1976).

[225] This element of Nietzsche's work should certainly not be alien to the 'neo Nietzscheans' especially Derrida who owes so much to Heidegger's analysis of Nietzsche. The contradiction between Nietzsche's perspectivism and his positivism is never stressed in Derrida to the extent that it is in Heidegger and it functions even less in Foucault and Deleuze. Heidegger alone sees the extent of what leads him to call Nietzsche, rightly or wrongly, "the last metaphysician". Only in Heidegger is Nietzsche's biological positivism given due concern, philosophers such as Deleuze, Foucault and Derrida, whom Heidegger so influenced, neglect this crucial aspect of Nietzsche's analyses.

analysis of Nietzsche in terms of 'the major Nietzscheans'[226], such a reading however remains limited in its ability to incorporate Nietzsche's will to power into its analysis, and, crucially, omits Nietzsche's engagement with the natural sciences without which the will to power cannot properly be understood.

Nietzsche's rejection of Darwinian emphasis points to the methodological distinction which separates Nietzsche's later philosophy from that of his heirs in a genealogical tradition. Milbank's fundamental argument is that genealogy unveils the perspectival nature of reality and uncovers the play of forces which stands as the only meaning in the post-modern vacuum. Genealogy however, for Milbank is only verified by the accepted veracity of this ontology of violence. He therefore points to a circular argument, foundationless, with no possibility of it being refuted on its own terms[227]. It can also for Milbank, be simply rejected as it seeks to base itself only in genealogical method which needs a secular[228] fideism to sustain it. Such arguments alone however, which merely assail the principle of genealogical deconstruction, are not sufficient to displace the ontology of Nietzsche, as unlike Foucault and certainly Derrida, Nietzsche conceives of the will to power based not simply on genealogical assumptions but by virtue of his involvement with the contemporary natural sciences, both external and as I will now discuss internal. To negate the significance of these influences, as Milbank, reading Nietzsche in light of the 'neo-Nietzscheans', does, is to fail to envision the nature of the will to power as Nietzsche conceived of it.

I will proceed to illustrate the extent of Nietzsche's utilisation of contemporary science in terms of mechanistic physiology and show its relationship with his philosophy of power. To this end I am indebted to Wolfgang Müller-Lauter as one of the first Nietzsche scholars[229] to document the significance of such thinkers as Wilhelm Roux on Nietzsche's philosophy. I will argue however that Nietzsche's

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[226] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason,* 278, where he writes " I am concerned with what is common to the outlook of major Nietzscheans, and I deliberately treat the writings of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Deleuze, Lyotard, Foucault and Derrida as elaborations of a single nihilistic philosophy, paying less attention to their divergences of opinion". This legitimate strategy however limits Milbank in his capacity to interpret Nietzsche in light of Nietzsche's attempts to ground an anthropology in terms of biological functioning. This omission facilitates the ease with which Milbank rejects Nietzschean ontology.

[227] Derrida is in complete agreement with Milbank in terms of such an analysis of his own deconstructive methods.

[228] Milbank wishes to assert that this belief is not simply secular but pagan.

[229] Other such key scholars would include Karl Schlechta and A. Mittasch who's *Friedrich Nietzsche's Naturbeflissenheit* is important to the development of Müller-Lauter own work

engagement with Roux was less systematic than Müller-Lauter advocates and Roux's influence less direct.

3:4 Nietzsche, Roux and mechanistic physiology

Roux is central in clarifying the precise nature of Nietzsche's biological anthropology. He is the most significant of the physiologists with which, from the evidence of Nietzsche's notes, we know Nietzsche to have engaged[230]. Nietzsche's notes on Roux manifest two stages, a first critical assessment in 1881 where Nietzsche retains a semiotically relativistic *caveat*[231], and then a more systematic and favourable assimilation in 1883. For Müller-Lauter "Nietzsche is pushed by Roux in the direction of recognising scientific research"[232]. I am however reluctant to see such a pattern in Nietzsche's relationship with science, developing and orientating Nietzsche's philosophy throughout the 1880's and it is significant at this point that the nature of Nietzsche's relationship to the sciences is established. Nietzsche consistently oscillates between positivistic language, in relation to the compatibility of certain scientific advances and his will to power, and suspicion of science as a discipline based upon his semiotic relativism, throughout his writing. In fact some of his most stringent criticisms of positivistic science comes as late as his *Genealogy of Morality* (1887) where he writes "all our science, in spite of its coolness and freedom from emotion, still stands exposed to the seductions of language and has not ridded itself of the changelings[233] foisted upon it" (GM: 1:13). Nietzsche in fact never deviates from a suspicion of science, in *The Genealogy* 3:24 he writes "Our faith in science is still based on metaphysical faith" here too he reiterates the attack on faith in science found initially in his *Gay Science*, which was written during the period of his engagement

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[230] Other such physiologists and natural scientists include J. R. Mayer whose *Die Organische Bewegung in ihrem Zusammenhang mit dem Stoffwechsel* features in Nietzsche's notes of 1881 as does M. Forster's *Lehrbuch der Physiologie.* Nietzsche also mentions the work of A. Spir and F. A. Lange whose influence is manifest in Nietzsche's work after 1880.

[231] see *Nachlass* spring-Autumn 1881 "Our natural science is now on the way to clarifying the smallest processes through our acquired affect feelings, in short to creating a way of speaking for these processes: very well! But it remains a picture language".

[232] Wolfgang Müller-Lauter *Nietzsche: His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*, Trans. D. Parent (University of Illinois Press, 1999), 165.

[233] By 'changeling' Nietzsche seems to mean a union between signifier and concept, taken in the past to be fixed and unchanging. With changing contexts certain signifiers, once thought fixed and true change or even lose all meaning as he writes, "the atom is, for example, such a changeling, likewise the Kantian 'thing-in-itself'" (GM: 13). He is effectively referring to scientific or philosophical 'truth' which fails to take semiotic relativism into account.

with Roux, "the truthful man, in that daring and final sense which faith in science presupposes, thus affirms another world from the world of life, nature and history; and inasmuch as he affirms this 'other world' must he not deny its opposite, this world, our world, in doing so?" (GS: 344). Here we see Nietzsche's understanding manifest throughout his writings, that science, in that it strives toward an unchanging 'reality', participates in the 'logocentric' tradition of western thought[234]. For Nietzsche this tradition since Socrates has sought to attain universal principles which negated the natural reality of 'the instincts' "Reason = Virtue = Happiness means merely one must imitate Socrates and counter the dark desires by producing a permanent daylight - the daylight of reason. One must be prudent, clear, bright at any cost; every yielding of the instincts to the unconscious, leads downwards" (TI: 'The Problem of Socrates' 10). Such rationalities negated the real in favour of the unchanging but "The harshest daylight, rationality at any cost life bright, cold, circumspect, conscious, without instincts, has itself been no more than a form of sickness... To have to combat one's instincts - that is the formula for decadence; as long as life is ascending, happiness and instincts[235] are one" (TI: 'The Problem of Socrates', 11). In contrast to the enlightened rationality, Nietzsche advocates a science which doesn't pertain to the unchanging but remains faithful to the natural, to instinct, as he writes, whoever "tries to place philosophy upon a 'strictly scientific foundation', first needs to stand not only philosophy on its head but truth as well" (GM: 3:24), science must participate in the 're-evaluation of all values' that seeks to focus not on the unchanging but on the life affirming principles of the will to power. Nietzsche opposes the arid science which pertains to absolutising rationality with the *gay science*, the life affirming science of the will to power.

We must be clear then of Nietzsche's methodology in approaching 'science'. It may not be expedient, as Müller-Lauter does, to write of mechanistic science winning Nietzsche over after Nietzsche's initial sceptical reading of Roux in 1881. Throughout Nietzsche remains sceptical of the discipline of science. As late as his genealogy the same linguistic and perspectival critiques were still being used. Rather we can best understand Nietzsche's engagement with science as a search for lexical support in

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[234] See WP: 361.

[235] It seems that Nietzsche also has the Kantian enlightenment in mind throughout this section. He opposes the Kantian harmony of virtue and reason with the instincts which they seek to overcome. This tradition opposing 'life' with an arid notion of reason is for Nietzsche the underlying theme of the western philosophical tradition from Socrates on.

conceiving and formulating his core philosophical notions. As surely however as the name 'will to power' betrays an immense debt to Schopenhauer, the grammar in which he conceived of his will to power became more and more dependant on the thought of the natural sciences. It is with this in mind that I will proceed to discuss Nietzsche's involvement with the thought of Roux. Not to illustrate the growing scientific influence on Nietzsche, nor to assess the scientific validity of the many ideas originating in Roux that Nietzsche utilised, rather I hope to use this section to identify the grammar and concepts that Nietzsche thought best articulated the concept of the will to power. Through developing an understanding of the will to power and its organic, as Nietzsche saw it, veracity, I can show why Milbank's understanding of it as simply one more mythos may not be as easily ascertained as he claims. His deconstructive dismissal unveils the inextricable interdependence of genealogical method and the ontology it claims to unveil. Yet through illustrating the evolution of Nietzschean ontology through an engagement with the mechanistic physiology of Roux, traceable through his notes on the subject after 1881, we can see that Nietzschean ontology originated more in study of the most basic organic functionings rather than through genealogical epistemology.

The will to power in mechanistic physiology

The concept of struggle provides the resonance that Nietzsche found so seductive in the physiology of Roux. In *Der Kampf der Theileim Organismus* Roux traces the impact of struggle, primarily in the inner workings of the cell. He identifies 3 manifestations of struggle within the cell that Nietzsche finds particularly significant[236]. Firstly the particle that assimilates more quickly within its environment develops quickly in size and deprives its neighbouring particles of space. Secondly larger particles more quickly assimilate food and thus enhance themselves spatially and thirdly the larger particles replicate at a far quicker rate and thus determine the 'character' of the cell. The cell in turn is involved in competition with others ultimately determining the organism on the whole, in a multiplicity of ways. This is significant for Nietzsche as he comes to understand the self as a mere surface phenomenon concealing a multiplicity of determining activity, functioning at a non-conscious level. As he writes "The assumption of one single subject is perhaps

[236] *Nachlass* Spring-Autumn 1883, 86.

unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness in general? A kind of aristocracy in "cells" in which dominion resides? To be sure, an aristocracy of equals used to ruling jointly and understanding how to command? *My Hypothesis*: the subject as multiplicity." (WP: 490) Here we can see the relationship between Nietzsche's physiological enquiries and his philosophical pronouncements. The image of struggle within the cell and its impact on the nature and functioning of the organism comes to underpin his epistemological assumptions. It is this process, tracing the general principle back to and out from an understanding of the miniute of organic functioning, which leads Nietzsche to write of the will to power in such positivistic language. To accept the principle of struggle, without, as Darwin identified in the natural world, and within, as Roux illustrated in the internal functioning of the cell, is for Nietzsche to accept the validity of the principle of will to power.

An anomaly also occurs in Nietzsche's notes on this section which raises an issue of particular relevance to Milbank's critiques. The quote above writes of an 'aristocracy of equals...ruling jointly' yet this simile is in contrast to the impression of the large part of his writings on this issue and is certainly opposed in his more detailed notes on Roux. Nietzsche rarely slips into such language as the cellular conflict that leads to the functioning of an organism, from those that decide hair colour in the embryo to those that decide the spread of fatal diseases at other stages in life, do not lend themselves to such phrases as 'ruling jointly'. The significant principle for Nietzsche is struggle; struggle between such cells and even within such cells. The actuality of hair colour, disease or even perception and thought is the result of "A tremendous assembly of living beings, each one dependant and subjugated and yet in a certain sense in its turn commanding and acting by its own will"[237]. For Nietzsche the will to power orientates action in the smallest component of the organism, as the will to power is the principle of struggle. He writes of primitive nutrition in a further note on Roux: "The protoplasm stretches out its pseudopodia seeking something that resists it - not from hunger, but from will to power", and so the notion of differences, between types of cells and even within cells, not being involved in struggle is anathema to the main thrust of his notes.

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[237] *Nachlass* June July 1885, 37.

In his notes on Roux from 1883 Nietzsche consistently notes the impossibility of differences not being involved in struggle. He had advocated this in his writings but now it is conceived of mainly in its cellular level. As he writes, "The struggle for food in the cell takes place as soon as there is inequality among its components"[238]. Nietzsche would universalise this in terms of inter human relations, "the will to power can express itself only against obstacles; it seeks what resists it – this is the original evidence of protoplasm"[239] yet even this itself intrinsically is a "plurality of conflicting beings"[240]. Using the example of the protoplasm further Nietzsche attacks the misconception that all activity proceeds from a willing which has a reason. Activity within an organism has no reason only effects and therefore we should speak "not of causes of willing, but rather of *stimuli* of willing"[241] (my italics). No conscious choice precedes acts merely biological stimuli and so the element of choice, central to Milbank's critique, is absent, at least in Milbank's understanding of it, in Nietzsche. All difference and inequality leads to struggle, every interaction on a human level is for Nietzsche a struggle where something is gained and lost as such biological stimuli orientates action in a multiplicity of ways. To trace a motive for the action of the pseudopodia – hunger, makes perfect if problematic sense. This however manifests for Nietzsche 'the problems of the philosophers' of attempting to superimpose causal relationships or intentional states which indicate what is "merely a surface phenomenon of consciousness, an accompaniment to an act, which conceals rather than exposes the antecedentia of the act" (TI: 'The Four Great Errors', 3). The antecedentia of the act is not the cause of the willing, or the intention of the willing but merely a manifestation of itself, its will to power. For Milbank this perspective, ultimately unveiling an ontology of violence, is an entirely malign mythology and he holds that this mythology can be refused by a Christian 'ontology of peace' which "conceives differences as analogically related rather than equivocally at variance"[242]. Nietzsche however, in accepting Roux's, analysis of struggle within the cell accepts that "struggle follows by itself as a result of growth" "simply because of

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[238] Ibid., This equation of difference and inequality is shared by Roux who writes "Difference is prevalent in the smallest things, spermatozoa eggs – equality is a great delusion", 69.
[239] *Nachlass* Autumn 1887 9, 151.
[240] ibid.
[241] *Nachlass*, Spring 1884 25, 436.
[242] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 279.

metabolism"[243]. The veracity of this claim is not the issue here, to accept it however, as Nietzsche did, is to refuse the possibility of a straightforward choice between two equally unfounded mythologies. For Nietzsche to accept the principle of struggle, common to the natural science of Darwin and the cellular physiology of Roux, precluded any ontology other than the one coming to form the basis for his doctrine of the will to power. Milbank's critiques, in attacking Nietzschean ontology solely on the basis of its genealogical foundation fails to prove fatal to Nietzsche as his claims, as we can see, are not based in the wreckage of a genealogical deconstruction but are founded in, for Nietzsche, the basic principles of biological activity. His attack on the principle of end directed struggle frames this point.

3:5 Nietzsche's Biological Absolutising of Struggle

End directed struggle for Nietzsche fails to do justice to will to power permeating all organisms: "If two organic beings collide, if there is only struggle for life or food: what? There must be struggle for its own sake"[244]. The understanding of the will to power, of the principle of struggle between every organism and even within every organism evolves from Nietzsche's engagement with the physiology of Roux. In accepting Roux's fundamental assessments of basic cellular activity Nietzsche comes to clarify and conceive of the concept of will to power and to frame it in the manner in wherein it reached its most definitive expression. The will to power, the decisive principle in Nietzsche's ontology of violence is primarily labelled 'will to power' in his notes written in the 1880's during the time of his engagement with Roux, and published under the title *The Will to Power*. It is here that the will to power is expressed as a physiological functioning orientating every action. Milbank however interprets the interpretation of life as the 'play of forces' as the residue of deconstructive genealogy. After the rejection of the foundational epistemologies of much traditional philosophy the machinations of power comes to be unveiled as the 'truth' of deconstruction. This perhaps is an accurate reading of much of Foucault's genealogical enquiries. The same however cannot be said of Nietzsche. Nietzsche's ontology of violence is, for him, the opposite of deconstructive nihilism, it is life

[243] *Nachlass*, Spring 1884, 25, 36.
[244] *Nachlass,* Summer/Autumn 1884, 26.

affirming, it is that which is real[245] it is what is good[246] it is 'the origin of a thing and that things final destination'[247], it is happiness[248]. This understanding issues not primarily from a nihilistic deconstruction of the philosophies and value systems of the past but from a basic understanding of biological functioning. It is in a note on the physiology of the cell that Nietzsche writes, "a particular force cannot be anything else... than precisely this particular force" [249]. It is mainly for this reason, rather than for those stemming from a deconstructive genealogy that the strong man is no more culpable than an eagle swooping down upon its prey.

Each cell within the organism is coded with its instructions, instructions at variance to many other kinds of cells and so Nietzsche comes to describe man as a 'plurality of wills to power each with its plurality of means of expression and forms"[250]. As Müller-Lauter points out, Nietzsche is shaped by Roux in his critique of Darwin as Nietzsche notes Roux's theories on how the variegated and complex differentiation's of blood vessel walls could not be shaped through an evolutionary struggle for existence[251]. Rather Roux describes how the forcing movement of blood in the embryo forges the blood vessels into the complex forms they become[252]. This opposition between struggle for existence and struggle between forces, as simply power asserting forces, frames an opposition often found in Nietzsche. In this, Nietzsche, as I illustrated in Ch. 2, echoes the emphasis of neo-Darwinism rather then Darwin himself as he writes,

> "To want to preserve oneself is the expression of a state of distress, a limitation of the actual basic drive of life, which aims at *extension of power* and in obedience to this will often enough calls self preservation into question and sacrifices it. In nature the rule is not the state of distress, it is superabundance, prodigality, even to the point of absurdity. The struggle for existence is only an *exception,* a temporary restriction of the will of life; the struggle, great and small, everywhere turns on ascendancy, on growth and extension, in accordance with the will to power, which is precisely the will of

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[245] BGE: 36.
[246] A: 2.
[247] GM: 12.
[248] D: 356.
[249] *Nachlass* Autumn 1887, 10, 138.
[250] *Nachlass* Autumn 1885 Spring 86, 1, 58.
[251] Roux, *Der Kampf der Theileim Organismus*, 38.
[252] Wolfgang Müller-Lauter *Nietzsche: His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*, Trans. D. Parent (University of Illinois Press, 1999),168.

life" (GS: 349).

This will for Nietzsche orientates the nature of all life: "What man wants, what every smallest part of a living organism wants, is an increase of power" (WP: 702) and this understanding, as can be traced through his notes, owes much to his engagement with Roux and his acceptance of Roux's basic ideas.

From Nietzsche's engagement with Roux's embryological understanding of the role of struggle, between different elements within the cell, elements that determine the future organism; and the consistent struggles within and between cells throughout the life of this organism, Nietzsche comes to write of the body as "a tremendous assembly of living things each one dependent and subjugated and yet in a certain sense in its turn commanding and acting by its own will"[253]. All biological functions "want victory overcoming opponents, a streaming out of the feeling of power over broader realms than before: all healthy functions have this need – indeed the whole organism... is a complex of systems struggling for this growth of the feeling of power" (WP: 703). Such processes determine all thought and action and it is this understanding that fuels Nietzsche's ontology of violence.

Milbank then by interpreting Nietzsche within the tradition of Nietzschean genealogy omits a key element in our understanding of Nietzsche's will to power. It is seen by Milbank as the destination of deconstructive genealogies, it is arrived at through the mechanism of genealogy which proceeds from a rejection of classical ontologies towards telling a story conceiving of life as a play of forces. However, as Milbank writes, "The key to the deconstruction of these stories is simply this: How can the understanding of the event as such, of every event as a moment of combat, justify itself in merely historicist, genealogical terms?"[254]. I have shown that the answer in terms of Nietzsche's philosophy is that it does not claim to. Rather it is claimed from an understanding of the competition which characterises every activity in the natural world. It is a claim forged in Nietzsche through an engagement with Darwinian natural science and the physiology of Roux, both of which, in their own way, understand every event as a moment of combat. Milbank writes of Nietzschean ontology that "Unless it is clear that this really is a more natural form of life, then the general thesis must fall into doubt...and, of course, this cannot possibly be made

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[253] *Nachlass* June/July 1885 37 [4]

[254] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 282.

clear"[255]. As Nietzsche, utilising Darwin and Roux shows, the principle of the will to power, the universalisation of struggle, internal and external is 'more natural'[256] in that biological[257] struggle orientates all life in the natural world. To deny that it is more natural is to deny the basic evolutionary processes which comprise every aspect of each organic functioning. From reading the concept of will to power in light of its physiological element we can see that the strong man's action as eagle, is not as Milbank sees it, an identification with an always already established paradigm of strength. For Milbank "The behaviour of the strong man is never spontaneous, it is always imitative of a cultural paradigm of strength and he never exercises a natural power..."[258] from understanding the evolution of the will to power we can see why, for Nietzsche, the strong man has no choice in manifesting strength[259], and why for Nietzsche moral questioning of such an act is asinine. By virtue of it being a natural power it is for Nietzsche always spontaneous as "Our moral judgements and evaluations too are only images and fantasies based upon a physiological process unknown to us, a kind of acquired language for designating certain stimuli" (D: 119).

At this point it can be seen that this jettisoning of Nietzschean thought facilitates a vital transition in Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory.* In that it is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the origin and functioning of Nietzsche's philosophy of power, any procession in the manner of Milbank, simply discarding a Nietzschean ontology of violence, is not an option here. Milbank, in conceiving of Nietzschean ontology exclusively in terms of it being based on genealogy, fails to come to terms with the concept in its functioning within Nietzschean philosophy. Nietzsche, as I have argued, did not by any means exclusively base it on genealogical critiques and so Milbank's critique is, at best, incomplete. Of course the fact that Nietzsche's ontology of violence is based upon what he holds to be the empirical evidence of natural science rather than a genealogical deconstruction of opposing truth claims, does not mean that Milbank cannot proceed by simply denying the veracity of Nietzsche's understanding, on whatever grounds, as 'one more mythos'. I

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[255] ibid.

[256] Milbank makes no use of a concept of fall or of sin at this point.

[257] The complementarity of Nietzschean models of will to power and neo-Darwinian models of the functioning of DNA illustrated in Ch. 2 is relevant to this point.

[258] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 283.

[259] Nietzsche of course has a sophisticated concept of the multiplicity of ways in which this strength is manifested ' by doing good and ill one exercises one's power" (GS: 13). The key element for Nietzsche is that it originates from the primal will to power which is a biological functioning.

have shown however that while Milbank rejects Nietzschean ontology based upon a limited reading of it, a more comprehensive reading would not allow the dismissal of Nietzschean thought with the same ease that Milbank manifests. To dismiss the cogency of Nietzschean ontology of violence is, in effect, to dismiss the facticity of the body as the sum total of a radical plurality of struggle at cellular level and beyond. It is to dismiss the universality of the principle of struggle as manifest in models of evolution through natural selection. Rather in my final chapters I keep such ontology in play, albeit through conceiving it in light of a Christological metaperspective which opposes it with a Christological ontology of peace. This ontology maintains these two models of humanity, which come, through a close reading of Barth's Christological anthropology, to be seen in terms of fallen and reconciled humanity in concomitant disharmony. While the ontology of violence manifest in Nietzschean thought can never provide an exhaustive account of the self, to dismiss it out of hand, as in Milbank, is not an option that will be followed here. Rather it will be refused by a Christological ontology of peace, an ontology however, which, based on the Christology of Barth, maintains it in dialectical tension. In so doing such a Christological anthropology as Barth's participates in a doctrine of reconciliation which pays due respect to both the fallenness and the justification of the human condition.

CHAPTER FOUR

NIETZSCHE AND THE RADICAL THEOLOGY OF THOMAS ALTIZER

In the first two chapters the goal was to identify the content of the phrase 'Nietzschean thought' as will be used throughout this dissertation. It will be this understanding of the Nietzschean notions of self and sign that will be interpreted in light of a Christological metaperspective in the final three chapters. At this point however I will illustrate the second of two theologies that have significantly utilised Nietzschean thought, although in a form which I will proceed to challenge, namely the "Radical Theology" of the Death of God movement. I hope to illustrate that, based on an insufficient reading of Nietzsche's will to power, this theology, like the 'radical orthodoxy' of Milbank, proceeds in a manner not open to the engagement with Nietzschean thought that I wish to provide. In so doing, I will argue that the radical theology of Thomas Altizer assumes the normative status of Nietzschean thought such that it becomes the lexicon from which he proceeds to construct his theology, at the cost of retaining its identity as a Christian theology. The radical orthodoxy of Milbank, again based on a limited reading of will to power was shown to have preserved the identity of his theological enterprise by simply dismissing the claims of Nietzschean thought after already utilising them to assail what he holds to be the hegemony of modernity. Having highlighted what I believe to be the problems in their use of Nietzsche I will proceed in my final chapters to identify a theological framework which can, I argue, incorporate a Nietzschean conception of self and sign while preserving its character as a distinctly Christian theology.

The goal in this chapter then is an illustration of the theological engagement with Nietzsche in terms of the death of God movement. To this end I will articulate the readings of western culture and modern theology in which, for Altizer, the Nietzschean voice represents at once the authentic manifestation of the evolution of western consciousness and the identification of the form of theology made possible only through the death of God. The awareness of the death of God is common to both this developing cultural consciousness and the core orientation of Christian theology. This articulation will centre around the illustration of two stories which ground

Altizer's argument, firstly a reading of western culture which documents the developing awareness of the death of God through cultural and social landmarks. An awareness which, for Altizer, reaches its crescendo in the chaos and formlessness of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and most precisely, in Nietzschean thought which, for Altizer, the *wake* echoes in its central theme. The second element illustrated will be Altizer's reading of what he understands as 'modern theology', inaugurated by Kierkegaard and marked by an attempt to relate the world of faith to the world of 'objective reality', the radically secular world. For Altizer each significant development in modern theology attempts, but fails, to truly correlate the radical sacridity of faith to the profanity of objective reality, instead arguing from one side against the other, failing to see the core interrelationship. Only Nietzsche, for Altizer, establishes a framework where, through a dialectical *coincidentia oppositorum*, the death of God finally allows the world of faith to be harmonised with the real through a joyful affirmation of life. This death of God, for Altizer, is also the central theme of Christian theology as an incarnational theology, a theology which precisely rejects transcendence in favour of the radical fleshification of God. Because of this, by virtue of a cultural evolution Nietzsche realises and a systematic framework Nietzsche expresses, the contemporary theological climate marks a *Kairos*, for Altizer, wherein the true nature of Christian theology can again be asserted as a joyful affirmation of, as opposed to an opposition to, life.

I will proceed in the first section to document Altizer's reading of modern western cultural evolution which reaches a crescendo in *Finnegans Wake* and Nietzschean thought and which has an origin in the collapse of the scholastic world view, culturally with the philosophical enlightenment and socially and politically in terms of the French revolution. I will then, in section two, chart Altizer's understanding of Christian theology as incarnational theology and as such, precisely the theology which affirms natural life by virtue of the death and subsequent fleshification of the once transcendent God. I will then, in the third section, illustrate Altizer's reading of modern theology, each manifestation of which he sees as attempting to relate such faith, illustrated in section 2, to the developing understanding of *existenz* highlighted in section 1. Each significant movement in modern theology for Altizer represents an attempt to relate the world of faith to this radically secular world of 'objective reality'. Again it is Nietzsche whom, for Altizer, structures a method that can pay due respect to both elements affirming each through a dialectical *coincidentia oppositorum*. After

showing Nietzsche to be central, both culturally and systematically to Altizer's claims I will finally, in my fourth section, examine whether the weight of Altizer's claims can be supported in Nietzschean thought, and contrast the reading of Nietzschean life, as has been established through the first three chapters of this thesis, to its utilisation in radical theology, which sees in it a direct equation with incarnational theology. It is important to note that the readings of western culture and theology Altizer bases his own theology on are, at every juncture, open to critique, the goal here however is to illustrate Altizer's readings focussing only on the their utilisation of Nietzsche. As such while highly controversial readings of Aquinas, Descartes and Barth among others, are offered, a significant criticism of Altizer's interpretations of such figures cannot be engaged in as the focus can only be on the role of Nietzsche given the overall theme and space permitted. Similarly Altizer's understanding of the nature of incarnational theology is utterly alien, as will be seen in the final three chapters, to the more traditional understandings I wish to offer. The point of critique here however can only be on the role and functioning of Nietzschean thought within Altizer's highly controversial schema and so while articulating Altizer's reading, either of what he holds to be the true, misrepresented essence of Christian thought, the radical secularisation of western consciousness since the enlightenment or the role of such figures as Barth and Tillich within modern theology, space cannot be given to engaging such controversial utilisations as the focus is exclusively on the role of Nietzsche as the cultural and systematic engine of Altizer's reading. It is Nietzsche who serves as the cornerstone both culturally and systematically in Altizer's theology and in the final section (4:4) of this chapter I examine the validity of this use.

4:1 Finnegans Wake as the end of the word

One of the most striking aspects of the death of God theology is its eclecticism, the works of Joyce and Blake feature far more prominently than Aquinas and Barth who nonetheless participate alongside such discourses as Sufism and Christian cabbalism. The vast divergence in sources serves to create a pastiche of culture, which testifies, in the modern era, to the developing awareness of the growing absence of God. This awareness becomes total for Thomas Altizer, philosophically with Nietzsche's madman and culturally with Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. *Finnegans Wake* for Altizer is

"the supreme epic of our century"[260] as like Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Joyce's last novel expresses, for Altizer, the consciousness of his century. I will proceed in this section by illustrating a reading, both of the Wake and Nietzsche's madman in terms of their cultural significance, offered by Altizer primarily in *The Genesis of God*[261], before showing this significance in Altizer as the culmination of an epoch that begins with the collapse of the scholastic worldview.

Unlike *Ulysses* or indeed any other epic, for Altizer, Finnegans wake is never grounded in any time or indeed in any sense[262]. Leopold Bloom of *Ulysses* certainly transcends an individual by being all men, victors and vanquished, collapsing the boundaries between these epic types in a functioning which is affirmed fully and finally by Molly in her soliloquy[263]. The consciousness explored in *Ulysses* binds the characters of Joyce to those of Homer along a figurative trajectory transcending the minutiae of early 20th century Dublin. Bloom is however grounded. The consciousness that Joyce explores in Ulysses is that of every man, yet every man as selves with individual consciousness, this is central to the modernist style of *Ulysses*[264] narratively inhabiting each consciousness voiced, allowing them a functioning which is fully articulated through its relationship with typological correspondences within the literary tradition. *Finnegans Wake* however, for Altizer, moves outside this tradition, rupturing the narrative structure as it rages against order and form. H.C.E. of *Finnegans Wake* is not simply everyman, as is Bloom, but everybody and at that "here comes everybody", the motion, the eternal becoming of

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[260] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Genealogy* (Westminster: John Knox Press) 1993, 85.

[261] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Genealogy* (Westminster: John Knox Press) 1993.

[262] A temporal and geographical framework can however be extracted from the wake as in Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1944), yet it is never a structure through which, for Altizer, the novel comes to function.

[263] This affirmation to both Bloom and the life he represents is in keeping with the form of reading Altizer gives the Wake, as Frank Budgen writes "It seems to me that Joyce neither hates nor loves, neither curses nor praises the world, but that he affirms it with a "Yes" as positive as that with which Marion Bloom affirms her prerogative on the last page. It is not to him a brave new world about to set forth upon some hitherto unattempted enterprise. Rather it is a brave old world, for ever flowing like a river, ever seeming to change yet changing never" *James Joyce and the Making of "Ulysses"*, (London: Grayson and Grayson Ltd., 1934), 73. While Altizer bases his arguments solely in the Wake this reading is precisely the form of affirmation of life, free flowing with the eternal recurrence of the same, that Altizer sees unified in *Finnegans Wake* and Nietzsche. Indeed for Adaline Glasheen "I have tried to disentangle Marion Bloom from the Marys and Annes of FW, and I cannot do it, and concluded Joyce didn't want it done", *Third Census of "Finnegans Wake"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 33.

[264] A thorough examination of this aspect of Ulysses in terms of modernism can be found in Harry Levin's *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction* (New York: New Directions, 1960).

consciousness. H.C.E is thus himself and everybody representing the plural consciousness of a novel that attempts to chart this history of all human consciousness. For Altizer he is at once Finn MacCool (binding him, as heroic archetype, to Ulysses and thus Bloom)[265] and "Haar Faugher" the crucified God whose feminine element is Anna Livia, the water of life. This water of life begins the novel "riverun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay"[266] a beginning, if it can indeed be identified with an origin, which is already focussed before its start as the first word takes no capital and thus the novel, as Altizer notes[267], testifies to the always already fallenness which it proceeds to map. It immediately charts this riverunning process, at once the consciousness of the participants and the explicit history of God, bound in its flow of language. This combined history of H.C.E and God that is begun "before joshuan judges had given us numbers or Helviticus committed deuteronomy...by the might of moses"[268]. Throughout the novel this river from Eden passes through the combined participants, through everybody, ultimately returning back onto its self as the novel ends on the word "the" directing the final word to its origin which is in turn indistinguishable from this terminus. This flow eternally recurring, affirming the fusion it represents, is, for Altizer, the central theme of *Finnegans Wake*. It is an eternal yes to this river of consciousness as the water of life, which is traced from its fall past Eden and down through the participants of the Wake, an apocalyptic flood for Altizer that is an end to transcendence and a baptismal immersion into the fused affirmative deity of eternal recurrence.

Finnegans Wake thus represents for Altizer, a cosmic play, the night of the novel reflecting the entirety of creation. The creation testified to in the wake is groundless as the style of the novel explicitly wages war on the word, which is understood precisely for Altizer's Joyce as the logos. Against this Word it celebrates the chaos of eternal recurrence rather than the centred sacridity of a transcendent and rational core as reason, truth, or God. Again this represents a shift from Ulysses where the creator God is present as a voice in the street (213). God is certainly hidden, but present in the formal structure of Ulysses. For Altizer the stable elements central for a novel of this

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[265] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Genealogy* (Westminster: John Knox Press) 1993, 132.
[266] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1999), 1.
[267] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Gene*alogy (Westminster: John Knox Press) 1993, 5.
[268] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1999), 4.

kind, signifying through direct engagement with a tradition, are representative of an onto-theological structure which substitutes for God a metaphysical principle that in turn facilitates the aesthetic functioning of the text. While God is utilised less in the romantic movement than in literary forms that preceded it, central to its functioning is an absolute notion of a pure, unmediated, aesthetic experience of the sublime. For the early modernists it becomes the subconscious which can be accessed in providing the immediacy of the self to the aesthetic experience, and so while God is not explicit, a pure, absolute frame of reference, the sublime, the subconscious, the shared literary heritage of the ideal reader, takes God's place. For Altizer the basic novel form requires a structural basis with a corresponding metaphysic that is manifest in *Ulysses* but is comprehensively rejected in *Finnegans Wake*[269]. In *Finnegans Wake* the word collapses as the novel flows as formless as the river it traces. The river begins and ends in H.C.E. as with the end of the creator God, the origin, creation begins in every now. God himself dies, is crucified in the wake[270], a death which allows life to flow through Anna Livia Plurabelle. As Altizer writes "A cosmic and apocalyptic Eucharist is reborn and renewed again and again in *Finnegans Wake*"[271], above all in the tavern orgy following the execution of "Haar Faugher" wherein victim, judge, host and

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[269] See Sheldon Brivic, *Joyce the Creator* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 3-28 in terms of Joyce's understanding of the role of the writer as precisely that of creator, fusing each act with the original creation (in whatever form) which gives each subsequent act form and structure. This Joyce is rejected by Altizer seeing a distinctive break with any traditional theocentric notions of aesthetics manifest in Finnegans Wake. Altizer's, of course, is a highly suspect reading. Brivic participates in a tradition of Joyce interpretation seeing the significance of Joyce's lifelong engagement with theological voices such as Aquinas. Sophisticated treatments of such themes include William T. Noon, *Joyce and Aquinas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), Daniel Schwarz, *Reading Joyce's "Ulysses"* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 93-97, Frank C. McGrath "Laughing in his Sleeve: The Sources of Stephen's Aesthetics", *James Joyce Quarterly* 23, no.3 (1986):259-275, Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos: The Middle Ages of Joyce* (Tulsa Okla.: The University of Tulsa Monograph Series, no.18, 1982) where he writes of Joyce abandoning his faith "but not religious obsession. The presence of an orthodox past re-emerges constantly in all his works under the form of a personal mythology", 3, and T.S. Eliot's *After Strange Gods* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1934) where he writes of Joyce being "penetrated with Christian feeling" and his having given "a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy", 48. Such readings are starkly opposed to those of Altizer. Indeed Beckett's essay "Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce" in Samuel Beckett, et al, *Our Exagmination round His Factification for Incrimination of Work in Progress* (London: Faber and Faber 1972. Rev. Ed.) argues (with Joyce's instruction) precisely for the utilisation by Joyce of a structure and form of the kind that Altizer denies, i.e. one based upon an engagement with and utilisation of a stable tradition. This tradition, manifesting a theocentric aesthetics in the form of Dante and Vico is comprehensively rejected by Altizer despite Beckett's claims which were made and published with the aid of Joyce himself, attempting to, in Richard Ellmann's words "answer the chief critics of his book", Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 613.

[270] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Genealogy* (Westminster: John Knox Press) 1993, 133.

[271] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Genealogy* (Westminster: John Knox Press) 1993, 132.

creator are one, everybody. This fusion of God and human consciousness traces the fall, the collapse of both concepts, manifest, mapped and testified to in the collapse of the novel form.

Such formlessness for Altizer marks the end of the word. The notion that words are bound to reality, a concept that begins with the naming in genesis and is testified to in Pentecost, is negated in *Finnegans Wake* where words through their shape and sound spark meaning. If indeed they do spark meaning they do so not by virtue of their relation to specific signified realities but from their friction with surrounding words. There is no origin, no reality for Joyce's words to cling to. H.C. Earwicker, Haraun Childeric Eggebert, Here comes everybody, *Hic cubat edilis* and countless others become to mean through each other in significatory interdependence, as they do with and through Anna Livia Plurabelle, *Apud Libertinam Paravulam.* For Altizer *Finnegans Wake* can only be written after the death of the word, but this death allows the resurrection of meaning in words through their playful interaction and overflowing polysemanticism. Thereby for Altizer, as will come into focus later "there occurs an awakening of the Christian God, an awakening in a world or cosmos in which God is dead, only now is a Christian reversal of God liturgically enacted, and enacted in a purely transgressive language which is simultaneously the ecstatic and universal language of Here Comes Everybody"[272].

The end of the word and the Death of God

For Altizer the theme of the wake is the death of God as being, beginning and origin, which allows for being to begin in every now i.e. eternal recurrence. From Joyce's letters we can see that he was familiar with Nietzsche[273] and indeed the concept of eternal recurrence, and it is to this reality that for Altizer the novel pertains[274]. It is written in the absence of a form, a structure, a word, that the western tradition has

[272] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Genealogy* (Westminster: John Knox Press) 1993, 133.

[273] James Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce*, 3 vols., vol.1 Ed. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Viking Press, 1957).

[274] Altizer's thesis at this point is never dependant on illustrating a formal utilisation of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence by Joyce, merely in showing the functioning of the concept of a joyful affirmation, beyond good and evil, of a form of life which is incessantly renewed through and in the form of the principles which are precisely the principles of life. In seeing this manifest in Joyce in parallel to the work of Nietzsche Altizer has even greater support for the notion that this represents a developing awareness in western consciousness than if Joyce's notion, inaugurated in the final chapter of *Ulysses* and explored and asserted in *Finnegans Wake*, was simply the utilisation of Nietzsche's notion, rather than his parallel arriving at that realisation himself.

known as the *logos* binding reason, order and rationality to a concept of God with which it is inextricably interwoven. While *Ulysses* culminates in the word "Yes", in the mouth of Molly Bloom, a yes to a sensuous all too human life, *Finnegans Wake* reaches its Everest in an end which is embodied in the resurrection of Anna Livia Plurabelle "Rise up now and aruse; Norvenas over"(FW 619.28). Heaven or Nirvana is over emphasising the now over and against which it stands. The now as a vale of tears is invoked by Joyce evoking the pietistic novena (Norvana) from which we are called from our knees. It is a now which celebrates the end of my "cold mad feary father"(628.2) the end of a distant and arid deity which results in a yes to the chaos of life a "Yes Llf"(628.2). Here "Llf" is life, but also the first syllable of Liffey the river, Anna Livia, and thus Joyce expresses the kind of life, free flowing, fallen, and centreless that is being affirmed. Ultimately, for Altizer, it is a yes to the eternal recurrence of life, originless, endless, chaotic, embodied only as the river which flows through Finnegans Wake, personified as Anna Livia who is resurrected only through and because of the death of God.

Finnegans Wake as such, for Altizer, represents the end of the novel form, the end of the word and with it the end of the narrative and semiotic centre i.e. God, as the ground of meaning. It thus represents the radical absence of God in the modern world, an absence it traces from its dawn in Eden. It also points to that source of faith beyond the God of the Logos; it points to faith in eternal recurrence. Faith in the chaotic affirmation of life. This affirmation is testified to in the resurrective yes which serves as the culmination of the novel and is only said after the death of God. It is an affirmation bound to, and only possible after, the death of God. This understanding is, for Altizer, clearly and consciously Nietzschean and it is in Nietzsche himself that Altizer sees the final radical awareness of the absence of God in the philosophy of modernity.

This process culminating in Nietzsche and mapped in *Finnegans Wake* is inaugurated for Altizer and William Hamilton with the French revolution which, they claim, marks the beginning of the end of the theocentric world view[275]. The revolution marks the overthrow of not just the monarchy but the entire paradigm that held it in place. From John 19:11, the monarchs power was given from above, his right to govern was guaranteed by divine right. The church was aligned to the system as an

[275] Thomas J.J. Altizer and William Hamilton, eds., *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (New York: Penguin, 1968), 2.

entire theocentric worldview copperfastened the social order. The revolution, for Altizer and Hamilton, marks liberation from the tutelage of scripture and church as human authority begins to take precedence over divine right.

4:2 The Modern Origins of the Death of God

This act was only possible for Altizer and Hamilton within an epistemological framework through which it could be held that the thought of the individual could arrive at a truth more real than that testified to in a literal interpretation of scripture or adherence to church teaching. This shift, essentially that from theocentrism to anthropocentrism, is only possible as a result of the epistemological advances of the enlightenment. For "Radical Theology" the enlightenment transforms the medieval concepts of both ontology and epistemology transforming essentially theocentric categories such as the *analogia entis* into radically anthropocentric realities. The *analogia entis* of the scholastics was dependent upon a concept, ultimately Aristotelian, of being, which was guaranteed by virtue of its grounding in being itself, God. Being thus has a sacridity emanating from and returning to being itself. For Altizer ontology at this juncture was a fundamentally theocentric category as the entire created order was infused with a sacridity through its analogical relationship to God. Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*, for Altizer, ruptured this harmonious world view as being itself comes to rest not on the *credo* of faith in the creator but through the *cogito* of rational thought. Being is no longer seen for Altizer's Descartes as being affirmed by virtue of its participation in diving being, its origin and source, but by its contingent relationship with a *res cogitans*. Thinking affirms the existence of being rather than it being established through its status as participating in God as being. This radically shifted, for Altizer, the nature of enquiry of being into profane categories. Rational thought as opposed to a credo became the foundation of intellectual enquiry, it went guarantor for it and in doing so assumed the mantle once held by the concept of *analogia entis*. This *cogito* of Descartes system was, for Altizer, the aggressive antithesis of the Thomistic world view as it was held together by a secular profane concept, i.e. philosophical reasoning. Ontology, in Altizer's understanding, thus becomes an anthropocentric rather than a theocentric category.

With this realisation the world becomes secular in that it becomes a secular reality, the object of secular thought, the exact antithesis of the *analogia entis*. The dismissal of God from the epistemological realm was developed in both the empirical and rationalistic manifestations of enlightenment of thought. God as a supernatural being was a revelatory impossibility within the empirical epistemological framework. Similarly the arid deity of the rationalists, for Altizer, could only exist as a God of the gaps, never in a manifestation of the Christian God. Kant, representing the Everest of enlightenment thought for Altizer, effectively consigned the living God to the epistemological wasteland, as the human mind could function actively only in accordance with the principles it could understand. Kant's establishment of epistemological categories through which sensory data could be appreciated, banished the revelatory God, making faith, in Barth's words, an "impossible possibility". This impossibility created an infinite qualitative distinction between the epistemological categories of human consciousness and anything that could be called God. This epistemological abyss marked a spectacular paradigm shift from the *analogia entis* of the scholastics. Now both epistemology and ontology became categories that were viewed as fundamentally secular.

God, or a concept of God, was salvaged for Altizer and Hamilton[276] in a mutilated form by Kant's antinomy of practical reason and thus lingered on the periphery of the Kantian universe. With Nietzsche however the concept of God was radically and terminally banished. For Altizer, following Nietzsche, the death of God represents an identifiable historical event. For Nietzsche the concept of God as the transcendence of being was the ultimate no said to life. Christianity emerged within the Nietzschean corpus as the spirit of this resentment to life. For Nietzsche, Christianity, combining the distant deity of Hebrew thought with the platonic *Logos*, both concepts pure, ordered, unchanging, is the antithesis of life, functions as resentiment over and against the fluid life affirming reality of eternal recurrence. Nietzsche's genealogical interpretation of God from its genesis to his Zarathustran antithesis exposes the history of God, to which Altizer subscribes. This history represents the growing absence of God as transcendent being, ground of morality, reason, language, society. With Nietzsche's madman we see the first realisation of the actual death of God. The madman's statement is not merely a theocentric analysis telling of God's death but the

[276] Thomas J.J. Altizer and William Hamilton, eds., *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (New York: Penguin, 1968), 7.

foundation of a life affirming liberating anthropology, "We are his murders...We have killed God" and now "Must we ourselves become Gods to appear worthy of the act? (GS: 125). The death of God is as such not simply a natural progression but an active murder[277] wherein humanity actively ends the existence of God as transcendence. Only through such an act can the self-realisation of the deity of humanity be engendered. Only now can the humanism established in the enlightenment and striven for, through, for Altizer, such thinkers as Feuerbach, be truly realised. As such it is not the passive witnessing of an evolution in consciousness but a conscious election and affirmation of the life which can be asserted only on the death of such a distant life negating deity. From this perspective the being which could once not think itself outside of God sees the concept 'God' as a stage within its own evolution, which it itself has the power to end and, through doing so, realise itself its own divinity. The death of God as the active ending of God by human hands testifies to the realisation of this evolution.

Nietzsche's genealogical approach however, for Altizer, testifies also to the interweaving of the concept of God through every element of human thought. As theocentric categories held the social order in place that was overthrown in the paradigm shift affirming French revolution, so too for Nietzsche do theocentric categories provide the foundations for all notions of truth, morality and knowledge. With the death of God "the old truth is coming to an end..." (EH: 86) Now "there is no up nor down... The earth is unchained from its sun" (GS: 125). This chaos is total for Nietzsche as all metaphysical notions are based on a concept of God who is the logocentric origin of their reality. Without this centre, this ground, such logocentric concepts, for Nietzsche, collapse. Thus Nietzsche, the Promethean bearer of God's obituary, "philosophises with a hammer amidst the toppling of idols" (EH: 86) as the metaphysics founded upon the logocentric reality of God, founder. The realisation of God's death exposes these realities and truths as idols, and the expression of the reality of this death destroys them.

This reality understood by Nietzsche as not just the end of God but of the logocentric concepts that the concept God keeps in place, is a conceptual framework testified to and made manifest by the Joyce of *Finnegans Wake* as previously Dante

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[277] A similar reading of Nietzsche's madman to Altizer's is found in Michel Haar "Nietzsche and the Metamorphosis of the Divine", Trans. M. Gendre in *Post-Secular Philosophy*, Philip Blond Ed. (London: Routledge, 1998), 157-176.

had in his own cosmic play made manifest the scholastic worldview[278]. Without the centre, the "original sun" we have derived from "Hearsay in paradox lust" (FW: 263)[279] the form, the order, the word, collapses in a liberating fall into chaos. The God as ground of our logocentric order is a life negating force for Joyce, "Rise up now and arise! Norvenas over" (619.28) tells of a faith which keeps a people on its knees in a vale of tears (novena) with the goal of escape (Nirvana). The end of this Norvena, the enslavement of other worldly piety, marks the genesis of affirmation, the affirmation of "Yes llf!" as yes to life and river Liffey, Anna Livia, manifesting the precise form of life affirmed, the Dionysian affirmation of free flowing formless chaotic life. As such the realisation of the death of God allows and is the wellspring of the Zarathustran affirmation of eternal recurrence.

It is to the reality of testimonies such as those of Joyce and Nietzsche as proclaimers of modern consciousness that Altizer and radical theology attempts to respond as Altizer and Hamilton feel that they are writing in any age in which philosophically and culturally God is dead. It is an event that has happened, was mapped through the cultural and philosophical developments since the collapse of the medieval synthesis, and then was finally testified to in such writings as those of Joyce and Nietzsche. In Joyce and Nietzsche the end of theocentric categories finally results in an end of every category which has a logocentric goal in terms of form or structure and is manifest as an absolute affirmation of the nothingness left in the wake of God's death[280]. The history of this events reception is charted by Altizer from the collapse of the scholastic synthesis through the widening abyss of the enlightenment to the wasteland of the twentieth century[281]. The goal of radical theology is to relate this Death of God, patently manifest in the evolution of culture and realised in its totality

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[278] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Genealogy* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993), 85.

[279] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Genealogy* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993), 132.

[280]Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Genealogy* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993), 134.

[281] To an extent Altizer's goal in his reading of *Finnegans Wake* could have also been achieved by a reading of Eliot's *Wasteland. The Wasteland* like Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* testifies to the death of God. In fact the hanging God of the Wasteland who is bound to the impotent fisher king, is a more obvious motif for expressing that to which Altizer pertains. The identification of the hooded figure on the road to Emmaus who mutates into the sinister hooded hoards also provides a potent symbol for Altizer's thesis of the life negating aspects of Christendom. The reason that the Wasteland is never referred to by Altizer points to the fact that his goal is ultimately the affirmation evident in *Finnegans Wake* which he seeks to identify with an affirmation of the God beyond God. Eliot's Wasteland, like Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, testifies to the death of God without the resultant life affirmation central to Altizer's thesis, and is thus largely absent from Altizer's cultural analysis.

in Nietzsche, to Christian faith. To relate the crisis inaugurated by the loss of God manifest in contemporary culture to the scandal of the absence of God on Easter Saturday and beyond.

4:3 The Death of God in Christian theology

I will proceed to illustrate the form of Christian theology which Altizer and Hamilton see as having a direct correspondence with the unveiling of the death of God and the affirmation of life manifest in Nietzsche and testified to in *Finnegans Wake*. It is this understanding of the nature of Christianity as an incarnational theology which Altizer feels establishes Christianity as the religion which has always proclaimed the death of the God as distant transcendent deity, a death common to both the evolution of western consciousness and Christianity which can in the contemporary theological climate be harmonised. This harmonisation is their main goal in responding to the crisis which reaches a crescendo with the truth[282] of Nietzsche's madman's statement "God is dead". A crisis however which is, they claim, at the core of all incarnational theology and therefore all truly Christian theology. In one sense the crises central to a incarnational theology is central to any Christian theology, as Hans Urs von Balthasar writes "If without the son no one can see the father (John 1:18) nor anyone come to the Father (John 14:6) and if without him, the father is revealed to nobody, (Matthew 11:27) then when the son, the word of the father is dead, no one can see God, hear of him or attain him"[283]. Incarnational theology focuses on the reality of God in the man Jesus, it tells of God in Christ reconciling Himself with the world (2 Cor. 5:19). Yet this God revealed, manifest and present in Jesus faces the believer, for Altizer, with the absence of the pre-incarnational God, the pre-Christian God. The pre-incarnational God cannot remain as such in the incarnation and if this God is known exclusively in the man Jesus then this God can only be known as man. Originally the distinction was

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[282] Truth here in the sense utilised by Nietzsche in "Truth and Lie in Their Extra-Moral Sense" such that "Truths are illusions we have forgotten are illusions, worn-out metaphors now impotent to stir the senses, coins which have lost their faces and are considered now metal rather than currency"(TL: 64). Truth here, as in the case mentioned above, maps the process whereby the metaphorical statement of the madman has become truth over time with gradual acceptance. For Nietzsche, as Arthur C. Danto writes "The difference between (so called) fact and (so called) fiction is virtually quantitative, that being taken as fact which has been repeated a sufficient number of times.", in this sense the death of God in the late 20th century has for Altizer become true, thus instigating the theological *Kairos* wherein the core essence of Christianity, for Altizer can be dialectically bound to the cultural awareness.

[283] Hans Urs Von Balthasar *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*. Trans. Aidan Nichols, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 48.

addressed, for Altizer, in anthropocentric terms examining the shift not in Godself but in terms of the humanity that believes in God, differentiating between participation in for example, the old and new creation, categories central to Pauline theology of reconciliation history. Yet the questions relating to the ramifications of a truly incarnational theology soon came to the fore in a new and unavoidable way with the Arian controversy. How can the omnipotence, impassibility, incorporeality and omniscience of God be maintained if God is truly incarnate in this man Jesus? For Arians of the fourth century the corporeality, suffering and unknowing anxiety which afflicts the Christ from Gethsemane to Golgotha represent a distinction, ontological and thus temporal[284] between the father and son. For Altizer the death of this man Jesus represents the death of the God who stands sovereign, permanent in the midst of change. For God to be truly present in the life, passion and death of the man Jesus, the God prior to this new mode of being must change signalling the death of the prior God. Christian theology is engaged with this scandal for Altizer, the dynamic, dramatic and ultimately redemptive scandal of the cross. The 'death of God' theology in its theological writings attempts to respond imaginatively to this crisis, relating it to and expressing it in the language of the death of God experienced in light of post enlightenment epistemology.

For Altizer only the Christian may speak of the death of God because "the Christian alone knows the God who negates himself in his own revelatory and redemptive acts"[285]. This understanding stems, for Altizer, from the difficulty in maintaining the otherness of God in the face of the impossibility of appropriating such a God within the framework of Kantian epistemology. The God accessible in revelation is thus a compromised God for Altizer, a God who must negate his otherness. To speak of the incarnation then is to speak of the radical end of this God in an entirely new epiphany of deity. With the incarnation, for Altizer, the celestial and transcendent Lord ceases to have currency, as God is known as flesh, annihilating the chasm separating humanity from an arid transcendent deity[286]. The hellenisation of Christianity however, for Altizer, marks the retreat from this radically new epiphany in Jesus to the old sovereign deity as the man Jesus is subsumed into the

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[284] As in the adversarial Arian catchphrase "There was when He was not"

[285] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *Gospel of Christian Atheism*, (London: Collins 1967), 102.

[286] Again Altizer's highly contentious deductions are illustrated without engagement, as the goal is not to form a critical evaluation of his theological, philosophical, literary and political opinions but simply to clarify and assess the precise role of Nietzschean thought in his highly eclectic framework.

primordial logos. The absolute and life negating categories of Platonism become the lexicon of the emergent Christianity restoring God away from God's chosen place on the cross. This inversion of the God known in the incarnation resurrects the distant God as the transcendence of being and thus establishes what Altizer controversially feels Kierkegaard refers to as "the great compromise of Christendom". This Christ of Christendom "must inevitably enclose Christ within a distant and alien form and refuse his presence in the immediacy of our existence"[287]. As such the history of theology from the fourth gospel on can only be interpreted by Altizer as a betrayal of the original significance of the incarnation as he writes "Every Christian attempt to create an unbridgeable chasm between sacred history and human history gives witness to a refusal of the incarnation and a betrayal of the forward-moving process of salvation"[288].

The incarnation properly understood for Altizer thus already inaugurates the reality of the death of God. A fact denied in the subsequent hellenisation of Christianity as "Platonism for the masses" (A: 47), which, in turn, inaugurates Christendom. The collapse of Christendom with the enlightenment brings the reality of the death of God once again into focus, a neglected reality that manifests the true significance of an incarnational faith. This reality of the death of God points toward the eschatological consummation of the original message which was that of a truly incarnational theology, binding the reality of God to the reality of life. Such a God known and mediated through the natural categories central to a properly incarnational theology has, for Altizer, been misrepresented by the hellenisation of Christianity forcing this God of flesh into logocentric categories. The death of God then in modern culture helps establish, for Altizer, an ultimately redemptive reality entirely in keeping with the manifestation of a godless faith in the man Jesus as he writes, "the death of God does not propel man into an empty darkness, it liberates him from every alien and opposing other, and makes possible entry into what Blake hailed on "The Great Humanity Divine" or the final coming together of God and man"[289]. The metamorphosis of transcendent God into flesh signalling the death of God and the affirmation of life is consummated in the kind of evolutionary consciousness that culminates in Nietzsche and Joyce as the proper culmination of the enlightenment

[287] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *Gospel of Christian Atheism*, 106.
[288] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *Gospel of Christian Atheism*, 108.
[289] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *Gospel of Christian Atheism*, 107.

enterprise. For Altizer "The actualisation of the metamorphosis of the word into flesh is a continual and forward moving process, a process initially occurring in Gods death in Christ, Yes, but a process that is only gradually and progressively realised in history, as Gods original self negation eventually becomes actualised throughout the total range of human experience"[290]. The experience of modernity testifying to the absence of God represents the fulfilment of salvation history as the untimely notion of the death of God, first spoken for Altizer with the man Jesus, is established finally and definitively in western culture. The death of God in modern culture is thus interpreted theologically by Altizer and is a cause for Christian celebration,

> "let the contemporary Christian rejoice that Christianity has evolved the most alien, most distant, and the most oppressive deity in history: it is precisely the self alienation of God from his original redemptive form that has liberated humanity from the transcendent realm, and made the total decent of the Word into the fullness of human experience. The God who died in Christ is the God who thereby gradually ceases to be present in a living form, emptying himself of his original life and power and thereafter receding into an alien and lifeless experience"[291].

The incarnation, bringing with it the reality of God as the affirmation of life in the face of the death of God, inaugurates a new history for Altizer. It is a history which is mapped in the modern era with the radical and increasing awareness of the absence of God, an absence inaugurated in the incarnation which is, for Altizer, the core of all properly Christian theology. As such with the reality of the death of God in the modern world this salvation history comes to fruition. The life-affirming ethos of Jesus, only possible in the absence of God as logocentric origin, with the death of this God in modern culture, becomes expressible once again. This arid distant deity, the God left behind in the incarnation, was worshipped in vain through the theological categories of Christendom, a God known as being itself, the distant philosophical deity which copperfastened the onto- theology of the Thomistic universe. With the death of God, testified to in the experience of the modernity, the Christian is again free to participate in the life affirming body of Christ.

The God whose death is celebrated in the works of the later Joyce and Nietzsche is, for Altizer, the God who is always already dead in the incarnation. By virtue of this

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[290] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *Gospel of Christian Atheism*, 109.
[291] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *Gospel of Christian Atheism*, 110.

Altizer sees the realisation of this death in post enlightenment culture as the consummation of salvation history. Modern culture signals the death of a Christendom which resurrects the transcendent sovereign Lord from the fleshy reality of the Christ. The incarnation heralds the earthly life affirming reality of a centreless God wherein "being is born in every now" (Z: 111). This God binds Godself to flesh exploding the other worldliness that negates a Yes to existence. This yes is the yes said to existence in the incarnation, a yes that is only possible after the death of God. The worship of the world of spirit, negating the reality of the world of flesh can only result in resentment towards this world. When logocentric being, God as structure, order, truth, and otherworldly reality dies, the incarnatory God which heralds this death can live. This God, existing as the fleshification of God, or the radical absence of God, results in the life affirming reality pointed to in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence.

Altizer then attempts to relate the life affirming reality of the incarnation with the life affirming reality testified to in the modernity represented by Nietzsche and Joyce. Through such an analysis Altizer can provide a theological interpretation of the radically profane reality of modernity. It is ultimately pointing not toward a correlation between an incarnational Christology and an awareness of a radically profane modernity but a dialectal *coincidentia oppositorum*. This dialectical coincidence of opposites attempts to relate the death of God in Christianity to the death of God in modernity as a liberating life affirming Yes. The fundamental incarnational import of Christianity, the crisis at the centre of all Christian thought, refuses to abate for Altizer. As such the theological task has always been to give voice to this affirmation of life as precisely the other of God as transcendent deity, yet it has been a task made impossible by virtue of its having been conducted through the onto-theological categories that have characterised Christianity since the fourth century. The modern period for Altizer represents the full and final overcoming of such categories and as such the task can begin of relating the incarnational essence of Christianity to the world of secular existence, pointing to the sacralisation of such a secular world as it can be affirmed as such only in an incarnation which establishes its sacridity through the rejection of the sacridity of the God who stands as other to it. As Nietzsche, for Altizer, represents in western consciousness the final, secular affirmation of the death of God, an affirmation expressed firstly and most perfectly in the incarnation, so too is Nietzsche the voice which in modernity can express most

fully the affirmation of the real most central to Christian faith and only possible through the death of God. This task of finally, in the wake of the death of God, affirming the sacridity of reality, is for Altizer the fundamental task of twentieth century theology, in the remainder of this chapter I shall firstly document Altizer's reading of the various stages of this attempt, before illustrating how, in Nietzsche Altizer feels the *coincidentia oppositorum* all properly incarnational theology strives for is realised. An affirmation of the world as the secular other of God made possible only by virtue of the radical absence of this God who opens up the path for the sacralisation of the real. This notion for Altizer is the essence of Nietzsche's notion of eternal recurrence and it will be as such that in the final section that I will argue that this equation of the essence of Christian thought with the affirmation of eternal recurrence is based upon an untenable reading of Nietzschean thought. Only through a reading which fails to see the precise functioning of Nietzsche's affirmation can it be equated with the Christian narratives which stand, as Nietzsche knew well, as the absolute rejection of the will to power.

4:4 The dialectical coincidence between the radically sacred and the radically profane in contemporary thought

The task of modern theology for Altizer, in the wake of the cultural evolution realised most fully in Nietzsche and Joyce, is to relate the world of faith to this radically secular world of objective reality. Altizer and Hamilton in their defining collection *Radical Theology and the Death of God*[292] map this process examining the significant developments within European theology in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in precisely this light. His goal is to illustrate the flaws in each venture as ultimately failing to truly fuse the radically secular and the radically sacred ultimately by privileging one side of the opposition. It is only in Nietzsche, for Altizer, that an absolute *coincidentia oppositorum* between the radically sacred and radically profane is manifest, bound in his notion of eternal recurrence.

Altizer begins his analysis with Soren Kierkegaard whom for Altizer is the founder of modern theology. Modern Theology, by which Altizer means the theological response to the collapse of the theocentric world view, was founded by Kierkegaard

[292] Thomas J.J. Altizer and William Hamilton, eds., *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (New York: Penguin, 1968).

specifically in response to the advent of the, for Altizer, radically secular, Hegelian categories of the "Universal" and the "Objective". Such categories were indicative of "the new reality created by modern man"[293]. This reality for Kierkegaard was never merely another way of interpreting reality or even an interpretative model which could provide a linguistic framework for faith in the modern era, as it was for liberal Protestantism. For Kierkegaard this reality, objective universal reality, existed as an outright negation of faith. The *cogito ergo sum* of the enlightenment and the culture it spawned was antithetical to the credo which was the mode of existence in faith. As Altizer writes "modern or 'objective' knowledge is not religiously neutral as so many theologians have imagined, rather, it is grounded in a dialectical negation of faith"[294]. The binding of being to rational objective thought, a movement which begins with Descartes' *cogito* and reaches its Everest in Hegel is simply paganism for the Kierkegaard of *The Sickness unto Death*. Kierkegaard's Abrahamic concept of faith based upon a leap, a Faustian choice, is dialectically negated by Hegelian categories of universal rationality. The objective existence is the antithetical opposite of the subjectivity which Kierkegaard identified as faith. The 'reality' of philosophy after the enlightenment is incommensurable with the subjective interiority which is individual existence, as such, existence is identified with the possibility of choice as a leap of faith, rather than the pursuit of a rationale which mirrors the inherent rationale of reality. As Altizer writes "existence in faith is antithetically related to existence in objective reality...Therefore true faith is radical inwardness or subjectivity, it comes into existence by a negation of objectivity, and can only maintain itself by a continual process, or repetition, of negating *Objectivity*"[295].

For Altizer's Kierkegaard, the post enlightenment world opposed to faith is a world where epistemology and ontology are inextricably interwoven; Descartes *cogito* has established a mutual interdependence between the real world and rational thought. By virtue of this the rational can identify and ultimately lead to the real. This is for Altizer the driving idea behind the theology which characterises the 19th century i.e. the synthesis of liberal Protestantism and the quest for the historical Jesus. In both instances we see a correspondence between 'objective' reality and 'objective' thought

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[293] Thomas J.J. Altizer and William Hamilton, eds., *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (New York: Penguin, 1968), 34.
[294]Thomas J.J. Altizer and William Hamilton, eds., *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (New York: Penguin, 1968), 103.
[295] ibid.

which can identify and uncover it. For Kierkegaard however there is an infinite qualitative distinction between the real, and the rational thought which seeks to lead to it. The reality of God is fundamentally opposed to the logic of rational thought, thought which is utterly alien to the faith of Abraham and utterly condemned by the paradox of the God-man. The correlation of thought and being which has its Everest in Hegel's categories of the objective and "universal" is the grammar of a world, for Altizer, opposed to the interior, subjective world of faith. Kierkegaard's dialectic sought to negate the alien world of objective reality in favour of the radical inwardness of faith.

For Altizer however Kierkegaard's dialectic is merely a negative dialectical movement never a final *coincidentia oppositorum*, subjectivity rages against objectivity as the real, in Kierkegaard's understanding the world of faith, is fundamentally opposed to the world. It becomes the norm, for Kierkegaard, as the world of faith subsumes the world of rational objective reality. This theological realism, for Altizer, is impossible today, "the crucial point is that Kierkegaard could identify authentic human existence with existence in faith...less than a hundred years later, it will be little less than blasphemy to identify the truly 'existential' with existence in faith"[296]. Kierkegaard's subsumption of objective reality into the categories of a Christological realism is only possible, for Altizer, because in Kierkegaard's intellectual climate "the death of God had not yet become a subjective reality"[297]. Therefore Kierkegaard's dialectic only needed to be a negation of objectivity, his attempts to reach a dialectic understanding of the relationship between the world of faith and the objective world of rational thought found a response which never needed to move beyond fear and trembling, that is, beyond the level of negation as opposed to affirmation. The arid limited world of empirical rationality was opposed to God for Kierkegaard. A God who reveals himself in the eternal moment, the paradox inbreaking into the interior subjective world of the individual who must respond to this other in a leap of faith utterly opposed to "objective reality". For Altizer this interior ground, fertile for concepts of God, has been eradicated by the all-encompassing reality of the death of God, a historical occurrence and development that was never consummated in Kierkegaard's time. Therefore his dialectical

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[296] Thomas J.J. Altizer and William Hamilton, eds., *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (New York: Penguin, 1968), 104.
[297] ibid.

movement is only a one way movement, it never points to its culmination in a *coincidentia oppositorum.* It fails to do so because the death of God experienced by modern people was to him only an objective never a subjective reality.

This passing of God and the ensuing collapse of the comfortable cohabitation of faith and existence mark the crisis that inaugurated the theology of the twentieth century. For Altizer "Modern man can know faith only as a 'scandal', faith is wholly other than the reality which we most deeply are"[298]. The theology of Barth marks, for Altizer, the first attempt to respond to this radical gulf between the objective world of post enlightenment epistemology and the scandal which was manifested to Barth as the impossible possibility of faith. The theology of Barth represents for Altizer this explosive dialectic between the Kantian epistemological framework of modernity and the revelatory reality of the word of God. Here, in the early Barth, the crises is borne of the juxtaposition of two fundamentally opposing linguistic frameworks, two contradictory lexicons - that of the gospel and that of the epistemological reality of modern man. The theology of Barth (for Altizer only the early Barth) represents the Christocentric expression of this reality where the epistemological cages established with the founding of Kantian anthropology are seen as indicative of the fallenness of humanity. The infinite qualitative distinction, which separates God's word and man's capacity to hear it, is fundamentally a theological response to post enlightenment epistemology. Only for a consistent Kantian can faith be an *impossible* possibility. The emphasis on God's initiative is not only a faithful representation of the theology of Romans but also the only possible theocentric understanding of revelation given the limits of Kantian epistemology. This dialectical understanding of the relationship between faith and existence which Barth knew as the loss of knowledge of God within the epistemological categories established by the enlightenment, forces the crisis of modern faith onto the theological agenda. The early Barth, for Altizer, continues the task of responding to the loss of faith within the modern world, a task inaugurated by Kierkegaard. For both Barth and Kierkegaard faith and "objective" existence are not merely opposed they are in fact interwoven through a state of mutual negation. The philosophy of Barth's day negated the possibility of a God who is God, forcing theology to become anthropology as the language for talking about God as God no

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[298] Thomas J.J. Altizer and William Hamilton, eds., *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (New York: Penguin, 1968), 111.

longer functioned lexically, similarly, the shocking eschatological significance of God's revelation condemned the world of man and the arid epistemology it preached.

For Altizer however the Barth of the *Church Dogmatics* is in stark contrast to this more dialectical Barth[299] "Quite possibly Barth realised that a dialectical method must negate all human expressions of the meaning of faith including the creedal and dogmatic statements of the historic church."[300]. The truly dialectical Barth thus makes way for the Barth of revelatory positivism who, like Kierkegaard simply refuses to accept the validity of the world of objective existence by interpreting it within the framework of Christian faith. Faith, thus, for Barth becomes normative with the world of epistemological reality being filtered through a creedal framework. For Barth the impossibility of God within the epistemological framework normative in modernity is interpreted theologically in terms of God's judgement and therefore functions, not opposed to but precisely within a theological metaperspective. Such a stance, for Altizer, again represents a choice to reject the affirmation of life that unifies both the evolution of cultural consciousness and the core essence of the Christian gospel through a positivism that negates the world in favour of the world of faith in transcendent deity.

The theological task inaugurated in Kierkegaard and preserved in Barth is for Altizer pursued in Tillich and Bultmann who are united "by the dialectical goal of correlating modern man's understanding of himself which they believe culminates in a despair of the human condition - with the answer to this condition in Jesus as the word"[301]. Tillich's method of correlation, seeing philosophical questions and theological answers in mutual interplay represents an attempt to relate *existenz* to faith. Tillich translates the transcendent images of divinity into the language of existentialism, seeing the traditionally transcendent being as the ground of our being.

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[299] Of Course the notion that Barth's theology turned away from its dialectical origin after his early Dogmatics, a notion perhaps inaugurated by Hans Urs von Balthasar, is a highly contentious one. In fact the Christocentric Barth of the Dogmatics is in many ways an even greater exponent of the kind of *Coincidentia oppositorum* at which Altizer aims. Barth's doctrine of election, as I will explore in following chapters, is a prime example when in an exaltation indistinguishable from humiliation humanity is negated on the cross. Because of this radical negation and only because of this radical negation is humanity affirmed through incorporation in humanity reconciled to God in the man Jesus. In the history of the cross creation is judged as fallen, a judgement which binds humanity to the human Jesus. By virtue of this election the new history of Christ allows us to see the humanity of God and thus inaugurates the Christocentric analogical framework Barth worked with. This analogy at no time negates the God who remains veiled in his unveiling and is unveiled in his veiling maintaining a dialectic between the transcendence of God and the revelation of God in the man Jesus.

[300] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 111.

[301] *Radical Theology and the Death of God,* 111.

This understanding for Altizer, once again ascribing to the world a holistic ontological continuum, is based upon a form of *analogia entis* that refuses to recognise the otherness of God to objective reality. For Altizer, Tillich's program of transforming the transcendent into the immanent is never dialectal by virtue of its ontological correlation between beings and the participating ground of being, as the new being in Christ. Such an overlap negates the possibility of a true dialectic, seeing as it does a continuum between "old" and "new being". Ultimately it neither negates nor affirms, and is left with an etiolated form of faith and a negative perception of existence, an existence which for Tillich ultimately culminates in anxiety and despair. Therefore for Altizer "it reaches neither eschatological faith nor contemporary *Existenz,* despite the fact that the apparent goal of Tillich's method, is surely the real goal of all genuinely modern theology"[302]. Bultmann also pursues this goal, yet with the ultimate aspiration of a biblical rather than ontological theology. Yet for Altizer, Bultmann, like Tillich, stops short of the radical dialectic which is capable of real affirmation and real negation. Neither echo Kierkegaard in his attack on both Christendom and the objectivity that is opposed to faith, nor do they proclaim with Nietzsche the death of God. They prefer instead to peruse the transcendence of being through Heideggerian categories. Ultimately for Altizer they "Stand on the 'Knife edge' between Angst and faith. But it is increasingly apparent that the dialectical theologian is standing on thin air, the cloud is lifting and now we are beginning to see the illusory nature of a stance that would exist halfway in the radical immanence of modern man and halfway in the transcendence of Christian faith"[303]. Tillich and Bultmann have neither the radical doubt of Nietzsche and Joyce nor the radical faith of Kierkegaard and Barth as rather than testifying to the radical juxtaposition of faith and modern existence they stop short and attempt to find a synthesis between the demythologised Kerygma and existential categories, for Bultmann, or a correlation between contemporary philosophical questions and theological answers, as in Tillich.

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[302] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 113.
[303] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 115.

4:5 Nietzsche as the consummation of the crisis between faith and existence in modernity

For Altizer the radical dialectic between existence and faith, the scandal of modern thought, is definitively addressed in Nietzsche, as he writes, "If radical dialectical thinking was reborn in Kierkegaard, it was consummated in Friedrich Nietzsche, the thinker who in Martin Heidegger's[304] words brought an end to the metaphysical tradition of the west"[305]. For Altizer it is Nietzsche rather than Kierkegaard who fulfils a truly dialectical understanding of the relationship between existence and its other, understood in terms of being beyond beings, or transcendence. Nietzsche's first movement is that of negating the world of faith but this negation, as Nietzsche well understood, involves a total negation of every category which depends upon it. For Altizer "No longer is there a metaphysical hierarchy or order which can give meaning or value to existing beings (*Seiendes*), as Heidegger points out, now, there is no *sein* of *Seiendes*"[306]. With Nietzsche a radical and total no saying to God as the transcendence of *sein*, makes possible a radical yes saying to existence (*Dasein*), but only after it involves a true negation of that understanding of life based upon the onto-theological categories that, for Nietzsche, have dominated western thinking since Plato. The reality of God for Nietzsche calls into question and ultimately condemns the reality of humanity. This is equally true of Kierkegaard. At first glance however it seems that Nietzsche merely reverses Kierkegaard's move, negating the theocentric reality that leads Kierkegaard to condemn objective reality. For Altizer however, Nietzsche is more faithful to the dialectical method. Central to Altizer's analysis is his portrayal of Kierkegaard as an apophatic thinker, he negates reality but ultimately lacks the language to speak about the reality he affirms. The infinite qualitative distinction condemns human reason and human language such that Kierkegaard can merely bend his knee before the paradoxical reality of God. Nietzsche rather, for Altizer, treats of both elements in the dialectic negating the *dysangel* of the gospel in

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[304] It is quite possible that Altizer has an unconventional reading of Heidegger on this point. For Heidegger, while Nietzsche brought to an end the metaphysical tradition, he himself was an exponent. For Altizer "Eternal recurrence is neither a cosmology nor a metaphysical idea", Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Genealogy* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993), 105. This is not the case for Heidegger, for whom eternal recurrence, like the doctrine of the will to power in which it was based, was clearly metaphysical.

[305] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 105.

[306] ibid.

order to affirm the reality which it denigrates. This affirmation however, for Altizer, may well be closer the kingdom of God preached by Jesus than the Hellenistic gnosticism which is endemic to the Christian church, condemned with no less venom by Kierkegaard than by Nietzsche himself. Nietzsche thus moves from a negation of the sacridity of God and thus the world which depends on this God for its meaning, to an affirmation of the sacridity of the world made possible by, and only possible in, the negation of God who is other to the world. The world for Nietzsche thus subsumes the sacridity once preserved in its transcendent other. Nietzsche's philosophy of eternal recurrence is, for Altizer, a dialectical inversion of the kingdom of God which establishes and ultimately affirms it through a radical negation "Everything goes everything comes back, eternally rolls the wheel of being. Everything dies, everything blossoms again, eternally runs the year of being. Everything breaks, everything is joined anew, eternally the same house of being is built. Everything parts, everything greets every thing again, eternally the ring of being remains fruitful to itself. In every Now, being begins, round every here rolls the sphere There. The centre is everywhere." (Z: p.13). It is here in Nietzsche that Altizer finds the philosophical expression which underpins the affirmation of Joyce. The explosion of being shatters the one into the many. Through the death of God being can begin in every now, as Altizer writes, "Eternal Recurrence is the dialectical antithesis of the Christian God. The creature becomes the creator when the centre is everywhere."[307]. Kierkegaard's dialectic remains one sided as it lacks the language to discuss the reality it affirms and therefore can merely negate the external, objective reality it denies. Nietzsche however points toward the *coincidentia oppositorum* to which dialectical thinking pertains. As Altizer writes "is it possible that the radically profane now of the Eternal Recurrence is a dialectical resurrection of a kingdom of God beyond God?"[308]. By virtue of the grammar available to him Nietzsche can treat of both elements in the dialectic, as the negation of *sein* in the willing of the death of God passes into the affirmation of *Dasein* as the affirmation of eternal recurrence. As Altizer writes "dialectically the opposites coincide, radical negation has become radical affirmation, but if the negative movement is a denial of God then the positive movement must finally be an affirmation of God, of the God beyond the Christian God."[309]

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[307] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 106.
[308] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 107.
[309] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 107.

The interpretative framework through which Altizer analyses Kierkegaard and Nietzsche is their dialectical understanding of the relationship between faith and existence in the world. Kierkegaard founds the tradition into which Altizer places himself by positing a radical gulf between the transcendent other and the individual, a gulf proper to the world of faith and that of objective reality which is, in the wake of the death of God, the condition of contemporary modernity. Nietzsche forces such thought to its natural conclusion affirming existence in the only way possible i.e. through a negation of faith in God. Yet for Altizer such a movement points toward an affirmation of Faith in eternal recurrence which represents the very kingdom of God.

In Altizer's influences we may see the curious mixture of theological orthodoxy and conventional atheism endemic to death of God theology. In keeping with the orthodox tradition, manifest in Kierkegaard, for Altizer, our language about God is always imperfect, furthermore God must die in the world before he can be born in us, an idea utilised by Luther among others. In keeping with the liberal theology of his day Altizer gives his assent to the proposition that the classical concepts of God need re-articulation to make them accessible and functional in the lexicon of the modern world. He also holds however that while there was once a God to whom veneration was appropriate, this God is dead and as such there is no God, he doesn't exist. All these propositions ranging from orthodoxy to atheism find a home within Altizer's thought which draws upon the work of such diverse thinkers as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche bound methodologically in Altizer's eclectic schema. Both are aware of the complex relationship between existence and faith realising that they are not two distinct and separate entities but intrinsically interwoven. For this reason faith exists for Kierkegaard as a negation of objectivity. Affirmation exists for Nietzsche through the active negation of God. What Altizer strives to achieve based on his reading of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche is a form of faith that is at once aware of the relationship between *existenz* and faith and is also "Contemporary" by which Altizer means in keeping with the situation in modernity which makes a privileging of faith over and against 'objective reality' impossible. Ultimately Altizer aims to arrive at a form of "eschatological faith" which is "a form of faith that calls the believer out of his old life in history and into a new reality of grace"[310]. This is primarily a re-articulation of faith in the reality of the death of God, a death which allows faith to come into being,

[310] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 107.

faith in the sacridity of life affirmed through a yes to existence. This is perfected in Nietzsche but has found expression, historically, for Altizer in the reformative prophetic movement of the Old Testament. Only in Jesus however does this kind of faith culminate with the proclamation of the kingdom of God. This proclamation represents the inbreaking of the other into the now which is at once a negation and an affirmation of the now. The eschatological faith Altizer believes Jesus preached is dependent upon this dialectical *coincidentia oppositorum*, which now in the contemporary world is preached anew with Nietzsche. Only through a denial of the world, or willing the death of the world, can the kingdom be established. The establishment of the kingdom however ultimately makes the affirmation of the world possible, that affirmation is ultimately what it consists of.

For Altizer, God as the symbol of the transcendence of being is a Hellenistic, in many ways Gnostic notion at odds with the preaching of Jesus. It is a concept of God which marks the transformation of Jesus *evanglion* into the No saying of resentment which Nietzsche attacks. As he writes "Thus Nietzsche looked upon Christianity as the stone upon the grave of Jesus"[311]. Because of this Altizer points to the possibility of a no saying to being and transcendence as an possible affirmation of the God beyond God, the God of affirmation, of eternal recurrence. Such a concept for Altizer does justice to both existence and faith as only through a radical negation may we have an affirmation through a *coincidentia oppositorum*.

Within this framework the kingdom of God and *Kosmos* are antithetical categories, as Altizer writes "The very dawning of the kingdom of God places in question the reality of the world, when the Kingdom is fully consummated, the world must disappear"[312]. And thus it participated in the kind of dialectical relationship which Altizer sees in the thought of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. The dialectic however gave way in Hellenistic Christianity when "the church came to know the world as being and God as transcendent 'Being'"[313]. The church thus invested the world with an ontological reality, faith came to know God and the world as existing in a common ontological continuity, and thereby was established what Kierkegaard was to call the great compromise of Christendom. This common ontological continuity was consummated in the medieval synthesis of the *analogia entis*. The dialectic was

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[311] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 106.
[312] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 109.
[313] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 110.

dissolved leaving no room for the radical affirmation or negation of either element, faith and existence, God and the world. Christianity entered time and history and since then Altizer argues it has been non-dialectical, as eschatological faith thus came to a temporary end with hellenisation of Christianity.

The death of God experienced in the modernity testified to by Joyce and manifest systematically in Nietzsche explodes this compromise as faith can no longer see the world as creation in fact, for Altizer, faith can only envisage the world as chaos. As Altizer writes "Therefore the dissolution of the 'being' of the world has made possible the renewal of the stance of eschatological faith, for an ultimate and a final No saying to the world can dialectically pass into the Yes-saying of eschatological faith"[314]. The comfortable harmony between faith and existence which characterised Christendom has come to an end with the passing of God making way for the dialectic of eschatological faith.

Altizer's program seeks to deepen and extend the method of Kierkegaard focusing on the dialectical understanding that can disturb the compromise of Christendom. Theology however, for Altizer, always already presumes a antithesis between faith and the world and is "born out of faiths will to enter history, now."[315]. If theology is to transcend itself it must negate itself, for theology can be reborn only through the death of Christendom, which finally means the death of the Christian God, the God who is the transcendence of being. It is to the affirmative ecstasy of eternal recurrence occasioned by the death of God that Altizer points as a concept which shatters the reality of history and the transcendence of being. The eternal recurrence exists in a *coincidentia oppositorum* with the kingdom preached by Jesus as Altizer writes "Yet now the contemporary Christian can rejoice because the Jesus whom our time has discovered is the proclaimer of a Gospel that makes incarnate a kingdom reversing the order of "history" and placing in question the very reality of "being" perhaps we are at last prepared to understand the true uniqueness of the Christian Gospel"[316].

Altizer's reading, of Christianity, of the cultural genealogy of the western tradition, of the death of God and of the yes to being in every now, the affirmation of eternal recurrence, is, then, fundamentally Nietzschean. For Altizer, echoing Nietzsche, the birth of the western tradition begins with the elevation of metaphysical concepts at the

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[314] *Radical Theology and the Death of God,* 109.
[315] ibid.
[316] *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, 116-117.

expense of the empirical world with Plato, this life denying concept became enshrined in the western mind with the platonisation of theology and the theologisation of Platonism which occurred with the foundation of Christendom. Such Christianity is a betrayal of Jesus, the only Christian, for Nietzsche (A: 39-42). Yet this for Altizer never leads to the scandal which forces a radical dialectic, rather the analogical method common to both Platonism and dogmatic theology blurs the time between the sacred and profane mutilating both. Instead of radical negation with its resultant affirmation we are left with the mere resentment which Nietzsche holds to be the essence of Christianity, as a reactive force. Only now for Altizer has the statement "God is dead" reached a crescendo so that it cannot be ignored and forces an analysis of the radical juxtaposition of faith and existence..

Only in Nietzsche can Altizer point to a truly dialectical method whose ultimate coincidence of opposites can be provided by Altizer's equation of the kingdom of God preached by Jesus with the Nietzschean notion of eternal recurrence. In identifying and discussing his pre-cursors Altizer outlines his program. It is an attempt to deepen and extend the dialectic of faith and existence analysed by Kierkegaard, Barth, Bultmann and Tillich but ultimately along Nietzschean lines. Only through the negation of God as transcendent being can we affirm the life where being begins in every now. Without the logocentric God the centre becomes everywhere. Only through a total negation of faith can faith ultimately be affirmed, a faith in the kingdom of eternal recurrence which echoes the kingdom of Christ. As Altizer writes "Nietzsche's apocalyptic thinking and vision is the renewal of an original Christian apocalypticalism, but a renewal occurring in a world where God is dead, and yet this is the very death which releases a new and total immanence"[317]

Nietzschean affirmation of Eternal Recurrence

Altizer's programme then utilises Nietzsche in two ways as well as sharing his understanding of the evolution and negative significance of what Altizer calls Christendom. Nietzsche, for Altizer, is firstly the voice in modernity which finally and definitively establishes the death of God as an historical event, testifying to the evolution in consciousness wherein western culture finally rejects the transcendent

[317] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Gene*alogy (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993), 170.

God. Furthermore this rejection marks a new juncture from previous atheisms in that Nietzsche, like Joyce, sees its full significance in that it is also and at once a refusal of the logocentric cornerstone of all conceptual frameworks, as it stands as the metaphysical ground of meaning in terms of reason, morality and semiotic stability. For Nietzsche the death of God marks the end of morality, the end of truth and the end of any metaphysical framework that seeks to establish faith in the pure unchanging *telos* of western culture, identifiable either as God, truth, unchanging fact, or established morality. The death of God, for Nietzsche, finally and definitively collapses these categories, a situation testified to primarily with his madman in the *Gay Science* and, for Altizer, echoed by Joyce in his *Finnegans Wake*. Secondly, for Altizer, the positive significance of this death and resultant deconstruction is fully manifest in Nietzsche. It is Nietzsche who establishes that this negation of structures opposed to life, structures attempting to identify and possess life by establishing a world of reason or language alongside it with the goal of controlling it, collapses. Now there is "no up or down" (GS: 125), no framework through which reality can be safely engaged with and controlled. With the death of God, who is the eternal unchanging opposite to life, the metaphysical categories which attempt to function parallel to life, tracing it through a process of misrepresenting it with the goal of controlling it, are also rejected, as all transcendence is shattered. The radically imminent world of reality for Nietzsche can then and only then be positively affirmed. This reality, beyond the truth/falsehood, good/evil categories which are synonymous with the logocentrism of the tradition, now becomes the focus and is opened up to the sacridity that was once the preserve of the other worldly God, truth or rationality which had previously opposed it. As such Nietzsche testifies to the cultural evolution Altizer maps, realises its full significance in terms of the collapse of the categories based on the concept of God, and articulates the positive significance of this collapse, as the no to the sacridity of the other, opposed to life, proceeds to a dialectical affirmation of the sacridity beyond this otherness, the sacridity of the now. And so Nietzsche is utilised by Altizer to an extent far greater than any other theological enterprise and significantly the Nietzschean voice, central to the establishment of Altizer's analysis is, unlike Milbank, preserved in the final prescriptive articulation. Altizer, ultimately, sees a direct correlation between the death of God in Nietzsche, opening the way for an affirmation of the sacridity of the now in his doctrine of eternal recurrence, and the fundamental orientation of Christianity as an incarnational

theology, refusing transcendence in order to affirm the sacridity of life. It is these two affirmations of life, central to both Nietzsche and Christianity, which are at the core of Altizer's theology as the end of God makes way for the radical sacridity of the now.

This correlation is at the centre of Altizer's theology dialectically fusing a Christianity without God to the refusal of God in modernity radically realised in Nietzsche. It is here however that the coincidence of opposites that Altizer ultimately works toward is most strained in that it is based upon a correspondence between the core Christian message and Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence. While Altizer's Christ is a Godless one, proclaiming the sacridity of the now through the death of the old transcendent categories, the message preached by Altizer's Christ offers an ontology of peace and as such, in this regard, is wholly orthodox. It is a peace made possible only through a radical affirmation of life paralleling the affirmation of the now, based on the refusal of the transcendent, in Nietzsche. These dual affirmations of life are conflated by Altizer in arriving at a theology which unifies the world of reality with the world of faith, the profane and the sacred as the profane is radically and definitively sacralised both in Nietzsche's eternal recurrence and Altizer's understanding of incarnational Christianity.

Of course the basic model of Christ used by Altizer, like so many of his readings, is suspect, although the focus of my own critique, given the overall theme, can only be on his utilisation of Nietzsche. In binding these two affirmations Altizer, as we have seen, envisions a pre-Christian Christ as the embodiment of a real or true Christianity. It is a conception born of an attempt to uncover the message of the historical Jesus by peeling back the layers of Hellenised theology, a task which was a primary concern of much 19th century biblical scholarship seeking to articulate a pre Hellenised apocalyptic Jesus. Ultimately the Jesus Altizer identifies is one in the image and likeness of a radical theologian, refusing the transcendence of being, and stressing the juxtaposition of existence and faith. A Jesus pointing to the *coincidentia oppositorum* affirming the being that is becoming in every now. Without this highly contentious image of Christ, Altizer's *coincidentia oppositorum* between Nietzschean thought and the core of the Christian understanding of God, at the very outset, fails to function. It is an image that, in many ways, stands or falls with the veracity of the historical enquiry from whence it stems. It is dependent upon identifying a pure uncontaminated reality of the Christ who exists as a pre-textual Jesus. He can only

exist in this sense as, as the post-theistic Christ, he is always already denied in scripture. Altizer's Christ is one which he feels has been misrepresented as logos in both the entire history of Christian theology and the gospels and as such the concept of Jesus as the only Christian, identified as such by both Altizer and Nietzsche, can only be arrived at through a complete rejection of the majority of the sources and the entirety of the testimony. Again however, it must be stressed that, as with Altizer's highly contentious and often clichéd reading of movements within philosophy and theology, Altizer's extremely questionable understanding of the true Jesus cannot be the point of debate here. It is obvious, of course, that the extenuation of the theological nuances of the incarnation to an outright proclamation of the death of the transcendent God is a highly problematic reading, but while a wholly more orthodox Christology comes to function in the following two chapters, space cannot be given here to list the scriptural and theological arguments which contradict Altizer's reading. Similarly Altizer's entire reading of the cultural awareness of the death of God is based on 'key' texts such as Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Yet, such texts are only seen as being of central significance by virtue of their proclamation of the death of God. Altizer's entire reading of this developing awareness is based upon his reading of key figures which owe his attention to their status as proclaiming the absence of God, and as such Altizer proceeds by presuming what he in fact sets out to prove. This said the focus of this study must be on Nietzsche, the lynchpin of Altizer's understandings, as Altizer's reading presented thus far must stand or fall with the legitimacy in conflating the affirmation of life in Christianity with the affirmation of life manifest in Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence. If these two readings cannot be correlated then the dialectical *coincidentia oppositorum* Altizer aims for between faith and *existenz*, the radically sacred and the radically profane, fails to function. The eclectic style favoured by Altizer necessitates a very broad reading of the individual philosophies he engages with and as such from this perspective he sees incarnational Christology as signifying the end of transcendence and the beginning of a radical imminence, representing a yes to the now made possible through the collapse of the aridity of a transcendent deity. Similarly Nietzsche proclaims the death of God and the metaphysical categories dependant on this transcendence, and through this the Zarathustran affirmation of eternal recurrence is possible, the yes to the beginning of being in every now as the acceptance of the end of transcendent sacridity makes possible the sacralisation of the now. From this perspective the coincidence at the core

of Altizer's theology (allowing for his reading of incarnational Christology) holds. From a broad perspective he identifies what I will illustrate to be simply a superficial correlation between these narratives. Focusing on descriptive accounts of these dual affirmations, Altizer never proceeds to an examination of the prescriptive elements central to both these stories as the nature of life affirmed renders the Nietzschean yes entirely alien to the Christological one. As mentioned, the prescriptive element of Christ's teaching is never denied by Altizer and as such his reading of the Christian narratives never denies the ontology of peace central to their proclamation. His failure to examine the prescriptive element in Nietzsche's philosophy however is the condition of the possibility of seeing a correlation between the Christian affirmation and the Nietzschean one.

Throughout Altizer's utilisation of Nietzsche he never proceeds to unpack the Nietzschean affirmation of eternal recurrence, seeing it simply as a yes to life beyond the categories dependant on transcendent deity. And, there can be no doubt that in this regard this element of Altizer's reading is entirely justified. As seen previously in this dissertation, Nietzsche strongly condemns "two world theory" (TI: 'Reason in Philosophy' 6) as he conceives of life, in the sense of the real, and a series of conceptual frameworks[318] which attempt to represent it but only succeeds in betraying the nature of the real. This representation is understood as any of the schema which have attempted the disclose the real, morality (TI: Morality as Anti-Nature), science (HaH: 11), reason (TI: 'Reason in Philosophy' 2), language (GS: 112), mathematics (HaH: 19), as all merely falsify by creating a world which is static and structured in accordance with the logocentric, ultimately theological, principles of the western tradition. The affirmation of eternal recurrence is as such an affirmation of life as natural life, misrepresented and unrepresentable by these categories. The rejection of transcendent deity and the conceptual categories it underpins, as God, reason, pure unchanging reality or semiotic stability allows for the joyful affirmation of the natural outside of such categories. It is this yes which for Altizer maps the yes in incarnational Christology, a yes to life and the fleshification of sacridity, the affirmation manifest and realised in Jesus. The question remains however to what extent are these affirmations compatible? Altizer's Christological yes is a yes to life, indeed a yes to life which is also a yes beyond good and evil in the sense of a yes to

[318] Which Nietzsche describes as a 'mummification' of the real (TI: 'Reason in Philosophy' 1)

the all, but this all, which is embraced by Altizer's Christ is, as is perhaps already clear from preceding chapters, utterly alien to the Nietzschean understanding of life. Nietzsche's affirmation is a yes to a life that Altizer never treats of, as life properly understood is, for Nietzsche, will to power. While both Altizer's Jesus and Nietzsche affirm life as the now, beyond the categories of an arid and distant deity or the metaphysical and onto-theological categories of western philosophy, the nature of life affirmed is radically different.

It is not, of course, immediately obvious that the will to power should be opposed to the life manifest in *Finnegans Wake* and central to the incarnational yes, an affirmation of natural all too human life. Power is never in itself a signifier that connotes a negative state, rather as *potentia* it is precisely the creative will. This creative will, understood as such by much of the Hellenistic onto-theology Altizer rejects, is the divine force fused into each creative act, a force emanating from God and manifest in all being. This understanding of life however is more in keeping with the Altizerian model than life orientated by Nietzsche's will to power, as power for Nietzsche is, as I have shown in chapters 2 and 3 and will further illustrate here, understood always in terms of violence.

As I have shown in the preceding two chapters "Life" for Nietzsche "is will to power and nothing else besides" (WP: 1067) the nature of will to power has been understood here however in a way altogether different from the manner in which it is utilised by Altizer. For Altizer the will to power is understood primarily as monadic as "absolute power itself"[319], it is "an absolute will which is the will to power and thereby a will which is totality itself"[320]. Through understanding it in such singular and holistic terms Altizer can more easily correlate it with a single creative force in the world, a God beyond God. Altizer proceeds through seeing the will to power as a single power infusing the whole and from here to envisaging it simply as the totality of life. The yes said to the will to power is, as such, the yes said to life, its processes, positive and negative. It is "a will that wills everything that occurs and therefore wills even the most terrible evil, a will which is inseparable from a total will to joy"[321]. As

[319] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Gene*alogy (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993), 96.
[320] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Gene*alogy (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993), 120.
[321] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Gene*alogy (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993), 121.

such "the will to power" is "the ecstatic dance of eternal recurrence"[322] the eternal affirmation of being in every now. Life as will to power for Nietzsche is understood by Altizer as life orientated by a singular will to power which is the source of all occurrence and as such a force beyond good and evil. This representation of will to power as monadic is central to Altizer as it can be readily corresponded with a total affirmation, beyond the old transcendent deity, of life, a yes which in Joyce is the source and process of life. It is a yes which is an affirmation of life and at once the creative force, forging life beyond the categories of morality. Altizer's conception of it as a single will which is also and at once the totality of life, is an image, however, which helps shield the precise nature of its functioning from view.

It is based upon an envisioning of will to power as a singular force, and as such the precise nature of will to power as the eternal recurrence of struggle between a radical plurality of forces is masked. To understand the nature of Nietzsche's understanding of life, affirmed in his doctrine of eternal recurrence and manifest as will to power "and nothing else besides" (WP: 1067) is to see will to power as precisely the radically plural process of interaction between forces. The will to power, for Nietzsche, as is manifest in chapters 2 and 3 and will become clearer here, can never be understood as a totality, as to say that life is will to power is not to envision totality as a monad, but to conceive of it precisely as determined by the play of radically plural forces. "What man wants" for Nietzsche "what every smallest part of every living organism wants, is an increase of power" (WP: 702), this is the goal of the individual organism which is a reflection of the radical plurality of wills to power which comprise him and as such he is a multiplicity that "has imagined himself as a unity"[323]. While Altizer can identify the affirmation of eternal recurrence as a yes to a will to power as totality, to understand Nietzschean understanding of force in a singular fashion is to misrepresent the Nietzschean functioning of force, as Gilles Deleuze writes "Every force is...essentially related to another force. The being of force is plural; it would be literally absurd to think of force in the singular"[324]. This is a core element of Nietzsche's understanding as "what is true is neither one nor even reducible to one" (WP: 536), rather being comprised of a plurality of functionings which structure the whole. In seeing the will to power in terms of this plurality its

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[322] Thomas J.J. Altizer, *The Genesis of God a Theological Gene*alogy (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993), 96.
[323] Nachlass Autumn 1881; KGW V2 480, Similarly D: 119, D: 129.
[324] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la Philosophie* (Paris, 1970), 7.

functioning as a struggle between forces comes to the fore. To understand the will to power is to understand it always in relation to other forces, as a will to maximisation of each self as "every living thing does everything it can, not to preserve itself but to become more" (WP: 1067). As we have seen in the previous chapter with reference to Roux's embryology, this, for Nietzsche, represents a process through which each cellular functioning in striving to replicate, and thereby is engaged in struggle against each other functioning. That each organism is comprised of wills to power for Nietzsche means that each organism is a structure whose physical composition, traits and attributes are the result of struggle between biological forces. Forces which in turn structure the organism itself in its pursuit of maximisation, a largely non-conscious, for Nietzsche "sublimated" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 19) process which involves at every juncture the engaging of power against power, violence. Altizer's understanding of will to power as a will to the totality of life, beyond good and evil, masks the status of Nietzschean life as a play of forces, always opposed one against the other. In fact not simply is the will to power a plurality of individual wills, but crucially for Nietzsche there can be no individual will that is not in itself a constellation of wills to power.

For Nietzsche an organism itself can never be understood as singular, as each living thing is orientated rather by a vast collectivity of biological forces each with its own "lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all other drives to accept as norm" (WP: 481). Nietzsche conceives of the notion of individual entity envisaged outside of its status as a composition of a multiplicity of forces as erroneous, as such each organism manifesting and orientated by a will to power is in fact a collectivity of wills to power, each one blindly seeking maximisation. Altizer, reading the will to power as a totality of the real superimposes a monadic structure on it which misrepresents this Nietzschean functioning. Rather, for Nietzsche, not simply is each individual organism orientated by its will to power but the organism itself is merely the sum total of the struggle, the rage for power, that occurs within it between a radical plurality of biological and, as we have seen in chapter, 3, more specifically 'cellular' functionings. For the Nietzsche engaging with the embryology of Roux, will to power is manifest as the cellular functioning whereby each cell seeks to strengthen itself, replicate and thus conquer alternative cell development, depriving them of food

and space[325] and in so doing determine the biological characteristics of the organism. In light of this not only is a monadic understanding of will to power a misconception, but to conceive of will to power in terms of an identification with an individual organisms propulsion to power similarly masks the multiplicity of forces which structure each component of the organism. As Nietzsche writes "If I remove all the relationships, all the properties all the activities of a thing, the thing does *not* remain over; because thingness has only been invented by us owing to the requirements of logic, thus with the aim of facilitating communication" (WP: 558) the understanding of an individual as one, a thing, masks the radical plurality of power relationships that comprise it. There is for Nietzsche no singular; this is the primary mechanics of the will to power, as even the smallest particle is comprised of other "power-quanta whose essence consists in exercising power on all other power-quanta"[326]. As such, that the world is will to power and nothing else besides, for Nietzsche, means that the world is comprised of a radical plurality of forces, wills to power, all structured in accordance with the same principles that orchestrate life; not as a totality, which can mask the struggle between forces which is its most potent procedure, but precisely as a plurality of radically individual forces. It was in stressing this point that the will to power was read in light of Dawkins' understanding of the functioning of DNA in chapter 2. The will to power, like the genetic functionings that structure an organism, seek maximisation blindly, over and against alternative forces, struggling for replication, at times at the expense of the organism as a whole[327]. The will to power is a process which can only be understood, not as a whole, but precisely in relation, each

[325] Nachlass, Spring 1888, KGW VIII 2, 150ff.

[326] Nachlass Spring 1888, KGW V 3, 28.

[327] A treatment of the processes which lead to this principle can be found in George C. Williams' *Natural Selection: Domains Levels, and Challenges*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). In terms of genetic functioning at the expense of the individual organism an example is provided, in Richard Dawkins, *River out of Eden*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1995), 128-129, where he notes the gene for Huntington's chorea in terms of the functioning of senescence. The gene has evolved through selection to only 'switch on' when the host organism reaches middle age by which time it has a far greater chance of having been passed on. From an intentional stance, the gene must wait to activate itself so as to maximise its potential for evolutionary survival. Its functioning from this perspective seems entirely independent of the host organism whose life and death it, to a great extent, governs. For Nietzsche, the biological forces which structure the organism do so blindly, to use a phrase of Dawkins "selfishly". Their goal is their own maximisation and their struggle with competing forces within their own environment, irrespective of the effect on the host organism, be it hair colour, skin tone, or like the gene for Huntington's chorea, death. While Altizer understands the functioning of will to power on a macro level Nietzsche understands it and grounds it in the absolute universality of struggle between forces, often on this micro level, and as such, as will become clearer, it represents an ontology which can only be understood in terms of violence. Nietzsche conceives of each moment as a moment of struggle, representing a precise inversion of the ontology of peace central to any reading of the Christian narratives.

to another and to see it as such precludes the reading of power as the all, which in Altizer serves to mask the fact that in Nietzsche power and its functioning is synonymous, not with creativity, as in *potentia*, but as violence.

The organism itself seeks to maximise itself orientated by its wills to power, yet each will to power itself is determined by its own internal functioning, understood by Nietzsche, as we saw in the previous chapter, in terms of inter-cellular struggle, and is engaged in this same struggle to maximise itself over and against competing forces. All interaction, for Nietzsche, is structured through this process and as such "Not contentment but more power; not peace at all, but war" (A: 1) is the source and norm of human action. For Nietzsche the play of force is extended infinitely as every individual is comprised of functionings which are engaged in struggle, functionings which in themselves are the composition of wills to power engaging other force and so on. This understanding of will to power as violence is not for Nietzsche to limit the functioning of will to power to the organic realm, in fact for Nietzsche "We do not know how to explain change except as the encroachment of one power on another power" (WP: 552). Change itself is simply a result of the competition between forces, each striving to maximise themselves and as such The basic "Chemical '*laws*'" for Nietzsche, "are a question of the absolute establishment of power relationships: the stronger becomes master of the weaker, insofar as the latter cannot assert its degree of independence" (WP: 630). Power cannot be understood holistically, as it is understood by Nietzsche always in terms of the radical multiplicity of power relationships that constitute the will to power, each against the other. The infinity of this process for Nietzsche, of struggle, and the eternal repetition of such play of forces, is affirmed in Nietzsche's Zarathustran yes to eternal recurrence. This affirmation as a single yes masks an affirmation of that which is always plural, always differentiated, one against the other. It involves the same process, the play of forces, struggle for maximisation, and as such "The world is will to power and nothing else besides. And you yourself are will to power and nothing else besides" (WP: 1067). The play of forces which is the will to power necessitates that each orientation toward power is focussed over and against other force. As such for Nietzsche "the will to power can express itself only against obstacles; it seeks what resists it – this is the original evidence of protoplasm"[328] which itself is plurality of conflicting beings[329].

[328] Nachlass, Spring 1888, KGW VIII 2, 152.
[329] Nachlass, May-July 1885, KGW VII 3, 259.

Power for Nietzsche represents the urge for replication and enhancement always in opposition to otherness. It is this understanding of life eternally recurring in each and every now that is affirmed in Nietzsche, the affirmation of each moment as a moment of struggle. Seeing the will to power as totality can mask the fact that it represents not simply struggle between individual organisms, nor simply the struggle between the radical plurality of forces which comprise the organism nor even the infinity of wills to power which govern the 'cellular' functionings which structure the organism, but that every moment of life represents the eternally recurring violence as force encounters force. This is the Nietzschean understanding of life, of every moment as a point of conflict driven by the radical plurality of 'selfish' and singular wills to power seeking maximisation.

From Altizer's panoramic reading of discourses the Nietzschean and incarnational affirmations of life can be dialectically fused. They both reject transcendence and refuse it toward an affirmation of natural life, voiced for Altizer in Christianity as a religion of the death of God, by Joyce in the yes Anna Livia in *Finnegans Wake* and most definitively in the Nietzschean yes of eternal recurrence. A closer reading of the understanding of life Nietzsche affirms, as manifest here and in the preceding two chapters, illustrates the Nietzschean affirmation as an affirmation, not simply of a totality beyond good and evil, but of a life determined through an eternally recurring plurality of violence. Nietzsche cannot understand the individual, the biological processes that comprise it, nor the myriad of engagements that structure these processes, in any other terms than the play of forces. This is the functioning of power in the term 'will to power', not as the holistic creative urge, but simply as the urge to engage other force toward self maximisation at the expense of the alternate force. Creation and destruction, in fact every result of this will to power is simply a bi-product, the engagement of force and the blind maximisation of the self being the only orientation at work. This process is universalised by Nietzsche to the extent that all change, time and the laws of nature are simply descriptions of the effect of force on force. And so Altizer's use of Nietzsche as the most crucial voice in the theological Kairos occasioned by the awareness of the death of God is based on a significant misreading of Nietzschean affirmation. Through understanding will to power as totality Altizer masks this functioning of will to power as precisely the eternal and infinite facticity of each moment as a moment of violence. This understanding is alien to Altizer's reading, not just of incarnational theology, but indeed of the Joycean

affirmation manifest in Ulysses and the wake, an affirmation summed up by Frank Budgen when he writes "It seems to me that Joyce neither hates nor loves, neither curses nor praises the world, but that he affirms it with a "Yes" as positive as that with which Marion Bloom affirms her prerogative on the last page. It is not to him a brave new world about to set forth upon some hitherto unattempted enterprise. Rather it is a brave old world, for ever flowing like a river, ever seeming to change yet changing never"[330]. It is this very general affirmation of the totality of life that Altizer reads as being the central affirmation of Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence, yet here, as I have shown, he is mistaken. Nietzsche's yes, cloaked in the prophetic and poetic language of *Zarathustra* readily submits to this misreading but closer inspection of the functioning of the life affirmed reveals it to be utterly alien to the simple and holistic yes to natural existence common to both Altizer's Joyce and his incarnational Christology. As a result of this his theology never fully engages with either the Christian ontology nor the Nietzschean one as a vague and unifying narrative is superimposed onto both. Neither Christian theology nor Nietzschean ontology is taken seriously by Altizer as his work manifests a caricature of both.

The goal in this chapter has been to illustrate the centrality of Nietzsche in Altizer's theology. I have shown that Nietzsche's is the voice which testifies to the developing cultural awareness of the death of God, his is also the voice that, seeing the inextricable interwoveness of the concept of God with the logocentric absolutes of the western philosophical tradition, realises the full significance of the death of God in terms of the end of the metaphysical absolutes, reason, logic and language, that were ground in a notion of God. Nietzsche's is also the voice which, for Altizer, recognises the full positive significance of this collapse of what Nietzsche calls 'two world theory' (TI: 'Reason in Philosophy' 6), in that the rejection of transcendence allows for the full affirmation, beyond metaphysical categories, of a new and radical immanence, an affirmation shared by the yes to life in both Joyce and incarnational Christology. I have however argued that Altizer's panoramic perspective on Nietzschean thought crucially misrepresents it and fails to see the yes to an ontology of differential violence which can never be identified with the affirmations of Joyce or, even in Altizer's understanding, that of incarnational Christology. His reading of Nietzsche, the engine of his theology, is based upon a significant misunderstanding of

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[330] Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of "Ulysses"*, (London: Grayson and Grayson Ltd., 1934) 73.

Nietzschean affirmation, which is never a vague yes but a yes to a precise and clearly developed understanding of life that Altizer never unpacks. This affirmation is a yes to an understanding of all life as struggle, all differential interaction as violence and the equation of time with the play of oppositional force. While due space could not be afforded to assess Altizer's broad and eclectic readings of the various figures and epochs he utilises, it is clear that his reading of Nietzsche, so central to his project, is based on a limited understanding of Nietzsche's will to power. Because of this reading Altizer seeks to re-articulate a form of Christian theology which is essentially that of a Christian atheism as it is performed only after conceding to the impossibility of faith testified to in Nietzsche the lexicon through which theology can be constructed.

An identification of the Nietzschean yes with that of Christian theology cannot be engaged in here as I understand Nietzsche's affirmation as a yes to that which is, as Nietzsche well understood, the precise inversion of a Christian ontology of peace. In my final three chapters however I will seek to outline, through a close reading of aspects of Barth's Christology, the way in which a Nietzschean understanding of sign and self, identified throughout this dissertation, can be re-interpreted in a Christological metaperspective. I hope to show how many of the understandings of both semiotics and ontology central to Nietzschean thought is already presumed in a Christocentric theology such as Barth's. Never, as in Altizer is there correlation, rather these understandings in Barth frame an anthropology which can never be permitted to have the final word as an account of the human condition, as they fail to analyse humanity in terms of its being the humanity elected by God as His humanity. An analysis of humanity in these terms, such as the one offered by Barth in his understanding of election, allows a voice for a semiotics and ontology such as Nietzsche's but one that exists in concomitant disharmony with an analysis of human signification and selfhood grounded in the reconciliation of self and sign in the man Jesus. Unlike Altizer then the account I wish to pursue through a reading of Barth never allows a Nietzschean voice determinative status, opposing it ceaselessly with an ontology of peace proper to a Christological anthropology, also however, unlike Milbank, keeping it in play as an account of that state which manifests the other of reconciliation.

CHAPTER FIVE

NIETZSCHEAN SEMIOTICS AND BARTH'S THEOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

The Nietzschean rejection of an understanding of signification in terms of an extenuation of presence, from self through thought to text or word can give rise to an outright nihilism which theology as a discipline must deny[331]. Theology, in that it attempts to refer to God, holds to a belief that meaningful reference is possible and that such reference can represent that which is; this understanding is common to each theology presented in this thesis from the radical theology of Altizer to the radical orthodoxy of Milbank. The means by and the manner in which theology responds to a particularly Nietzschean form of nihilism will be the focus of this fifth chapter.

Catherine Pickstock's *After Writing*[332] advocates a striking and erudite interpretation of this question posed by such nihilisms. In a manner not dissimilar from Milbank's in *Theology and Social Theory*, Pickstock, switching the transcendental codes, proceeds by rejecting the Derridian reading of Plato's privileging of orality. For Pickstock, Derrida's claim that Plato's rejection of writing inaugurates the 'metaphysical', logocentric primordicy of presence that has characterised western philosophy, is flawed, as she proceeds to illustrate the choice for orality in terms of a privileging of temporality, open-endedness and physical embodiment. From this position she can begin to re-cast the pre-modern account of language arguing that it proceeds liturgically throughout the medieval period in holding, with Plato[333], that language exists primarily, and in fact has stable meaning only, in terms of its doxological functioning in the praising of the divine[334]. From this understanding she proceeds through a sophisticated account of dichotomys such as

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[331] In this respect I would concur with both Milbank and Pickstock in their analysis of the risk in the absolutising of the space between signifier and signified endemic to certain Derridian critiques.

[332] Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*, (Oxford: Blackwell), 1998.

[333] For Pickstock's Plato, as will become a focus later, language only truly re-presents in terms of its functioning as the praising of the divine.

[334] For Pickstock Plato leads "dialogue ... *into* doxology, which for Plato is our principle human function and language's only possibility of restoration" *After Writing*: *On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 43.

text/voice, space/time, the opposition between reality as given and reality as gift[335], and finally, the opposition of an 'empty subject' (either as, for Pickstock, the erroneous subject of modernism or the explicitly discontinuous self of post-modernism) versus a liturgical subject which is coherent but not foreclosed. These readings then lead to an undermining of the semiotic nihilism of the Derridian enterprise and an arguing for the acceptance of the pre-modern contention that semiotic functioning is preserved and only preserved in liturgy. Again, as with Milbank, where the ontology of the Nietzscheans is rejected on essentially pragmatic grounds, the key to the development of Pickstock's thesis is its outright rejection of what she terms 'nihilism'. By virtue of this Pickstock can identify a tradition which is more open to a dissemination of meaning and choose it, again like Milbank, on pragmatic grounds. From here Pickstock can identify a space, functioning or procedure, identified in the logic of the Mass, where words can represent a meaningful reality, the truth.

It is difficult however to precisely identify Pickstock's understanding of what such semiotic nihilism entails, perhaps because this is also the case with Derrida to whom she is mostly referring. It is crucial however at this time that the functioning of the concept is made clear, as keeping a form of it in play[336], in a manner unlike Pickstock, will be a crucial theme of certain parts of this chapter. Previously I identified the Nietzschean notion of the radical instability of the sign and this is the basic concept which at this point it is important to precisely identify in itself, before articulating the possibilities for subsuming such a semiotic nihilism within a Christological metaperspective. Firstly it must be admitted that the simple sense of the phrase 'semiotic nihilism' - signs refer to nothing or nothingness, corrupts itself. In that signs refer they obviously refer to something. Derrida, with whom the concept is associated in Pickstock's text, gives rise to the phrase by such texts as 'Plato's Pharmacy' and 'Sign, Signature and Event', the latter examined in a previous chapter. In 'Plato's Pharmacy', Derrida, among other things, inaugurated a critique of the relationship between language and reality indicating always that the former can never be immediate to, or reveal[337] the latter[338]. A space exists between the two, a space

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[335] A dichotomy in which Pickstock draws heavily on Milbank, See John Milbank "Can a Gift be Given? Prolegomena to a Future Trinitarian Metaphysic" Modern Theology 11.1 (1995), 119-161

[336] Albeit a limited form which seeks to overcome nihilism.

[337] Reveal here as in its most basic entomological sense in terms of 'removing the veil'. Again words function and as such can be said to reveal, but the focus is on that which is revealed and the status it

examined in 'Sign Signature and Event' where Derrida argues against Austin's notion of performative utterances providing safe context for meaning. Derrida here examined how the consistent possibility of failure serves as the condition of the possibility of language. Both these texts and perhaps also *Speech and Phenomena* introduce a notion which is not especially original. Essentially that the self's construction of reality is re-presented to itself and others through words and that such words relate to such reality and convey the quidity of such reality only in the now[339], in terms of the self, while failing to convey but rather opening themselves up to plural functionings in terms of the other. As our experience of each word is alien to that of the other, the word can not convey our experience, it can however, and does, convey the other's own experience of the word to themselves[340]. The mechanics of meaning then for Derrida resides within the locus of the word. Words do not mean by containing the experience of the self and conveying it, they mean by being constantly imbued with a meaning by the addressees of such words. As such they refer to something constantly different, their meaning is never fixed, stable or even orientated by the origin of the sign which becomes negated in the mechanics of meaning[341]. Whereas Saussure's synchronic linguistics[342] opens up the space between sign and signified questioning each pole, origin and destination, from the perspective of the other, post-structuralists such as Derrida and de Man deconstruct each pole, sign and signified, origin and destination, each from the perspective of the other, collapsing each category such that

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has. 'Reveal' has connotations such that it functions in the sense of removing the veil allowing the addressee to see the precise thought or experience of the addresser. As this, for Derrida, is alien to the process by which signifiers function the term reveal is for him unsatisfactory.

[338] This view, which is perhaps only a slight extenuation of Saussurean semiotics, is summed up in its most basic form by David Lehman as the belief that "The word doesn't reflect or represent the world; the word contains the world and not the other way around. Therefore, texts are self-referential – they refer to themselves, not to anything outside themselves. There is no such thing as the real world...all that is left is a succession of misleading signs, a parade of words beyond the power of humanity to control them". David Lehman, *Signs of the Times: Deconstruction and the Fall of Paul de Man* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1992), 41.

[339] Derrida of course proceeds to undermine the notion of the self as this now is always transient.

[340] Which is not to say that there may not be a considerable overlap in the functioning of each word in each other's experiential lexicon.

[341] Again this basic understanding of the nature of the sign is not especially original or exclusive to Derrida and among recent authors is manifest explicitly in such texts as Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text (*London: Fontana 1977*)*, and in a work which preceded Derrida by a decade *Writing Degree Zero (*New York Hill and Wang 1968*)* (Originally published in 1952). Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. A. Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969) and implicitly in works as diverse as Jacques Lacan, *The Language of the Self : The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1968), Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia, 1984) and Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature,* (Princeton: University Press, 1979).

[342] See Ferdinand De Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, (London: Duckworth, 1983).

it becomes possible, from one angle to claim that there are only signs referring infinitely to nothing but themselves[343]. Of course Derrida goes on to mean more than this, some of which, specifically regarding his critique of the notion of text in terms of an extenuation of presence, I have utilised, the majority of which however is irrelevant to the form of Nietzschean thought represented here. This, basic understanding of semiotic nihilism[344] then is that which will be useful in terms of this chapter. It is understood in this sense, common to both Pickstock's utilisation[345] and the one which shall be pursued here, that words do not have contents[346], that such words mean or refer to an experience of reality which is not only individual and perspectival but in flux within the self, as the self is not continuous or immediate to itself[347]. This aspect of semiotic nihilism is useful in this chapter as the goal is to examine a process by which such nihilistic functioning is refused. Such a process will be contrasted with the surpassing of nihilism in terms of liturgy offered by Catherine Pickstock. It will be argued that the attempts to overcome such nihilism manifest in Barth's theology of language differs from Pickstock in that, with Barth, the 'safety' of meaning is never fully restored. Rather Barth's theology, keeping the other of semiotic meaning in play in continuous disharmony, represents a theology which need not suffer the isolation of exclusivity which is congruous with a safe identification and

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[343] It follows also in the economy of différance (see essay 'Différance' in *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973)) that there is also nothing but signifieds, originless destinations (a term which in this sense puts itself under erasure) which are but cannot be traced to a signifier. Derrida implicitly attempts to account for this in his essay through readings of Freud, Nietzsche and Levinas in relation to an economy of meaning in the functioning of the subconscious, the play of forces and the trace of the other respectively, yet does so, by his own admission, unsatisfactorily. Derrida has been read mainly in relation to his understanding of the nature of the sign and text, there being nothing outside either, he has however turned more in his later work to this other aspect of Saussurean semiotics which is central to but unresolved in the economy of différance (See *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (University of Chicago Press 1996) and *On the Name*, trans. J. P. Leavey (Stanford University Press 1995)) it however remains unresolved and a deconstructive critique of Derrida is possible from this perspective.

[344] The full significance of its 'nihilism' is not voiced in an analysis of the actual semiotics. Rather it ensues in the functioning of such a semiotics in a deconstruction of the self and any locus of meaning.

[345] Pickstock however also seeks to overcome other aspects of this semiotic situation, for example, again reversing the Derridian reading she reads an inherent necrophilia in such semiotics. This aspect will not be the focus here rather I shall focus on the understanding of the situation stated above which is common to both Pickstock's analysis and the one pursued here.

[346] Again 'contents' being a misleading term in the description of the process by which words function, implying as it does a cargo transmitted by the word to the addressee of that word. Words rather, in the Derridian sense that shall be explored here, function as machines whose product is determined by the hearers/readers of that word. In this sense they do not contain meaning but are imbued with meaning. Against this I shall be examining the way in which Barth attempts to develop a notion that words do have content and function explicitly in a manner which rejects the 'arbitrary' nature of the sign in the Saussurean sense. See Ferdinand De Saussure Course in General Linguistics (London: Duckworth 1983).

[347] See chapter 2.

establishment of a locus of meaning. Rather I hope to show how Barth provides an account of language which at once refuses the Nietzschean semiotics illustrated in this dissertation and keeps it in play as, for Barth, each signifier participates at once in the radical meaninglessness proper to the sign and radical meaningfulness, in that it can be bound to the reality of God, by God in His revelation. This however, unlike radical orthodoxy never results in a localisation of meaning in a process of signification, as the safe stability of meaning is never fully restored.

I will proceed by first articulating Barth's theology of language, his account of how words come to have meaning and content. I will examine it in terms of bridging the space between signifier and signified[348] in that Barth's goal is to transcend the problematic of perspectival meaning and envision a re-unification of word and concept. As such I will highlight the overlap between this theology and that of Pickstock's as both seek to identify a space or situation within which language is directly descriptive of reality[349]. Going on to illustrate the difference between Barth and Pickstock will introduce the aporia[350] in Barth's theology between semiotic meaningfulness and radical meaninglessness housed at once within each signifier. I will proceed to illustrate how such a semiotic situation functions within the context of the *analogia fidei* before finally turning my attention to Barth's Christological anthropology which is the well spring of such theology. I will trace the aporia running from Barth's anthropology to his theology of language showing how the latter stems from the former. Both identify the basis for language and ontology in a manner which refuses the perspectivism and indeed violence (in terms of ontology) of such philosophies as identified with the Nietzschean tradition. I will however argue that the safety and resultant exclusivist isolation of such an identification is never fully restored within the dynamic of Barth's theology. I will show this by consistently identifying the concomitant other of Barth's aporia precisely in terms of a

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[348] And in this sense to overcome what Saussure calls its 'arbitrary' nature.

[349] Both seek to arrive at an understanding in which words have fixed meaning and real content, over and against all forms of semiotic relativism.

[350] It will be noted that I use the term aporia at times for elements within Barthian theology which are traditionally termed 'dialectic' in both Barth himself and Barth studies. The reason for this is that the term dialectic is often quite misleading as it refers to a dyadic process resulting in synthesis. A central theme of this chapter is that I shall be highlighting the absence of such a synthesis within Barth's 'dialectic', and so the term is, in this applied sense, inaccurate. Further the rhetoric of Barthian dogmatics frames a situation in which the term 'dialectic' can provocatively differentiate a logic resolved only in faith from a seemingly rival theological methodology. In the current climate, without such explicit polemic, 'dialectic' implies the traditional synthetic meaning without the provocative rhetoric and, as such, is corrupted.

Nietzschean semiotics and ontology; it is precisely because this aporia is never resolved that Barth's theology never finds comfort in a safe identification of meaning or a potentially exclusivist understanding of liturgy. Rather the mechanism in which Barth's theology refuses non-meaning and Nietzschean ontologies of power outlines an analytical grammar for at once overcoming nihilism while keeping it in play in concomitant and corrective disharmony.

5:1 The crises of meaningful representation in Barth's dogmatics

The initial difficulty that manifests itself in attempts to explicate Barth's position in relation to a question that is not exclusively theological is that Barth poses himself no non-theological questions. His clear and conscious attempts to practice theology as opposed to any other form of enquiry lead to a drawing of clear methodological lines between the 'science' of dogmatic theology and other modes of enquiry, either secular or those of liberal theology. Moreover in relation to certain areas Barth explicitly guards against his theological methodology being read as a general theory relating to aspects of human enquiry not directly theological. He writes a typical caveat in relation to his theological epistemology, "It is to be noted that the assertion of the hiddenness of God as introduced and represented here has no connection with a general theory of human knowledge" (CD: 2:1 p.183). Such a situation seems to darken any attempts to explicate Barth's responses to questions which are not directly theological at the outset. If Barth does not pose himself any questions about the possibility of meaningful reference in a general sense, how then can he be said to offer a response to a nihilistic semiotics? His concern is about the possibility of our words relating to God having content, how can this limited analysis incorporate the universal linguistic concerns such as those associated with post-Nietzscheans such as Derrida? Barth however must assimilate a general theory of language within his theological metaperspective by virtue of both his conception of the status of language within the created order and its central role within his theology of the knowability of God. Barth's understanding of language is manifest in his *Anselm, Fides Quaerens Intellectum* where he writes "The truth of thinking or speaking stands or falls by virtue of the relation of its sign language to what exists independently of signs"[351]. He

[351] K Barth, *Anselm, Fides Quarens Intellectum* (London: SCM 1960), 164.

proceeds to argue that in the original Adamic language a direct correlation was possible between words and their objects, a correlation destroyed by sin[352] and testified to in the Babel narratives. Language then for Barth, unlike secular epistemologies or general theories of knowledge, is given directly by God to humanity as part of the created order. As such the nature of language and in particular questions as to the possibility of stable signification, are for Barth always already theological[353]. The question of language for Barth is within a theological category as it is an element of the created order, and, in that it participates in the fallenness of creation it participates in the reconciliation of the Cross. As such the question of language for Barth is more properly a sub-category of Christology, and as such it will be examined in a later section.

It is broached outside these categories, in its own right, in chapter 5 of his Church Dogmatics when Barth turns to the question of knowledge of God. Barth's understanding of the process of knowing incorporates an understanding of linguistic functioning and when the focus moves to the veracity of man's knowledge of God (CD: 2:1 p.204-253) and he must respond to this question of language as "If men can speak of God in human words – and this is the pre-supposition we have to examine – it is obvious that they can first view and conceive (i.e., perceive and think) God. If this is not so, they do not know him." (CD: 2:1 p.181). Knowledge is manifest and only manifest in its semiotic form, illustrating the authenticity of both the perception and cognition which precedes it. This triad features again and again in Barth, perceiving, thinking, speaking, - views, concepts, words, together manifesting the economy of knowledge. To know for Barth is a union between perceiving, conceptualising and then linguistifying, if the extenuation in language is in harmony with the source then knowledge is attained, without it no real knowledge is possible. The word, separated from the object, is the preserved and as such known object, if it is not faithful then what we know as the object is not equitable with its 'source' and real knowledge is not attained.

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[352] The relationship between Barth's anthropology and his understanding of language will be examined in the second part of this chapter.

[353] In a very different way from Barth, both Nietzsche and Derrida would agree with this proposition. For Nietzsche God is the guarantor of the stable transmission of meaning in terms of morality and truths but also in relation to semiotic reference. If words can have meaning and referents outside themselves then the possibility of God is always real and so Nietzsche writes, "I fear we still believe in God because we believe in grammar" (TI: 'Reason in Philosophy' 5). Derrida of course more obviously holds that "the age of the sign is essentially theological" *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins), 14, as it is part and source of *logocentric* tradition.

The mechanics of this process in Barth is, to a point, Kantian[354]; perception is filtered through the cognitive categories of Barth's *naturlich Mensch* mapping a distance between the noumenal and the phenomenal. The relationship between the phenomenal cognition and the object, re-presented to the subject, however, is never addressed by Barth in a general form, who focuses purely on the theological separation between the perception (*Vorstellungen*) of God's Word and our inability to conceptualise or think this encounter. Throughout Barth upholds the Kantian distinction between the noumenal object and the perceptions of this processed object via the a priori categories, but the process by which God is unknowable or indeed knowable only as the absence of God, is attributed to fallenness. Knowing, in whatever form, for Barth is nevertheless always understood within the subject-object categories of Kant's transcendental analytic in that the subject perceives and then actively processes this perception as knowledge in accordance with his transcendental (for Barth fallen) limits. The appropriation of such knowledge to the object it represents is always mediated and to varying degrees uncertain. Significantly though Barth adds a linguistic level[355] to the traditionally Kantian framework[356], the object, perceived then conceptualised is finally linguistified. As we can see in the reference cited in the previous paragraph, this linguistification does not remain 'outside' the process of knowing as a post-eventum labelling. Knowing for Barth involves an alignment between the object, our perception of that object, our conceptualisation of our *vorstellungen* and our semiotic representation of that thought. If the extenuated sign does not correlate with the object it represents, then knowledge of that object is not attained. With Ward and McCormack it must be acknowledged that this linguistic concern manifests the ever increasing semiotic emphasis of Barth's philosophical climate. It is also significant however that Barth's account of the knowability of God is resolved, as we shall see, through his doctrine of revelation wherein the alienation of our words from God's truth and the possible correspondence of our words to God's self are central to Barth's account of both the absence and presence of God.

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[354] See Graham Ward, *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology* (Cambridge University Press 1995). 22-23, and Bruce McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development, 1909-1936.* (Oxford University Press, 1995).

[355] For Ward, influenced by J. Alberto Coffa, *The Semantic Tradition from Kant to Carnap* (Cambridge University Press 1991) "It is a notorious fact that Kant himself paid too little attention to language – as both Hamann and Herder, and later Bolzano, made clear", Graham Ward, *Barth Derrida and the Language of Theology,* 25.

[356] For both Ward and McCormack, Barth's focus on linguistic matters result from his intellectual climate within the traditions of *Sprach* and *Rede philosophie.*

Furthermore for Barth, the task of dogmatics is "the self examination of the church in respect of the content of its distinctive talk about God" (CD: 1:1 p.11). Barth eschewing the private knowledge of God he associates with the liberal tradition articulates the economy of revelation in terms not of a knowing which is personal but a knowing which is realised in the unity of our words and our concepts and as such can be incorporated into the activity of the church. Barth's evangelical orientation undoubtedly propels his thought towards the question of language as in the knowledge of God "we are seized by a dual responsibility", "our thought is our responsibility to ourselves...our speech is our responsibility to others" (CD: 2:1 p.211). As Barth seeks to make the knowability of God a sub-category of a doctrine of revelation and as expression is an activity of the church central to and made possible by revelation, the relation between thought and language is significant and, as such, is maintained throughout.

Incorporating the relationship between language and its object into the question of whether God can be known is quickly established as problematic by Barth as we "use our words improperly and pictorially...when we apply them within the confines of that which is appropriate to us as creatures" (CD: 2:1 p.229). The unification of object thought and sign proper to the created order[357] is for Barth abnegated by the human situation. This is not simply true of our attempts to refer to God; rather the inability of language to signify its destination is true "of any word which man can express on the ground of his viewing and perceiving. It is not only true of the attempt of scientific theology to speak of God in strict concepts." (CD: 2:1 p.195). As I have indicated for Barth all language, not merely language about God, participates in the crises of representation inherent for Barth since the fall. Barth proceeds briefly commenting on two attempts to resolve this situation claiming firstly that the problem cannot be resolved by any attempt to elevate an understanding of language such as he associates with A.E. Biedermann. Such a strategy attempts to isolate a form of linguistic utterance which can transcend the linguistic instability of reference, advocating a "pure conceptual language which leaves the inadequate language of images behind, and which, accessible to the initiates of this high art, is, as such, the language of truth". For Barth however, "the language of strictest conceptuality participates in the inadequacy of all human language" (CD: 2:1 p.195). Again 'all language', this view is

[357] see Barth's *Anselm, Fides Quaerens Intellectum* (London: SCM 1960), 160-170.

unavoidable for Barth by virtue of his conception of language participating universally in the fallenness of humanity and therefore any attempt to conceive of a more positive linguistic functioning must participate in a more general doctrine of reconciliation.

Barth proceeds however to reject the more obvious theological attempts to by-pass the problem of language in the form of a 'simple sense of scripture' or the infallibility of church proclamation, as "Even the language of ecclesiastical dogma and that of the Bible is not exempt from this crises" (CD: 2:1 p.195). Indeed "This has been the frequent error of biblical orthodoxy. But the Church fathers[358] were already clear that there are no words, not even the simplest of basic Christian words, in the use of which we do not have to take into account the inner limitation of all human language" (CD: 2:1 p.195). It is clear in these references that Barth sees the problem of explicitly theological reference in terms of a general crisis involving all language and his attempts to ground a theory of meaningful discourse then is never an isolated enquiry with significance only in terms of the possibility of referring to God. As such his theology of language cannot be distinguished from a general theory of language in the same way that his theological epistemology can be distinguished from a general theory of knowledge[359]. The full implications of this in terms of his theological anthropology will be explicated in a later section, for now I will stay with his response to this crises as set out in Ch. 5, from here I will proceed to trace the reasoning for this to Barth's more general account of participation in the analogy of faith leading to a comparison with Catherine Pickstock's *After Writing* which will illustrate some basic similarities. Returning however to the Christological ontology which orientates Barth's theory of language and relating it to its Nietzschean other I will articulate key distinctions between Pickstock's methodology and that of Barth's and will proceed to argue that Barth's method may, in a variety of ways, prove more fruitful.

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[358] In preceding sections he quotes Cyril of Jerusalem (Kat. 6,2) Justin (Apol II, 6) and Clement of Alexandria (Strom V, 12,81,6) in relation to this.

[359] See CD: 2:1 p.183.

5:2 Barth's account of meaningful reference

As I have noted, by virtue of the fact that the economy of salvation in Barth is predicated by revelation[360] in which we may come to know God, and the fact that our knowledge of God is dependant on the adequacy of language in referring to its destined referent, Barth needs to establish a theology of language which can overcome this crisis. He proceeds in Ch. 5 to outline a striking process, in which the gap separating signifier and signified is overcome, a process "by which we come to participate in the veracity of his revelation and by which our words become true descriptions of Himself" (CD: 2:1 p.229). A central tenet of this understanding is that "Our words are not our property but His" and "When we apply them to God they are not alienated from their original object and therefore from their truth, but, on the contrary, restored to it" (CD: 2:1 p.122). He proceeds to provide a series of examples such as the term 'lordship' which for Barth does not properly refer to "the exercise of power by man over man, but the *kuriotes* of God exercised and revealed in Jesus Christ" (CD: 2:1 p.230). Barth identifies the impossibility of reference, of binding a signifier to a signified, as a manifestation of the human situation in need of redemption. In the redemptive act of Christ, language may once again be restored to its referent as the signifier, lordship, has stable reference in relation to the reality of the lordship of Christ on the cross. The reality, which, as shall be explored in more depth later, is a lordship manifest in servitude and as such manifests the meaninglessness of the signifiers 'lordship' and 'servitude' in their traditional uses. When the God who is Lord becomes a Servant the significatory process by which these terms function, signifying through a dichotomy, is at once condemned and opened up to being restored to what, for Barth, is a proper functioning. As Barth writes "Their proper use obviously consists in the fact that they point away and beyond themselves, taking on a new pregnancy, referring to that to which they cannot refer at all as our views and concepts" (CD: 2:1 p.230). 'Lordship', word and concept, functions in that and only in that it is bound to the Lordship of God revealed on the cross as without this union, signifier and signified, the process by which language is

[360] "The veracity of the revelation of God verifies itself by verily laying claim to the thinking and speaking of man. Our thinking, which is executed in views and concepts, is our responsibility to ourselves. Our speech is our responsibility to others. In this twofold responsibility – and this is how the veracity of the revelation of God verifies itself – we are verily claimed by it" (CD: 2:1 p.211). The process by which this incorporates the person via the analogy of faith in the economy of salvation will be explored later.

shorn from its referent is maintained. As such temporal lordship and the Lordship of the crucified are, in the Barthian sense of dialectic, dialectically opposed, as Graham Ward writes "No synthesis is possible between these two activities, the one anthropological and the other theological; the latter reveals the former to be an idol, or, in terms of linguistics, the endless play of signifiers"[361].

This process, central to so much of Barth, whereby the reality of the cross undermines the reality of the world is not quite the case here, as the process by which Barth proceeds with his theology of language is different from the traditional dialectical theology of crisis. The 'strange new world of the Bible' for Barth functions epistemologically as Ward states, in revealing our knowledge of reality to be alien to the reality of God. In this sense Barth's dialectical theology amounts to "what Kierkegaard called the infinite qualitative distinction between the temporal and the eternal."[362]. Barth however has an understanding of "the inadequacy of all human language" (CD: 2:1 p.195) which functions in a different manner to the way the world negating effect of the reality of God does in relation to his epistemology. Barth sees the problem of reference manifest in itself and, as such, as an obstacle to the knowability of God, not as a situation only made manifest in contrast with a theological understanding. The possibility of a restoration of the relationship between signifier and signified is made possible within the economy of revelation (as I will proceed to explore) and this possibility represents an analysis which incorporates a response to the "inner limitation of all human language" (CD: 2:1 p.195).

I will now trace Barth's reasoning for this possibility as he proceeds in his doctrine of the Veracity of Man's Knowledge of God. After signalling his understanding that words can be restored to their referent and as such 'have content', Barth attempts to clarify the process through an engagement with a concept of analogy which attempts to elucidate the mechanics of how words may be 'restored'. Throughout he strives to distance himself from the analogies of being[363] which were the target of his constant

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[361] Graham Ward, *Barth Derrida and the Language of Theology,* 16.

[362] Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York, 1960), 10.

[363] Barth's understanding of analogia entis throughout the 20's is questionable as it was based upon a highly suspect understanding of Thomas' use of 'nature' see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth,* trans. Edward T. Oakes, S.J. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 37. Von Balthasar does show however that Barth's later writing on the *analogia fidei* overcomes his earlier opposition to a principle of analogy. See *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 63-66, 382-85 and Barth's understanding of Thomas unquestionably develops throughout his later texts. For a sophisticated account of the relationship between Thomas and Barth in terms of Thomistic interdefinition of nature and grace see Eugene Rodgers, *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth, Sacred Doctrine and the Knowledge of God* (University of Notre Dame Press 1995), 188-213.

polemic throughout the twenties and thirties. With typical rhetoric he establishes that an aversion to the traditional use of analogy should not negate the use of any understanding of analogy, as he writes "The impossibility of the thesis of a parity between our word and the being of God must not press us into the counter-thesis of a disparity between them. On the basis of the same presupposition the latter is just as impossible as the former" (CD: 2:1 p.225). A proper understanding of analogy, meaning similarity for Barth (CD: 2:1 p.223) "limits both parity and disparity". It is not the case however for Barth that

> "by means of a clarification of the meaning and understanding of our words as such, we can press forward to a provisional meaning and understanding of their use in relation to God. The provisional meaning and understanding to which we can, of course, press on by this kind of clarification is the provisional meaning and understanding of our understanding of the world, and finally of our self-understanding as it may actually come to pass in our encounter or supposed encounter with one of the gods of this world" (CD: 2:1 p.230).

Barth here typically combines his 'anthropocentric' critique of both "the older theology" (CD: 2:1 p.225) and liberal theology, each attempt to name, for Barth, resulting only in a naming of ourselves as we cannot perceive outside our subjective categories[364]. Barth not only accepts the impossibility of a natural theology utilising Kantian critiques[365] but, equating and radicalising the subjective limitations of Kantian anthropology with the fallenness of the human condition he submits subjectivist analysis to a perspectivist critique[366]. As such our language refers not to a 'transcendental signified' but to our own subjective experience which functions as the

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[364] In this sense, as will become clearer in both this chapter and the next, Barth and Nietzsche share an understanding of the basis for semiotic nihilism. For both the radical entrapment within an individual perspective results in the interpretation of the object always in terms of the selfish or utilitarian ends of the organism. For Nietzsche this is a result of the will to power, for Barth, as will be explored in detail in the next chapter, this selfishness, resulting in the radical perspectivism which is the root of the crisis of representation, is the manifestation of fallenness. The overcoming of this fallenness is also and at once the overcoming of the semiotic crisis in which it results. The concomitant reality of reconciliation and its other frames the semiotic and ontological situation which characterises the human condition.

[365] Barth theologises elements of chapter 3 of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason in his attack on analogy throughout CD: Ch.5.

[366] Barth looks at the theological implications of this in CD: 2:1, 232, where he writes "It will only be the perseverance or stubbornness of one or the other of the philosophical schools which will here affirm the analogy of God in the one case and deny it in the other, thus drawing a boundary, but not knowing at all how long it will be a boundary, or whether it will soon be drawn very differently".

signified of that word for us[367]. An attempt to signify outside ourselves (and the self for Barth is in many ways the Kantian self) can only result in the signification of precisely ourselves. Such signification for Barth cannot convey this same signification to others, as from within their semiotic lexicon our reference can merely evoke not our lexicon, but theirs[368]. And so for Barth our attempt to conceive of God through such methods as the analogia entis represents a fashioning only of the functioning of these analogical predicates within our individual lexicon. It can neither represent God in God's Self nor mediate this or any other reality to others.

Barth nevertheless attempts to utilise the concept of analogy in a different way. As we have seen, the dangers inherent in the doctrine of analogy become manifest for Barth if it envisions a process by which our words about God may be seen as a sequence through which we ourselves can come to real knowledge of their referent[369]. This is central to his understanding of language, as "it certainly does not lie in our power to return our words to their proper use" (CD: 2:1 p.230). If words are to be restored to their truth the mechanism must be orientated through God's initiative. Again this cannot be otherwise as if the abyss separating signifier and signified is a consequence of the fallenness of creation[370], the solution must necessarily stem from the reconciliation of the created order to God and as such from God's action toward humanity. Barth then must outline a mechanism by which our reference becomes meaningful by virtue of its correspondence to the meaning and reality of God, in which the signification does not entail a signifier bound to its signified by the initiative of humanity. A mechanism wherein "the human word receives concrete content and concrete form from God, and becomes capable of saying something, by the fact and only in the fact that it is spoken on the strength of God's permission and command, and therefore has the definite similarity with its object which is promised and bestowed by God's revelation and is not arbitrarily discovered and affirmed" (CD: 2:1 p.232). The impossibility of reference based upon Barth's analysis of extreme subjectivism, a predicament he traces to our fallenness, must be overcome from God's side. As we have seen the term 'lordship' does not alter for Barth, in

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[367] For an original interpretation of Barth's hyper-modern (in Lyotard's sense) critique of modernity see Isolde Andrews, *Deconstructing Barth: A Study of the Complementary Methods in Karl Barth and Jacques Derrida* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1996).

[368] As shown in chapter one this is the essence of Nietzsche's account of semiotic nihilism.

[369] This for Barth is also true of the traditional reformed notion of verbal inspiration which he attacks as manifest in Quenstedt (CD: 2:1, 237-243).

[370] The mechanism through which fallenness is equitable with the radical selfishness which mediates this semiotic situation is fully explored in the following chapter.

being restored to its proper use the signifier remains the same, real reference then is an activity of the signified. Barth reverses the orientation of his and the traditional trajectory of the economy of knowledge in terms of object, thought and sign, in detailing a process in which the sign does not seek to bind itself to the signified, rather God, as the object of our knowledge, aligns God's Self to our human terms. As Barth writes "He has then to bestow truth upon our knowing...the truth of similarity with him" (CD: 2:1 p.231). Despite the rhetoric this is not simply a theocentric caveat for Barth guarding against any explicitly anthropocentric analogical methodologies. It initially seems such as Barth articulates an epistemology in stark contradiction to the traditional Kantian architectonic within which he was working, reversing it by making the subject passive and the object of our knowledge active in binding itself to our perceptions concepts and words. Yet this is precisely what occurs for Barth in the act of revelation wherein "God's true revelation comes out from itself to meet what we can say with our human words and makes a selection from among them to which we must attach ourselves in obedience" (CD: 2:1 p.227).

This is a striking claim that can only be understood within a more general understanding of how Barth sees revelation functioning within the analogy of faith. Barth sees revelation as the opening of the human self, by God, to God, it is the inauguration of a process wherein this alignment of word and truth begins. Revelation for Barth, involving a God who is "veiled in his unveiling and is unveiled in his veiling" (CD: 1:1 p.175) initiates a process, oscillating between apophatic and catophatic procedures where the human, confronted with the absence of God, begins to come to know precisely the God who is absent, or, at least, beyond our understanding[371]. The response in faith to this revelation begins to incorporate the individual within the *circulus veritatis Dei* which is an aspect of the intra-Trinitarian procession by which God interprets God, by God (the Son) through God (the spirit). God's self knowledge which acts at the founding concept for Barth's understanding of the Trinity, emanates through the process of revelation, involving God as Revealer (the Father) God as Revealed (the Son) and God as Revealedness (the Spirit). The

[371] Nowhere is the space between Barth and Schleiermacher narrower than at this point where both locate the origin of faith, of knowledge of God, precisely in the moment when the absolute transcendence of God becomes radically real. Rightly or wrongly Barth seems to interpret a crucial difference in the fact that he sees the human, in Schleiermacher's understanding, coming to this position through herself being confronted with absolute transcendence. For Barth the confrontation with this transcendence is borne of God's initiative in revealing God's self as the God who is hidden. At this point though, in the moment of faith, the dynamics, if not the emphasis, seem closer than Barth admits.

consistency of the inner dynamic of the Trinity, for Barth, must be maintained in the process of revelation if revelation is to be possible. This is evident from Barth's initial attack on Modalism[372] where his basic argument claims that if God reveals God's Self as triune (and this, for Barth, is testified to in scripture) God must be triune in God's Self. No discrepancy between the immanent and economic Trinity is admissible for Barth, as if salvation is predicated by coming to know God, and coming to know God (it not being in man's power to know God by his own means) is possible only through God's graceful revelation, then this revelation must actually reveal God's Self. If this revelation does not reveal God's Self then we do not come to know God and therefore salvation is impossible. God in God's Revelation however does not simply mirror God's Self, however faithfully. If God's revelation is as faithful as it must be in Barth's doctrine of the Word of God, then God reveals God's self precisely as the God who is the God of revelation, as God the Revealer. It is an activity of the Triune God who reveals God's self as true God in His Revelation; the God manifest in revelation cannot be other than this revealing God. Revelation then is not an activity of God separate from God's self, it is not something that God does but something God is. Because of this revelation is not something to be beheld by its human subject, but rather an opening up of this subject towards participation in the activity of God's triune self[373].

It is in this sense then that Barth's statements relating to the incorporation of human terms into the truth of God functions. God chooses human words in that God chooses humanity, God binds God's Self as referent to human signifiers in that God binds God's Self to humanity. Such an understanding orientates Barth's theology of language towards Christology as Christ for Barth is the source and focus of this union. The incarnation binds God as true God and man as true man and as such binds the

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[372] Barth of course is himself the subject of numerous critiques of his own form of modalism which follows from his antipathy to the term 'person' in Trinitarian thinking, as he writes "What is called 'personality' in the conceptual vocabulary of the 19th century is distinguished from the patristic and mediaeval persona by the addition of the attribute of self-consciousness. This really complicates the whole issue." (CD: 1:1 p.357).

[373] In this sense Colin Gunton is correct in claiming that knowledge of God is a relationship between knower and known rather then a series of abstract propositions based upon 'scientific' observance of the object. See Colin Gunton, "No Other Foundation, One Englishman's Reading of Church Dogmatics Chapter 5" *Reckoning with Barth*, ed. Nigel Bigger, (Mowbury Press, 1988). Where Gunton's reading is questionable is in indicating that Barth, like Polyani, holds that this knowledge is prior to a propositional knowledge. Barth's goal throughout Ch. 5 is explicitly to account for the possibility of our views concepts and words actually realising proper knowledge of God, certainly this is possible only within the context of the divine/human relationship, but in attempting to correlate Barth with Polyani Gunton has superimposed a temporal delay or even absence onto Barth's account may not be there.

Word of God to human words, as such it is "Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of the Father, revealed on the cross and resurrection, who is the truth and life of man – the real man, to whom we have to keep if we do not want to speak meaninglessly and futilely but with final substance and content" (CD: 2:1 p.153). Christ therefore actualises God's revelation ontologically and semiotically. Ontologically as true God and true man, fulfilling both and binding them together in this realisation; semiotically as this establishes a hermeneutic within which words can have meaning. 'Power' as such signifies Christ's Power, power as the sovereign and Lordly power of servitude, which at once negates and fulfils the signifier 'power'. Negates it of traditional functionings, which it reveals as the other of power, fulfilling it in the sense of orientating it toward the reality of Christ on the cross, the "final meaning and content" of the signifier 'power'. In this way then Barth maps a process by which God as reality binds this signified to our signifiers imbuing them with content. And does so through binding the human as subject, to God as object, in the activity of revelation, which is an incorporation of the human into the reality of God's triune activity. It is in many ways the inevitable progression as if the displacement of the union between word and referent is participatory in the fallenness of humanity; only God's act of reconciliation can ground an account of stable reference. For Barth then his theology of language must proceed via his understanding of revelation toward his doctrine of reconciliation which is *in nuce* his Christology. Barth's theology of language then proceeds to mirror his Christology "The secular form without the divine content is not the word of God and the divine content without the secular form is also not the Word of God" (CD: 1:1 p.175) toward an account of the reconciliation of human language to its truth, which does not change the form of the word but rather its orientation and content.

The full significance of Barth's theology of language has not been elucidated at this point as I have focussed exclusively upon the attempts of Barth to develop an account of meaningful signification without illustrating the aporia central to it. By virtue of this aporia Barth's account never completely establishes the safety of meaning, as words are never fully restored to their pre-lapsarian state. The process by which non-meaning remains as the concomitant other within Barth's theology of language will be explored fully. At this point however I will introduce the attempts of Catherine Pickstock to provide an account of meaningful reference in the light of a similar 'nihilistic' semiotics to the one that Barth seeks to overcome. I will focus

initially on the shared focus and superficial similarities in their accounts before going on to distinguish them. The dichotomy between doxology (Pickstock) and Christology (Barth) as the parameters of meaningful discourse will incorporate the completion of the Barthian account explicated thus far and provide a framework in which I hope to highlight some of the advantages in Barth's method. From here I will complete the account of Barth's theology of language by focussing on the Christology at its base arguing that the aporia in Barth's account issues from the aporia at the centre of his Christological ontology. This aporia in terms of both semiotics and ontology will be revealed as the continuous presence of a Nietzschean semiotics and ontology which Barth's theology, for Christological reasons, never fully dispels.

5:3 Catherine Pickstock's doxological account of meaningful representation

Catherine Pickstock's *After Writing* engages, albeit in a very different way, in the same process of enquiry that Barth must pursue in chapter 5 of his *Church Dogmatics*. Both provide responses to a situation of semiotic nihilism in the sense of semiotic nihilism briefly described in the initial stage of this chapter. Barth, as we have seen, mixes theological and philosophical portrayals denoting a situation in which language refers only in the functioning of each sign within the individual's linguistic framework. It cannot refer to a reality outside this framework and as such cannot mediate this intended signified to others. Barth accounts for this situation as our post-lapsarian heritage, although his description utilises a Kantian framework which he radically perspectivises[374]by incorporating the process of signifying into the subject/object mechanics of knowing. This semiotic instability must be refused for Barth in his account of the veracity of our knowledge of God, and, as we have partially seen, he attempts to overcome it through aspects of his doctrines of revelation and reconciliation, articulating a process by which our language can correlate directly with reality in that the reality binds itself to our words. Pickstock is less explicit in that she traces a process by which the nihilistic situation, manifest in Derrida, is arrived at, and offers a re-interpretation of the manoeuvres central to this

[374] For Richard Rorty such a perspectival understanding is inevitable when a semiotic paradigm is incorporated into a Kantian epistemology, see R. Rorty "The World Well Lost" in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (1972), 649.

development with the aim or re-orientating the process in a very different direction to the Derridian enterprise. Postmodernism for Pickstock "seems to have foreclosed the possibility of a benign, universal, rationalist humanism, while, on the other hand, it does not seem able to refute the suggestion that it itself is irredeemably nihilistic"[375]. It is this nihilism that she attempts to overcome. Her goal is encapsulated in her claim at the outset of her book that "This essay completes and surpasses philosophy in the direction, not of nihilism but of doxology"[376] as she attempts to articulate an alternative to the exaltation of the *nihil* by identifying the locus of meaning in liturgy.

A full discussion of the many 'hermetic inner corridors' in Pickstock's 'Labyrinthine treatise'[377] is impossible given the spatial limitations here, a brief charting of the development of her argument however is necessary to contextualise her identification of a realm and functioning of meaning in her final chapter. She begins by providing a reading of the tradition inaugurated in Plato, in direct opposition to that offered by Derrida in 'Plato's pharmacy'. Derrida identifies the *Phaedrus* as the inauguration[378] of philosophy's choice for orality over textuality by virtue of it being closer to the origin of the sign. Socrates rejects writing as the originator of the sign cannot defend it from the (mis) interpretation of its recipients. Furthermore for Socrates writing represents a substitution for memory which houses thought outside the self. On account of this Derrida holds that orality is privileged in *the Phaedrus* as the originator is present to the sign, and, more significantly, the sign is closer to the thought which is both its origin and referent. And so, for Derrida, the oral privileging manifests the understanding of language as an attempt to bind itself, or be present to, its origin/signified; as such it is always prior, immediate, pure, close to the centre, truth or God. Rather than such terms being privileged by virtue of their being closer to an explicit God, for Derrida they are elevated through their closeness

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[375] Catherine Pickstock, *After writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), xii.

[376] Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing,* xii.

[377] These descriptions come from John Milbank's recommendation on the back cover of *After Writing*.

[378] This is one of the areas where Pickstock's original and sophisticated reading of Derrida is open to critique. She sees him as, in a manner not dissimilar from the critiques of Foucault, tracing an idea historically through the architectonic of an epistemé. From this identification she can oppose his reading of the historical development with her own. Derrida, at least in Plato's pharmacy, is never explicit in relation to the development and chronological boundaries of the tradition of presence; his claims are actually less direct than Pickstock states. Deconstructions such as 'Plato's Pharmacy' function by being parasitic upon a text, as such they have no life outside of their host texts. Certainly Derrida implicitly holds that the privileging manifest in the Phaedrus is endemic to the western philosophical tradition yet this is certainly different to the kind of Foucaultian mapping of a chronological development, which, superimposed onto Derrida's critique, considerably enhances Pickstock's thesis.

to truth or reality, the always teleological goal of the tradition manifest and perhaps inaugurated in the *Phaedrus*. Speech is privileged over writing, as it is always closer to the *logos*, it is more immediate to truth, self or God, bound for Derrida, as the interchangeable *logocentric* goal of philosophy. Writing is a derivation of speech, further removed, temporally and spatially, from the centre, the moment of truth, of realisation, of revelation. Derrida however, refuses this Platonic choosing in identifying writing, not speech, as the most representative manifestation of language. In that Plato holds speech as preferable by virtue of it being present to the rationality which is its origin, and as such the re-presented excavated self, housing the thought or truth of that self, Derrida holds that writing is a more accurate metaphor for the manner in which language (fails to) function as it is open to the play of undecideability which rejects the safe categorisation of binary oppositions.

Pickstock, by initially re-interpreting the *Phaedrus,* seeks to show that Plato privileges the phonic, not by virtue of his holding to a notion of signification orientated by logocentric presence, but precisely because of its temporality, open-endedness and it being more open to a physical embodiment which links the sign to a process of life rather than death[379]. From this perspective she can begin to recast the pre-modern understanding of language contrasting this specific form of orality with Derrida's privileging of writing[380]. Pickstock identifies this properly platonic notion, in contrast to Derrida's reading of Plato, that language does not have a centred logocentric realm of stable signification. The Platonic account rather, in Pickstock's

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[379] Pickstock correctly notes the identification of the sign, written and oral with death in postmodernity. Key examples of this identification include Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, tr. David Allison, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press), and, "Donner la Mort," eds. Jean Michel Rabaté and Michel Wetzel, *L'éthique du don: Jacques Derrida et la Penseé du don*, (Paris: Métailié 1992), 48-49, Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*, in ed. Sean Hand, *The Levinas Reader*, tr. Richard Cohen, (Oxford: Blackwell), 38-58, Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature,* tr. Ann Smock, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 145, all three drawing in different ways on Heidegger's *Being and Time*, tr. John Maquarrie and Edward Robinson, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 281-284.

[380] Pickstock significantly characterises this identification of Derrida as an active privileging of writing. This is central to what follows as Pickstock, interpreting the trajectory of writing in the direction of mathésis, will choose to show the negative aspects of a primordicy of writing. This manoeuvre allows for what amounts to a pragmatic rejection of the identification of language with writing, a manoeuvre which is possible through contrasting her own/Plato's choice for orality with that of Derrida. If however Derrida is not *choosing* writing but merely articulating its metaphorical advantages as a analogy for the functioning of all language then Pickstock, in order to refute him, would have to explicate why this is not the case. Claiming Derrida privileges writing allows her to assail this privileging on pragmatic grounds without engaging in a first order analysis on the nature of semiotic functioning. Derrida however would not accept that in any sense he chooses or privileges the graphic over the phonic.

reading, illustrates that such meaning is only possible in terms of language's doxological functioning, that is, in the praising of the divine.

Pickstock proceeds from this illustration, in a manner similar to Milbank, by utilising post-modern accounts of modernity and, with Derrida, interpreting the development of modern thought through the establishment of certain key dichotomies[381]. These dichotomies Pickstock analyses in her account of the rise of the early modern period, but illustrates how they are structured through the procedures not of orality, as Derrida implies, but writing[382], weaving the interrelationship, for example, between the development of the printing press and the sinister growth of *mathésis*[383] as charted by such thinkers as Foucault and de Certeau. This process, Pickstock argues, emanates from the decline in liturgical practice, a process that proceeds to interpret language, as precisely the opposite of doxology, attempting to use it instrumentally to reveal and control the economy of the real[384]. Pickstock's version of modernity holds it as the legacy of the sophistic tradition which Derrida idealises in his account of *the Phaedrus,* a modernity which, although deconstructing it, Derrida utilises, through practising precisely the same dichotomies and instrumentalist logic. In the face of this Pickstock attempts to re-assert the properly platonic privileging of orality in identifying a linguistic locus of meaning in liturgy which culminates, for Pickstock, in the logic of the mass.

This understanding is traced by Pickstock, in contrast to Derrida's portrayal, toward a recasting of the pre-modern account of language in precisely this light. The belief in stable reference and the concomitant functioning of presence are, unlike Derrida claims, not to be found in the pre-modern accounts, which attempt to ground a concept of signification in relation to its liturgical functioning. This reaches what amounts to its purest form in the Roman Rite which, for Pickstock, refuses Derrida's categorisation of binary oppositions because, although being primarily an oral phenomenon, it "achieves a balance between the oral and written which surpasses the

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[381] The dichotomies are for the Derrida of *Plato's Pharmacy*, the binary oppositions within which metaphysics seeks to operate. She will proceed to argue however that these issue more from a privileging of writing rather than a privileging of the phonic.

[382] This again functions after the identification of Derrida having *chosen* writing.

[383] This process Pickstock interprets as the spatialization of knowledge which effectively amounted to an arbitrary ordering of nothing, "a nihilistic project in the merely formal interests of control itself", xiv.

[384] A process which Pickstock, echoing Derrida, interprets as based upon a flawed notion of signification. As such, with signification merely the representation of nothing but itself, it proceeds from a nihilistic semiotics toward an outright nihilism revealing nothing but impotent power.

dichotomy in a way most adequate to the echoing of eternity in space and time[385],,[386]. Ultimately in and only in the liturgy is a co-presence of sign and body present as she writes "The coincidence of sign and body is most manifest in the event of the Eucharist. Moreover, this event, by giving death as life overcomes the opposition of death to life, which is a token of modernity and postmodernity"[387]. Pickstock holds that in and only in the Eucharist is there a unification of sign and signified, co-present in a moment which transcends both the modern opposition between space and time and the postmodern conflation of them. I will now proceed to detail Pickstock's account of liturgy which claims in the face of semiotic nihilism that only the Eucharist "grounds meaningful language" as she writes "throughout the essay, I suggest that liturgical language is the only language that really makes sense"[388]. In this sense there is a not insignificant overlap between the explicit aims of both Barth and Pickstock as both attempt to ground a concept of meaningful discourse using theological categories. A significant distinction which has surfaced however is that Pickstock's method, in common with Milbank amounts to the comparison of traditions identifying in them a particular narrative which it isolates as prescriptive. Pickstock's identification of liturgy as the ground of meaning makes way for a localising of this significatory potential within the roman rite of the high middle ages. This manoeuvre and its ramifications will be contrasted with those of Barth highlighting the implications in orientating an account of meaningful reference toward doxology and Christology.

5:4 The locus of meaning in Pickstock's Account

Pickstock's analysis of semiotic dichotomies such as presence/absence, codifying for Derrida the signifier/signified, sign/body relationships, argues that it is not the focus on presence within these oppositions which is metaphysical but the opposition itself between absence and presence. Rather than the privileging of presence it is the spatializied dichotomy of the real and the representative which orientates the rise in nihilism, from modern instrumentalist rationalities, to postmodern deconstructive

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[385] Pickstock similarly attempts to overcome the space and time dichotomy not, in the manner of Derrida by conflating them but through submitting the categories to a hermeneutic wherein reality is construed as gift.
[386] Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing,* xv.
[387] ibid.
[388] ibid.

exaltations of the *nihil*. The former, for Pickstock, articulates a process separating sign and body, life and death such that the second term is to be understood and made manageable through the instrumental operation of the former. This separates the real and its representation in a manner that was new to the pre-modern accounts which did not take this as given. From here the post-modern inhabits this newly established space widening it into the necrophilic void which refuses any relationship between them. As such the modern space between sign and signified is widened such that no direct relationship between them is deemed possible within the postmodern accounts. Pickstock seeks to refuse this through her account of the liturgy and especially her identification of the functioning of the Eucharist as the locus of meaning. This certainly represents a third option alongside modern and postmodern accounts but it is certainly not original. The functioning of the Eucharist in what Pickstock terms the 'Roman Rite'[389] perfects the understanding of language properly found in Plato and articulated throughout the pre-modern texts she examines. The Eucharist functions for Pickstock in confronting the illicit dichotomies that have characterised both modern and postmodern accounts such as sign/body, absence/presence, living/dead. As such it reads like Derrida's play of the undecideable, but this nihilistic deconstruction of infinite play is explicitly refused as the overcoming of the logic of binary opposition is interpreted as the productive understanding of mystery in the patristic sense of *mustérion,* in terms of both *mysterium* and *sacramentum. Signum* as such is not left behind or opposed to *Res*, as in the modern accounts or negated as in the postmodern but rather it participates in the signified as the Eucharist is both signifier and signified, sign and body. It does not negate the distinctions, as Derrida's undecideable aspires to, but affirms them through transcending them. Similarly the categories of living and dead are not rendered meaningless as in Derridian attacks on such binary oppositions, but precisely rendered meaningful in not being opposed, but transcended as a dichotomy. Pickstock claims that the Eucharist "approaches everything in an optative stance of open expectation, and which says that any substance is what it is only through its participation in divine being"[390]. As such the tradition testified to in *the Phaedrus* and perfected in the Eucharist of the Roman Rite identifies and isolates true

[389] Pickstock is referring to the Mass at what she identifies as its purest point in the high Middle Ages. Her understanding of this is articulated in dialogue with such thinkers as de Lubac, Jean luc Marion, Louis Marin, and Joseph A. Jungmann, whose work *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, tr. Francis A. Brunner, (London: Burns and Oates, 1959) is significant.
[390] Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing*, 258.

linguistic functioning in doxological functioning, as Pickstock writes "The eucharistic sign…by casting all language as flowing in time from eternity, without according itself any priority over eternity, allows all signs to become concelebration."[391].

Pickstock's methods in claiming this are borne of a reading of traditions of thought that concurs with Derrida's reading of modernity, but not the pre-modern. She illustrates the manner in which the pre-modern understanding of Eucharist overcomes the modern understandings in terms of binary oppositions but claims it does so by transcending them as opposed to negating them in the manner of Derrida. As such this establishes a ground of language which overcomes the traditional interpretation of signifier/signified but which doesn't negate them, rather sacralising them in transcending the limitation of their dichotomy. Like Milbank she illustrates the difference in traditions, proposing her own reading of the tradition of pre-modern liturgy as an overcoming of nihilism, which is the pragmatic ground of its authenticity. Denying with Derrida the procedures of modernity and refusing the nihilism entailed by the postmodern critiques "Radical orthodoxy…has offered a third alternative: while conceding with postmodernism the indeterminacy of all our knowledge and experience of selfhood, it construes this shifting flux as a sign of our dependency on a transcendent source which "gives" all reality as a mystery, rather than as adducing our suspension over the void"[392]. This theological response to the crises of meaning and representation is one similarity with Barth's method; another more significant one is that for both the hermeneutic that facilitates the founding of the significatory grammar is faith. Faith is central to the bridging of the space between alternate understandings, the secular and the theological, as Pickstock writes in a key passage "One can look at the bread in a mode of equal certainty and uncertainty… which results from an absolute empirical discontinuity between body and bread…and an absolute certainty of faith that judges that the body of Christ is present and completely continuous with the bread and wine"[393]. Ultimately "the Eucharist might lead us to assume a doxological brand of scepticism when regarding all things – so as never to assume, nor to claim to know securely, that the way a thing appears is the way it substantially and exhaustively is"[394]. In this sense the participation through faith in doxological functioning facilitates the same function as participating in

[391] ibid.
[392] Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing*, xii.
[393] Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing*, 257.
[394] ibid.

revelation in Barth's account in that the signifier takes on a Christocentric otherness which challenges the secular functioning of the signifier. In Barth, as I illustrated, the signifier 'Lordship' remains as signifier but is imbued with a new and real meaning, the lordship of servitude. Similarly in Pickstock the Eucharist remains as sign while binding itself to its signified, the body, without itself being negated in the process. With Barth however, and this is a key distinction, signifiers do not in themselves assume a sacridity as they do in Pickstock[395]. They participate in the sacred, to use a term alien to Barth, but they never encapsulate meaning in the manner of the liturgy of the Roman Rite for Pickstock. There is no transubstantiation of the signifier in Barth's theology of language, as I will proceed to illustrate.

5:5 The aporia in Barth's theology of language

As I have shown, Barth in attempting to ground a grammar of meaningful discourse, unifying signifier and signified, proceeds to make his enquiry a sub category of the doctrine of revelation which participates in the doctrine of reconciliation. This doctrine, as I shall illustrate in the following chapters, centres on a Christology which stems from an aporia between Christ as true man and Christ as true God. Throughout Barth's doctrine of reconciliation, he attempts to be faithful to the central tenet of this paradox, as the aporia is never etiolated. This aporia as, I will now illustrate, is manifest in his theology of language and necessarily so if the economy of revelation is to be faithful to its reconciliatory functioning. In so doing it will be seen that Barth's theology of language never risks the localisation of meaning that is manifest in the radical orthodox accounts. Rather, as will become clear in the following chapter, Barth's theology of language, like Nietzsche's semiotics is grounded in his ontology. The reality of this ontological status vis a vis humanities participation in fallenness and justification necessitates the aporia in Barth's semiotics when the safety of meaning is never fully restored as a past event. As Barth writes "Our viewing and conceiving of God and our speaking of him will never be a completed work showing

[395] This is also the relevant disjuncture between the accounts offered here and those of Milbank. From keeping a Nietzschean account of self and sign in play the safety of meaning is never full restored or localised rather as Barth's semiotics and based in his Christology, meaningful and meaningless signification exist concomitantly mirroring the nature of a humanity at once justified and a sinner. The ontological predisposition to radical selfishness, leading to the extreme perspectivism which is the root of semiotic nihilism is always a constant reality for Barth as is the eternal and gracious election of this human into Godself which never allows this ontology and resultant semiotics the final word.

definitive results : and therefore we can never view what we do as something which has already "succeeded". In this respect the hiddenness of God as the point of departure of this activity of ours defines at the outset the limit which will not be infringed even at the finishing point" (CD: 2:1 p.208). Through such a position Barth occludes a safe identification of meaning commensurate with any activity or institution. Meaning cannot be restored in activity or institution as the inner limitations of its grammar, as our grammar, participates throughout in non-meaning. As Barth writes "the veracity if God in His revelation and the veracity of His revelation establishes the veracity of the claim laid upon us to think of him and speak of him" but "This claim does not annul our human situation. Nor does it ignore and eliminate the fact that apart from God many other things, conditioned by ourselves and the world-reality around us, are the content of our two-fold responsibility and therefore of our thinking and speaking" (CD: 2:1 p.211). We have seen how for Barth the economy of this conditioning by our cognitive and linguistic subjectivity functions in that it precludes any capacity of ours to perceive, know and speak of God as object. In that we speak 'conditioned by ourselves'[396], within Barth's epistemology we can only speak of ourselves. In this sense Barth joins 'world' and 'reality' realising an oxymoronical signification. For Barth language cannot refer to its destined object, merely signifying its own functioning within the lexicon of each subject. As such our participation in the semiotic meaningfulness of the revelatory process does not negate our human functioning in the world.

This appears alien to the process discussed earlier where, for Barth, we participate in revelation, which by virtue of God revealing God's Self, incorporates us within a process of participation within Trinitarian life. As God lays claim to us in revelation he lays claim to our words and as this revelation is the Word of God, Jesus Christ, our words are bound to and orientated by Christ's life death and resurrection. To speak meaningfully then is to bind or have our language bound by God such that we use the word 'power', for example, signifying the precise power of Christ on the cross and no other. As such for Barth and only as such has our language meaning, as only as such can the signifier 'power' be bound to reality, only as such can it have stable significance, bound to its most concrete reality signifying this power and no other. If however the aporia of the cross is to be maintained, this binding of humanity to God

[396] (CD: 2:1 p.211).

must be orientated also by the judgement on humanity by God. As the cross for Barth is the realm where sin is both disclosed and encountered, then incorporation into this process does not leave sinful humanity behind. Because of this while our words participate in the reconciliation they must necessarily manifest both a reconciling act of God, and a humanity who was, is, and will be, in the sense of needs to be, reconciled[397]. This humanity is not omitted in Barth's account of meaningful signification. Because of this the safety of meaning is never fully restored to language for Barth. Meaning never resides *in* words sacralising them. Words reflect the aporia, the unresolved reality of the cross, in that while they signify the reality of Christ, they also signify the lexical functioning of such signifiers in all their negative significance. No balance is restored, as the semiotic nihilism Barth's account of revelation refuses maintains a deconstructive presence. The Christological functioning and its nihilistic other remain, in Barth's account, in a state of continual disharmony. Each functioning of power remains, each confronting its other and this is why Barth's Christological hermeneutic is the ground of his ethics. It refuses isolation as it serves to challenge and deconstruct alternative significations maintaining a distinctively Christological voice. This aspect, the propulsion of Barth's doctrine of reconciliation towards praxis will be a principle theme of the final chapter. It is one aspect wherein Barth's account, refusing the stable identification and localising of meaning, refuses the potential inertia of an account such as Pickstock's. Moreover, neither, in Barth's account properly understood and maintained, can stable signification lead to theological exclusivism as the semiotic instability which is the concomitant other of all human signification destabilises each pronouncement, deconstructing it. As Barth writes "In this sense, it is Jesus Christ to whom we must again refer in conclusion. This does not mean we are speaking our last word. In respect of the *circulus veritatis Dei* we have no last word to speak…we can therefore only describe him again and often, in the last resort infinitely often" (CD: 2:1 p.250). And so while each word may participate in the truth of revelation and as such challenge the alterity of its significations (orientating Christology toward ethics), its concomitant other in signification refuses that this word may be infallible, static or even exclusivist. Barth's account of meaningful reference then must be understood in terms of these two hermeneutics, the

[397] This three fold aspect of Barth's economy of salvation in terms being justified, reconciled and sanctified examines the process of salvation in terms of past, present and future. The always already reality of humanity's justification by Christ, our ongoing reconciliation in life with Christ, towards our eschatological sanctification in Christ is manifest in such texts as CD: 4:1, p.79-128.

salvific Christological functioning that challenges the signification of each word and the semiotic instability, never overcome, that forces each Christological identification of meaning to consistently re-articulate itself. As such it refuses exclusion constantly orientating itself toward participation. The aporia of meaningful reference in Barth, maintains and manifests a continuous disharmony between and within each word, as it involves both a participation in the post-lapsarian impossibility of signification and a reconciled participation in the reality of Trinitarian meaning.

Barth, then, unlike Pickstock never identifies a safe locus of meaning; his theology of meaningful signification allows for and even incorporates the kind of nihilistic semiotics, identified in chapter 2 with the Nietzschean tradition, which Pickstock negates. It also overcomes it, but it does so through an understanding where the full safety of meaning is always on its way (CD: 2:1 p.209) it is never fully realised and because of this the certitude of infallibility and the resultant threat of inertia never shadows a properly aporetic theology of language. Stable meaning for Barth is never realised and as such repetition does not function in Barth as in Pickstock[398], as the significatory process must be constantly entered into, in faith, anew. As such Barth's theology of language mediates between his Christology and his uncompleted ethics. The process, by which the dynamic aporia in Barth's theology of language issues from the aporia in his Christology and the ethical implications therein, will be the focus of the rest of this dissertation. I will illustrate that this nihilistic other in Barth's account of language is mapped by a Nietzschean other in Barth's anthropology. This other which is the radically secular inverse of the Christology of the Lord as Servant serves as the concomitant other at the heart of Barth's ontology. To this end I will proceed in the next chapter to articulate the understanding of fallenness which grounds one aspect of the ontology which is the source of the semiotics which has been described thus far. In doing so I will begin to trace the considerable overlap in elements of Nietzschean ontology and Barth's 'fallen man', before in my final chapter showing how Barth's doctrine of reconciliation proceeds to refuse this ontology as a grossly incomplete account of the human condition. It does so however not through dismissing 'Nietzschean thought' but through incorporating it and reinterpreting it in light of Christology. The aporetic nature of Barth's Christological ontology provides a grammar for Christian anthropology in that it responds to and encompasses, without

[398] See Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing* 35, 106-108, 223-226, 247-248.

negating, an ontology in keeping with the Nietzschean ontology of power discussed in chapter 2. It will be seen that as a Nietzschean semiotics is grounded in an ontology, an ontology I will further explore in the following chapter, Barth too traces both semiotic limitations and the restoration of the sign to the ontological condition of humanity, in terms of the concomitant reality of fallenness and election. Because of this I shall in these final two chapters offer a comprehensive reading of Barth's understanding of fallenness and its functioning illustrating the perspectival semiotics and ontology of violence from which it stems. I will also show through an articulation of Barth's understanding of reconciliation, the mechanics of a Christology wherein this philosophy, while being keep in play, is also refused as an analysis of the human condition which fails to take into account God's graceful election of humanity. Barth allows both ontologies, and thereby both semiotics, a voice, by conceiving of the semiotics and ontology identified with Nietzschean thought within a Christological metaperspective.

CHAPTER SIX

NIETZSCHEAN ONTOLOGY AND BARTH'S CHRISTOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY

The goal in this chapter is to examine the nature of 'fallenness', which, for Barth, is at the core of the semiotic crisis that was a central theme of the last chapter. I hope to show that certain elements within traditional accounts of fallenness are significantly absent from Barth's analysis. Firstly he never accounts *for* fallenness, rather he testifies *to* the reality of fallenness through a procedure where he comes to assess humanity through the hermeneutic of the real human Jesus. The gulf between real humanity, manifest in the Christ, and natural humanity, clothes the signifier 'fallen' in Barth's accounts. Faithful to Barth's methodology I seek to examine his understanding of fallenness as a subsection of his doctrine of election and in so doing I seek to highlight that an understanding of fallenness and reconciliation in a linear temporal progression, manifest in concepts of election and predestination that Barth identifies with both Augustine and Calvin, are not to be found within Barth's own accounts. Rather I hope to show how, for Barth, fallenness and reconciliation represent aspects of humanity which exist concomitantly, being manifest and made real in the human response to God's graceful election which is, for Barth, a call into freedom. As such I will illustrate the dichotomy between freedom and its other within the Barthian accounts as the content of election showing its basis in Barth's notion of double predestination. This understanding of fallenness and its other, as will be explored in this chapter, serves two purposes, firstly it deepens an understanding of Barth's semiotics as begun in the previous chapter showing at once the basis for it and the mechanics, explored in the final chapter, wherein such a crisis of representation is overcome, propelling such a Christological semiotics toward ethics. Secondly a focus on Barth's account of fallenness allows me to introduce the overlap between Barth's account of 'fallen man' and Nietzschean ontologies examined in previous chapters. From doing so I hope to illustrate in my final chapter, the precise mechanics through which Barth sees such ontology as being overcome, ontically and noetically in God's election of humanity in the human Jesus. As such the Nietzschean ontological grammar, as with the semiotics examined thus far, will be seen to participate in

Barth's accounts which incorporate them but also refuse them as any analysis of the humanity outside of its status as elected by God is, for Barth, an illicit abstraction.

Barth's theology of language outlined thus far attempts to articulate a process by which words may be restored to their destined referents. This original gulf between the real and its referent is established for Barth by virtue of two elements which are constantly and at times confusingly interwoven throughout his theology. Firstly there is the infinite qualitative distinction between the temporal and the eternal which necessitates the hiddenness of God in terms of his absence from the world. As such there is a distinction in Barth between the real as in the reality of God, and the world, which for Barth being 'wholly other' to God is robbed of its reality. As such, in strictly theocentric terms, for Barth the human capacity to know the real is that of the creature's capacity to know God the creator, and as such is determined by the infinite distinction therein[399]. Secondly and more specifically in terms of the theme of this chapter, by virtue of a semiotics marked by a corruption which Barth traces to fallenness. This corruption as I shall illustrate, is, for Barth, an element of human nature precisely as fallen human nature. As such the gulf between the signifiers of fallen man and their destined signifieds is established as an element of the nature of human fallenness. The way in which Barth understands this fallenness will the theme of this section.

The two elements are interwoven because both are seen by Barth within the context of Christ and as such participate in a theology which is primarily Christology. Christ, for Barth, represents the binding by God of the temporal to the eternal such

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[399] Christoph Schwöbel extends this element in Barth's thought. For Schwöbel Barth reverses a 'modern' paradigmatical procedure which prioritises knowing over being such that the grounds of knowledge are established and then being is interpreted through this epistemological structure. As such being is decided and determined by the mechanics of knowing. Epistemology is prioritised over ontology. For Schwöbel Barth reverses this such that the ontological status of the object of knowledge determines the potentiality of knowing. Because of this for Schwöbel's Barth "Only that which is real can possibly be known by the human subject", *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, John Webster Ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 30. The ontological reality of God determines the potential of our knowledge of Him, the 'reality' of that which is not God or does not participate in God is, in real terms, unknowable to Barth's subject. A similar analysis of the relation between such a 'pre-modern' model of knowing and one representative of 'modernity' is to be found in Ingolf U Dalferth, "Karl Barth's Eschatological Realism". In Karl Barth: Centenary Essays, ed. S. W. Sykes. (Cambridge: CUP 1989) 14-45. A strong claim is to be made that Barth's conception such that the nature of that which is, in reality, is determinative of the grounds of any true knowledge of such an object, and is in keeping with the theme of his texts. Actual textual support for such a position however is limited as Barth explicitly warns against extenuating the impossibility of knowledge of God to a general theory of knowledge, "It is to be noted that the assertion of the hiddenness of God as introduced and represented here has no connection with a general theory of human knowledge" (CD: 2:1 p.183).

that the gulf, the abyss separating God from the world is overcome. This binding for Barth is centred on the cross which binds the eternal and the temporal, God to man. Because of this the natural, in the sense of the pre-lapsarian[400], always already distinction between the temporal and the eternal is distinctively and decisively ruptured in Christ as knowledge of that God who is 'wholly other' is possible for Barth through the God who is man. In this theocentric sense reference about the real is possible as the word became flesh. Similarly when Barth writes of fallenness he writes of it in terms of the judgement by God on man, and as such for Barth it is manifest most completely in this same cross of Christ which marks the absence of God from the world "The true God, himself removed from all concretion, is the origin of the *crisis* of every concrete thing, the Judge, the negation of this world" (R: p.82). The crisis of fallenness is Christologically bound in Barth to the absence of God, which is the nature and form of God's judgement on man. It is a fallenness understood primarily by Barth as humanity opposed to that humanity represented by Christ. This opposition in Barth is not limited to the choices of humanity but is manifest in the state of 'fallen man', how this functions for Barth in terms of the nature and actions of fallen man will be examined in this section.

Two elements that will shadow the remainder of this essay are however manifest at this point. Firstly Barth understands and interprets the reality of fallenness in terms of his Christology and so an account such as the one required at this point risks an etiolation of Barth's understanding, as I shall strive to focus primarily on Barth's account of fallenness in itself, the nature of this condition of fallenness and what it means to be fallen. Secondly, in noting Barth's understanding of the cross as the point of God's judgement, the testament to God's absence from the world, while also and at once noting the cross, in Barth's understanding, as the binding of God's Self from all eternity to man, negating the abyss of the infinite qualitative distinction, this same absence, I note an element both of Barth's theology and of Barth's style which shadows any linear explication such as the one I hope to provide. An element of Barth's theology in that Barth clearly and consciously collapses the temporal and spatial distinction between the absence and the presence of God, between the evacuation of meaning from the world, in and as God's judgement, and the genesis of

[400] Although as I will show the term pre-lapsarian imposes a linear temporal structure on Barth's understanding of fallenness and reconciliation which Barth does not have. An expression of the dynamics of Barth's account in terms of a reality prior to the fall, a fallen humanity and a humanity restored in Christ would be a mis-representation of Barth's understanding.

meaning established by this very negation. I will be focussing mainly on Barth's articulation of the fall from his dogmatics but his presentation of the relationship of humanity reconciled in Christ, to humanity orientated by fallenness, Barth's 'fallen man', lacks none of the rhetoric of his Romans commentary where he writes "In the resurrection the new world of the holy spirit touches the old world of the flesh but touches it as a tangent touches a circle, that is without touching it." (R: p.30). As such an exposition is required of a reality which for Barth rejects temporal or spatial categories and denies a linear logic of non-contradiction.

It poses a stylistic difficulty in that Barth attempts to remain faithful to this core 'dialectic' of his theology by what John Webster among others notes as the "musical structure" of Barth's texts, which begin with "the announcement of a theme, [and proceeds in] its further extension in a long series of developments and recapitulations... no one stage of the argument is definitive; rather it is the whole which conveys the substance of what he has to say. As a result, Barth's views on any given topic cannot be comprehended in a single statement (even if the statement be one of his own), but only in the interplay of a range of articulations of a theme"[401]. This style however is perhaps the only means of representing a relationship between fallen and reconciled humanity which is orientated and determined by the reality of the cross, as the condemnation and justification of humanity. Barth's method attempts to focus and pay full respect to each element as for Barth only such a method can witness to the paradox of the cross. Such an approach shadows any explicatory attempt to isolate and identify the functioning of a specific element within Barth's theology such as his understanding and use of the concept of fallenness.

The goal in this particular section however is precisely to explicate Barth's understanding of the nature of fallenness in as it manifests itself particularly in his dogmatics. It is necessary as it will complete the exposition of Barth's linguistics thus far illustrated. The impossibility of stable signification for Barth is a fact of our fallen nature and as such the substance of this nature needs to be articulated. As Barth's account of language was illustrated as an attempt to relate to and overcome a nihilistic semiotics, I hope to show this articulation of Barth's account of fallen nature, and his subsequent[402] attempts to overcome it, as a mechanics for incorporating a Nietzschean

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[401] *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, John Webster Ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 9.
[402] Although again in Barth this linear notion of fallenness and restoration is not maintained. I will seek in the remainder of this chapter to illustrate Barth's account of fallenness and, with specific reference to

grammar within a theological metaperspective. As with his engagement with a nihilistic semiotics, Barth's understanding both acknowledges and refuses an ontology that I hope to express in terms not dissimilar from those associated with Nietzschean ontologies of power in previous chapters.

I will proceed by firstly describing the ways in which Barth talks about fallenness and the role it serves in his overall corpus, two points will be made, he attempts to give an account *of* fallenness without ever giving an account *for* fallenness. At no point does Barth attempt to engage with the question of how a creature created in God's image reached a state of which the adjective 'fallen' can be used. For Barth knowledge of fallenness is arrived at through a knowledge of 'true' humanity, humanity as intended by God, knowable though relationship with the one human whom God uniquely intended, the man Jesus. This true human, Jesus, as the norm and source of theology and anthropology for Barth, reveals humanity as fallen, humanity as being orientated in a radically different way to the orientation of the man Jesus. As such Barth's writing about the fall is subsumed into his Christology and its most explicit articulation is to be found in his doctrine of reconciliation. I will trace this understanding in his concept of election wherein fallenness is that state realised in the refusal to respond to God's electing grace. I will go on to contrast Barth's focus with a more traditional one by discussing his writings on the fall narratives in Genesis. Here Barth's understanding of the nature of fallenness comes into a clearer focus as he attempts to account for the universality of fallenness without resort to an account of the hereditary transmission of sin such as is associated with the doctrine of original sin. From here I will discuss Barth's writings on this universality of sinfulness in terms of his articulation of a natural, in the sense of biological, orientation to self realisation which is orientated away from the God revealed in the man Jesus. I will conclude by noting the similarities in this aspect of Barth's account with Nietzsche's ontology orientated by the will to power. This will then provide an account of the kind of ontology which underpins the significatory impossibility illustrated in the previous section on Barth's aporetic theology of language and also establish the kind of ontology that Barth shows as being confronted in the reconciliatory reality of the cross. The relation of Barth's account of reconciliation to this ontology of sinfulness

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this account, explicate his account of the overcoming of this fallen state in Christ. In Barth however these are not two distinct moments within a linear time frame, he examines and witnesses to fallenness and describes the reality of reconciliation, constantly oscillating between these two perspectives, two concomitant aspects of humanity which for Barth flow from the paradox of the cross.

will be shown to mirror the relationship of fallen and restored signification shown earlier. Both maintain a 'nihilistic' account of sign and self, with a reconciled one in an aporetic relationship wherein the comfort of stable meaning and sanctified ontology is never restored. Such disharmony and the constant deferral of a stable ground of meaning and a fully restored ontology, I shall argue, propels such an account as Barth's towards ethics. It also, I shall argue, provides a grammar in which a theology such as Barth's maintains the Nietzschean thought in terms of semiotics and ontology explicated previously. It does so in a manner that neither negates Nietzschean thought out of hand such as we saw manifest in the work of John Milbank, nor incorporates a Nietzschean lexicon to the extent that key elements within traditional Christian theology are sacrificed and subsumed, as can be seen in the thought of Thomas Altizer. It seeks certainly to provide a distinctively Christian response to the challenges provided by the Nietzschean tradition, yet such a response never negates a Nietzschean analysis, but rather keeps a Nietzschean voice in play in concomitant disharmony.

6:1 Barth's account of sin within a Christological metaperspective

Barth's account of fallen humanity, as we have seen, is central to the development of his epistemology, semiotics and anthropology and yet Barth has often been read as notoriously neglecting a proper account of the fall and sin[403]. This claim is in many ways quite justified. Barth's methodology precludes any properly theological treatment of an event or situation which is not revealed in Christ, Christ for Barth is both the ontic and noetic condition of the possibility of theology. Barth's writings on the fall cannot then stem from empirical analysis of the human condition, such as we find in John Henry Newman nor can he trace an understanding of fall through an exegesis of the Genesis narratives. Rather Barth's writings on the fall take as their source and destination the Self-disclosure of God in Christ. More properly the Christological emphasis in Barth's texts on the fall stem from the revelatory disclosure of *real humanity* in the life and death of Christ. If Barth is to ground his anthropology in the history of the man Jesus, then this true humanity, Barth's 'real man' (CD: 3:2, pp.132ff), will be shown to be manifestly alien to the humanity

[403] For example see K. Luthi, *Gott und das Bose* (Zwingli Verlag, Zurich, 1961), 261.

manifest in Barth's understanding of humanity in the world. Concepts of fallenness comprise an understanding of two states, often a pre-lapsarian and a post-lapsarian, the latter defined as fallen, or as with Tillich, an opposition between old being and new being in Christ. The binary opposition which underpins Barth's writings on fallenness is not plotted along such a time scale but is established through an understanding of the 'real man' manifest in Christ and that other which Barth refers to as 'fallen man'. The space between Jesus as real man and humanity as opposed to this reality, maps the abyss which gives the signifier 'fallen' meaning within Barth's accounts. It is this opposition that takes the focus in Barth's texts as opposed to the more linear, in terms of temporal sequence, structures of traditional accounts of fallenness.

Because of this Barth's only focussed treatment of the fall is found in CD: 4:1 p. 478-514, as a subsection of his doctrine of reconciliation. For Barth an understanding of sin in itself can never be arrived at by any amount of analysis of a situation or deed in its own terms, rather sin for Barth, as that which is opposed to the will of God, is made knowable through the disclosure of God's will in the man Jesus (CD: 4:1 p.446). Only after the encounter with Christ in God's revelation do we understand what sin is and so, for Barth, any treatment of sin outside of the reality of Christ's reconciling act is an impermissible extraction. It is this understanding that leads to his attack on Luther for holding that the law can give us an understanding of Sin. His method of proceeding from the facticity of our reconciliation in Christ and treating of our fallenness through this hermeneutic, negates an account of the fall or even sin *in itself.* This ontic and noetic primacy of Christ for theological knowledge in Barth is manifest in his reading of Paul's account of Adamic sin. For Barth, Paul interprets and knows the sin of Adam only through interpreting and knowing first the salvific functioning of Christ "there can be no doubt that for Paul, Jesus Christ takes the first place as original, and Adam the second place as "the figure of him that was to come" (v.14) the prophetic type of Jesus Christ. He knew Jesus Christ first and then Adam" (CD: 4:1 p.513). Without the experience of Christ, for Barth, the concept that sin came into the world through one man and has been overcome in the man Jesus can not have real content. Only in relationship with and having knowledge of Christ, and the concomitant understanding of sin as that which is opposed to this reality revealed in and as Christ, can the idea of sin have any real functioning. It is in light of this methodological hermeneutic that when Barth turns his attention to sin and fallenness,

he does so from the starting point of the reconciliation of Christ, as this reality is the hermeneutic which we take to our human reality, a hermeneutic that for Barth reveals it as fallen.

Fallenness in Barth's doctrine of election

A corollary of this is that if Barth writes of sin through this hermeneutic, then sin for Barth is to be viewed as a subsection of his doctrine of election. It is here that the relationship between sinful humanity and true humanity takes place. This has significant implications for the way in which Barth treats of fallenness. Barth's doctrine of election (CD: Ch. 7) proceeds in theocentric interwoveness with the unfolding of his notion of grace, as such Barth understands grace as "the demonstration, the overflowing of the love which is the being of God, that He who is entirely self-sufficient, who even within Himself cannot know isolation, willed even in all His divine glory to share His life with another, and to have that other as the witness of His glory" (CD: 2:2 p.9-10). Barth's doctrine of election issues from this concept of divine initiative, in the form of a divine willing which is understood not as divine decree but as a procession of gracefilled divine being. As such when Barth writes of fallenness it is primarily from the perspective of a gracious and redemptive activity of God's being rather than a human situation interpretable outside of theocentric categories. Its focus is Jesus who is both electing God and elected man. Nothing more remains to be said for Barth about either the divinity of God nor the humanity of humankind that is not disclosed in the history of the man Jesus as the history elected by God. That this history is the history of the real man Jesus, in whom all are represented and realised, is the essence of Barth's notion of double predestination. This doctrine of predestination is a crucial and often problematic issue in all grace centred theology as when the focus is clearly and consciously on God's initiative such that the role of human action in the salvific process becomes insignificant, the reality of fallenness and reprobation risks being understood as also issuing from divine initiative. Barth (CD: 2:2 p.3-94) attempts to explicate his own understanding of 'double predestination' through an opposition to a form of predestination which he associates with Augustinian accounts and even those of Calvin in his formal teaching. Notions that manifested a "fatal parallelism of the concepts of election and rejection." (CD: 2:2, p.17). Such theologies viewed

predestination as issuing from divine decree delineating an elect and reprobate. Once the focus of such theology as Barth associates with Augustine is distinctly on God's grace filled initiative in the salvific process, such that man cannot earn salvation, rather it is given to him, and God's omniscience is allowed for, a notion of predestination which cognicises God's graceful election arises. It represents predestination as involving a divine choosing, and a humanity decided by God from all eternity as elect or reprobate. Barth consciously attempts to take the focus away from each of these elements, electing God and fallen humanity and interprets each element, electing God and elected man, in terms of Christ, who is for Barth precisely electing God and elected man. Because of this the focus of Barth's doctrine of election is a willing which cannot be abstracted from the actuality of the man Jesus and God's eternal willing to bind Godself with this man. This election in not conducted by a distant God in terms of a decision issued by God in absentia, but realised in actuality through the Self-realisation of God and the concomitant realisation of man in the man Jesus. It involves a gracious God and a sinful man elected in Christ as His friend, brother and covenant partner (CD: 4:3 p.200) but in whom God also recognises, judges and takes man's sinfulness on himself, this judgement is not a declaration of reprobation on the few but a judging that is a negation of all sinful humanity. This negation is absolutised in the gracious binding of God's self to this humanity taking man's reprobation onto Himself by taking reprobate man to himself as covenant partner. The electing grace of God in the man Jesus prohibits for Barth a notion of predestination that involves a parallel process choosing 'the elect' as covenant partner while rejecting the reprobate. For Barth then "predestination means quite unequivocally double predestination : double in the sense that election and rejection are now two species within the one genus designated by the term predestination"[404] (CD: 2:2 p.17).

This is the only concept which, for Barth, can remain faithful to the positive and negative significance of the cross which involves both "elected man and electing God" (CD: 2:2 p.162) in which "God has ascribed to man election, salvation and life...and to himself reprobation, perdition and death" (CD: 2:2, p.163). These two movements, and these are the positive and negative poles of God's judgement, are

[404] In this section Barth contrasts the parallel notion he associates with Augustine with the notion of double predestination that Barth traces through Isodore of Seville, Gottschalk, to certain key texts of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin.

bound in the one man Jesus in whom God wills man as his elected covenant partner. God's will issues forth from God as a procession of God's being. The will of God which is the focus of the doctrine of predestination is seen within the context of an overflowing of God's graceful being as free, loving, electing God. The content of this will is the binding of God's self to man in the man Jesus and as such, within Barth's intra-Trinitarian dynamic, it is an eternal willing, an eternal election, which transcends temporal limitation. Moreover for Barth this election "cannot be overthrown or reversed. Rejection cannot again become the portion or affair of man. The exchange which took place on Golgotha, when God chose as his throne the malefactors cross...means that there can be no condemnation literally none, for those that are in Jesus Christ" (CD: 2:2 p.167).

Within the auspices of such a doctrine of election, which is dependant on Barth's notion of double predestination, the space of the 'wholly other' existing between God and man is collapsed in the man Jesus. From all eternity God binds God's Self to humanity in the man Jesus and takes humanity and human sin onto Himself[405]. In this sense sinfulness as the state outside of or absent to God is no more. In this sense and from this perspective Barth claims that "Fallen man is dead" (CD: 4:1 p.481) in that the state of fallenness has been overcome through God's election of humanity. He compares fallen man to the "empire of the Egyptians" an "empire no longer there, which belongs only to history" (CD: 4:1 p.503). In that fallenness is treated by Barth within a Christological perspective in terms of a concept of election whose most potent procedure is a double predestination, the state of sin has been vanquished, it has ceased to exist. Because of this analysis, which proceeds from his Christocentric methodology, Barth can give it no treatment in itself viewing it only, as Eberhard Jüngel claims, with a 'sideways glance'[406], as nothingness, "It is true that the fall of man means that in his being there has opened up a gulf or vacuum of nothingness in the world which God created good" (CD: 4:1 p.480). There is then a problem in Barth's writing on sinfulness within a more general doctrine of reconciliation in that if our understanding of fallenness cannot be arrived at *extra Jesu Christi* and the understanding then arrived at through Christ is of an always already vanquished state

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[405] Barth emphasises this aspect to the extent that he proceeds to write, controversially, "In giving Himself in this act He ordained the surrender of something, i.e., of His own impassability in face of the whole world" (CD: 2:2 p.163).

[406] see Eberhard Jüngel, *Karl Barth A Theological Legacy*, tr. Garrett E. Paul (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 127.

of fallenness, and as such an understanding of a 'gulf' a 'vacuum' an 'absurdity' or 'nothingness', the term fallen most fundamentally connotes a situation which has been transcended. For Barth, as Wolf Krötke writes "there exists no account of things in a position to make what is sinful 'fit' somewhere and thereby render it understandable in some genuine sense"[407]. This is undoubtedly the most significant impression created by Barth's writings on the fall. He can never provide an account for the fall or how fallenness came into existence as for Barth knowledge of fallenness is only realised through an understanding of that absolute other of fallen man, that is, the 'real man' manifest in the man Jesus.

Barth's language however throughout his doctrine of election in terms of its positive significance does allow at this point an insight into his understanding of fallenness which will come into clearer focus in the next two sections. If fallenness is overcome in God's election of fallen humanity, then Barth's interpretation of the nature of this election has an implicit vision of the nature of fallenness which has been overcome.

Freedom in Barth's concept of election

Barth's focus in his doctrine of election is striking in terms of his overall structure as it centres on God's involving of humanity in partnership with Him[408]. "God was always a partner. The Father was a partner of the Son and the Son of the Father" (CD: 4:2 p.344). Because of this the election of humanity does not involve the "sweeping away" of the human (CD: 4:4 p.163), for Barth, as is often claimed. Election for Barth, as Wolf Krötke points out, involves a humanity that is "set on their feet as God's partners" (CD: 4:3, p.941). This setting on their feet is typical of Barth's language of election as God's freedom, realised in His choosing of man as His covenant partner, opens up the possibility for the free participation of humanity in witness and response to this grace. The election of man in the man Jesus establishes for Barth the ontic and noetic conditions for the possibility of freedom. Ontic in that the ontological movement of the God who loves in Freedom establishes the condition and possibility for human participation in this freedom, through participation in the

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[407] Wolf Krotke "Karl Barth's Anthropology", in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, John Webster Ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 165.

[408] It is striking in that Barth's theology throughout the twenties and thirties was orientated by the infinite qualitative distinction between God and man such that "God is in heaven thou art on earth", Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York, 1960), 10.

freedom of God. Noetic in that this election allows the human to respond in freedom to this election through coming to know the parameters of sinfulness and its Christological other. Freedom for Barth is that established and knowable in the freedom of the loving God, who alone chooses, not out of selfishness or need but freely, to elect man as His partner. This is manifest and realised in the act of the man Jesus whom for Barth realises freedom in subordination to the will of God. The corollary that can be drawn from this is that for Barth human fallenness involves an enslavement or orientation to sinfulness that orientates the person away from God. As God alone can love in freedom, fallen humanity for Barth cannot replicate this freedom, being limited to love, choose and act selfishly, orientated by the demands of their fallen selfhood. God's graceful movement in the election of humanity, God's action as the God who loves in freedom, establishes a possibility for humanity, enslaved to sin, to participate in divine freedom. Such participation is at once the free response and witness to God's grace and the participation of the person in the reality of freedom, in the reality of God's free choosing of humanity. As such fallenness has been overcome and is no more in the sense that humanity now has the freedom to respond to God's love in freedom. This is so by virtue of the binding of God's being to humanity in the man Jesus and the illustration in the man Jesus of that which is and is not the real human intended by God. For Barth however this aspect does not exhaust the issue.

For Barth "freedom is not the freedom to sin" (CD: 3:2 p.197) yet this does not entail a concept of a subject who cannot, through predestined reprobation or elect divine orientation, choose for herself to respond to God's grace. Rather to choose not to respond to God's grace, for Barth, is precisely to participate in the antithesis of freedom which is the enslavement of sin. As such the term 'choice', for Barth, can only be used, in this instance which is precisely as a refusal to choose, to convey something which is never a choice as it is precisely a refusal of, rather than an entering into, freedom. It is not a free choice, rather a rejection of free choice, and as such the 'empire' of fallenness is that in which fallen man is within. Again such theology is worked out through a theocentric equation of the signifier freedom with that freedom revealed in God as the God who loves in freedom. It also begins to clothe Barth's understanding of the nature of fallenness. Fallenness for Barth appears to be that state wherein the choice cannot be made to respond to God's grace in freedom. Such a free response is possible by virtue of the election of all humanity in

the procession of God's will manifest in the man Jesus. As such Barth safeguards God's initiative in the salvific process. It is this initiative which overcomes the hegemony of sin. Justification involves the opening up of the human person by God to the freedom articulated, manifest and realised in the freely chosen subordination to the will of God of the man Jesus. This response to God's freedom incorporates humanity in the man Jesus into God's freedom. Only as such and in terms of such freedom can Barth's constant use of the term 'partnership' have significance. Moreover the choice to sin, for Barth, is as such not a choice that manifests or participates in freedom. It is the antithesis of such freedom and is as such understood as "absurdity", "meaninglessness" and at times "nothingness".

Within the noetic possibility established through the incarnation, God's self disclosure identifies not only God's self but also that which God is not. From this differentiation the human freed from enslavement to sin can freely choose to respond to such revelation. Fallenness and its other, participation in God's humanity through a response to God's call to man to be His man (CD: 3:1 p.176), as understood within Barth's doctrine of election, do not manifest the either/or of concepts of predestination Barth rejects, but the both/and of double predestination. Justification for Barth represents the decisive rupture of the hegemony of God's absolute otherness to humanity by God's eternal and absolute willing to be God with man. Reconciliation represents the entering into partnership with God in freedom, a freedom realised precisely in this positive response to God's graceful election. The other of this freedom is that which for Barth clothes the term fallen, in that it is characterised by the inverse of freedom, the enslavement to sin.

So while Barth at no stage, by virtue of his theological methodology, accounts for fallenness, an account of fallenness can be abstracted from his doctrine of election. The picture so far portrayed is of a human condition which is wholly other to God such that knowledge of God and the real is impossible. This is so as humanity, both as a result of, and through realising, 'fallenness', is enslaved to 'self' realisation such that the free choice to surrender the self as in the free loving choice of God the Father and the man Jesus, is impossible for him. And so the limits and orientation, such that man cannot be free, are the nature and functioning of the term 'fallen' in Barth's usage and as such will be the main concern of the remainder of this section.

Barth and inherited transmission of sin

Barth then understands fallenness through contrast between humanity and that real or true humanity manifest in the man Jesus. Within the doctrine of election God overcomes such fallenness by binding Himself in freedom to fallen humanity a humanity reconciled in the free surrendering of Christ's self to the will of God. It is an act established in freedom as the free decision to respond, and results through this response in participation in freedom. As such 'fallen man is no more' for Barth in that, firstly, the hegemony of fallenness is no more. Secondly the signifier man has been given new and real content in the man Jesus such that it cannot be understood in terms of this opposition to God which is the nature and form of fallenness. Yet while Barth writes of this event within a historical context identifiable within a linear development of time, he is also aware that such representation struggles to do justice to a situation which is established as a procession of divine will. Jesus in whom all humanity is represented is with God in the beginning, as such the election of humanity and God's moved being in binding Himself to humanity does not represent an alteration of God's self. As the election of humanity is manifest in God's self, as the God who chooses humanity, it refuses temporal isolation. God's election reaches its most complete manifestation on Golgotha and it is here that is the well-spring of Barth's writing on election, but Barth also writes of election as the ongoing calling into covenantal relation by God to man. Because of this the opposition fallen and reconciled exists concomitantly for Barth as the response to God's electing grace realises and manifests the state of reconciliation or fallenness.

As his understanding of fallenness is forged against this backdrop it is not surprising that he reads the genesis accounts of the fall as saga. Barth rejects any claims such that the genesis account should be seen as history, instead "It is not history but only saga[409] which can tell us that he [fallen man] came into being in this

[409] One of Barth's clearest explications of his position in relation to the status and implications of such a saga and its relation to history came not in his dogmatics but in a letter to his niece where he wrote "The creation story deals only with the becoming of all things, and therefore with the revelation of God, which is inaccessible to science as such. The theory of evolution deals with what has become, as it appears to human observation and research and as it invites human interpretation. Thus one's attitude to the creation story and the theory of evolution can take the form of an either/or only if one shuts oneself off completely from faith in God's revelation or from the opportunity for scientific understanding." Quoted from R. C. Johnson, "The Legacy of Karl Barth," *Reflection* (New Haven, Conn.) 66/4 (May 1969), 4 in Ford 1979: 55.

way and existed as the one who came into being in this way – the first man" (CD: 4:1 p. 508). Neither should this 'first man' be seen as explicit history[410] rather "The meaning of Adam is simply man, and as the bearer of this name which denotes the being and essence of all other men" (CD: 4:1 p.507-508). This nature of this 'being and essence' represents the functioning of the saga of Adam and as such the understanding of 'all other men' who are represented in the signifier 'Adam'. The name Adam is, for Barth, the attempt to identify man precisely as fallen man who chooses the self and its fleshy orientations and in so doing turns his back on God's gracious offer. The saga testifies to the reality of creation which is created as good, this for Barth is the inheritance of Adam, but it is also "the name of Adam the transgressor which God gives to world-history as a whole". Adam is simply for Barth that name which is given to the humanity, a humanity which is and is always other than, and opposed to, God. 'Adam' then for Barth is that which testifies to sinful nature in which we participate, but this participation is not for Barth to be traced to any understanding of inheritance (CD: 4:1 509,510). The notion of inheritance (*ürsubernde*) Barth rejects as it treats of sin as something which absolves humanity of the guilt and responsibility synonymous with the activity of sin. As we have seen, Paul for Barth reads Adam through Christ and as such in claiming that sin entered the world through one man Paul is striving to assert the absolute biological universality of sin in correspondence with the new humanity universally brought into being and manifest in the one man Jesus. Paul is using Adam as both a rhetorical and didactic device paralleling the reconciling man Jesus and also as an attempt to point to the universal nature of Adam as man.

Because of this the signifier 'flesh' in Pauline accounts for Barth cannot be read as a metaphor participating in a platonic dualism with notions of 'spirit'. Rather through 'flesh', Paul, for Barth, is attempting to bind a notion of sinfulness to the very nature (as biology as well as orientation) of the human condition (biology here as the fleshy universal nature of humanity). This understanding is misread for Barth and leads to an account of the hereditary transmission of sin. There is a crucial distinction to be made between a notion of sinfulness such that sin is thrust upon us in birth and which, as such, has "a hopelessly naturalistic, deterministic and even fatalistic ring" (CD: 4:1

[410] Barth's understanding is explicitly and consciously an exegesis of the narrative of genesis as it stands, he acknowledges and accepts the validity of a redactive treatment differentiating the Yahwistic texts of Gen. 3 from the Priestly text of Gen.2 (CD: 4:1, p.508-509).

p.501) and a notion of sin as an aspect of our nature, even our biological nature, which we share in and have responsibility for. We have responsibility because of God's election of all humanity in the man Jesus. For Barth, clearly defending a notion of personal human responsibility, man "is not forced to commit sin...there is no reason for it" (CD: 4:1 p. 484), "No one has to be Adam. We are so freely and on our own responsibility" (CD: 4:1 p. 509). Moreover when we think of sin for Barth "we have always to think of a human decision and act" (CD: 4:1 p.510). Barth clearly preserves a notion of human agency in his treatment of sin[411]; sin is something we do rather than something that happens to us. Despite this however, Barth has also an understanding of the human condition as fallen in the sense that there is nothing that *we* can do about it. This is central to his theology of God's initiative, man who is fallen needs to be redeemed and can only be redeemed by God. As such there is nothing we can do about our fallenness but there is something God can, has, and is doing. We cannot stop ourselves from being fallen, for Barth we inhabit a sinfulness which we cannot escape from. The understanding that can be explicated from Barth's juxtaposition, is however in keeping with the nature of fallenness manifest in his doctrine of election. It is not divisible into a pre-lapsarian and post-lapsarian state, although this impression is unavoidable if it is to be spoken about in terms of the life of the man Jesus which gives it content. Rather God's election of humanity in the man Jesus, who was with God in the beginning, calls humanity into partnership with God. This call comes with the always already transcending of the determinative fallenness of humanity. It is an offer which proceeds from all eternity as the overflowing of God's free gracious love; the decision to respond to this election is a response which can be made in freedom, a freedom made possible by the ontic and noetic situation established through the man Jesus. To not respond to this, is for Barth, not to participate in freedom and so it is a choice made, for which we are culpable, but which can only be expressed as being 'determined' by fallenness. It is a choice to precisely refuse free choice, a freedom established only through belief and therefore the resultant awareness of the opposition of fallen and real humanity, sin and its other. Such opposition is only manifest after belief and so the possibility for free choice between sin and its other is refused through not responding to God's grace. As such the non-choice not to respond indicates, manifests and realises, in the sense of makes

[411] See John Webster "The Firmest Grasp of the Real" and "Justification, Analogy and Action" in *Barth's Moral Theology: Human Action in Barth's Thought*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998).

real, the state of fallenness. It is a choice to refuse God's electing grace and realise the fallenness that is manifest precisely in that choice. God's grace in Barth is not isolated to a past but offered anew as each self is called into partnership with God, neither for Barth is human fallenness a condition which does not now affect the human person, rather it is a state made real in each now with the refusal to respond to this grace. This refusal is a refusal of freedom and a choice to allow oneself to be determined by fallenness as it is a no to the ontic identification with God's freedom and the noetic freedom which this entails. The nature of this refusal, and the form it takes, can also be abstracted to an extent from Barth's texts which rarely deal with this theme explicitly. Nature as in the condition of humanity such that the movement away from God is always at hand; form as in the actual form that this movement takes.

6:2 Barth's understanding of the nature and form of fallenness

Fallenness for Barth, as we have seen, cannot be identified with a prior historical act which incorporates humanity in a sinful state. For Barth however fallenness is the term which makes understandable a mode of being which is characteristic of all humanity. Barth's account of fallenness explicitly refuses a concept of hereditary transmission[412] but it is no less universal than such accounts. He needs to locate the reality of fallenness as an orientation away from God in a universal aspect of humanity without incorporating an hereditary account of an Adamic sin or any notion of genealogical concupiscence. This universal aspect of sinfulness is testified to by Barth as the human "is inclined "*by nature*" (my italics) to hate God and his neighbour" (CD: 4:1 p.494). Whatever it is that is the nature of humanity, its effects are manifest in the radical opposition of the self to the other, both God and the neighbour. The opposition is the source and form of sin and is an always already reality of man's natural being. Again, "man" for Barth, "at the very core of his being – the heart, as the Bible puts it – is not good but evil, not upright but corrupt, not humble but proud...and therefore hating his God and his neighbour" (CD: 4:1 p.495). Here Barth points to the most explicit of the sins which he identifies with mans opposition to God, it is man's pride that orientates him away from God and neighbour. The core of man's being for Barth is orientated towards hate, it is

[412] "'Hereditary sin' has a hopelessly naturalistic, deterministic and even fatalistic ring" (CD: 4:1, 501)

maintained throughout his account of the fall that this hate stems from selfishness and pride, the *corruptio optimi* for Barth is "the selling and enslavement of the good man and his nature and all the activations of his nature to the service of evil and the work of his own pride"(CD: 4:1 p.497). This process whereby the 'activations' of human nature is toward sin is not something Barth traces out from a historical act leading to a lapsed state of being but acknowledges in the reality of humanity in direct contrast to humanity as God intended, manifest in the one man whom God uniquely intended, Jesus. Of this fallen man "to use the phrase of Kant, he [man] lives by an "evil principle", with a "bias towards evil" in the power of a "radical evil" which shows itself virulent and active in his life" (CD: 4:1 p.495). Fallen man as we have seen is bound by a lack of freedom. This can only be the case as for Barth freedom, both manifest and offered, is the content of election. If freedom is something only offered in the reality of election then that other of election, which God's electing grace calls humanity from, is marked by an absolute otherness to this freedom, an enslavement. This enslavement which negates mans freedom is depicted by Barth as a force orientating human action. It is for Barth the clearest manifestation of human nature that this natural orientation, which determines human action, orientates him away from the other through pride in the self. For Barth it is this pride articulated as the will to be in and of oneself as opposed to witnessing to the radical dependency of the human on God, which manifests this fallen orientation. The dialectic is at all times stark between these two modes of existence, the freedom of election and the enslavement of fallenness. This understanding of humanity enslaved is perhaps even more explicit in his earlier work in that it actively sought to attack a concept of the human person which saw him or herself as self sufficient rational agents capable of deciding moral and political reality on their own terms, without dependency on God's being. It is an understanding maintained from his engagement with Romans to his doctrine of reconciliation and Barth attempts to explicate it in Pauline terms. For man to be of a sinful nature means that "He is not partly but altogether "flesh". He does not act in a fleshy way only in certain actions and passions and things done and things not done, but in all of them" (CD: 4:1 p.496). Barth then identifies sin as human action in self realisation, choosing to be oneself and as such refusing the call by God in Jesus Christ to be precisely God's man. It is an activity however which is altogether an aspect of human nature. From a certain perspective this human is naturally orientated toward sin and cannot by himself refuse this self assertion. It is his flesh and "He is

not partly but altogether "flesh""(CD: 4:1 p.496). For this to be strictly accurate however one would have to conceive of "natural man" outside of God's willing of this man to be God's man. Only if we consider natural humanity outside of the facticity of election can this state be considered determinative. For Barth there is human nature and the concomitant calling of this human into being with God. This humanity, called as God's humanity in the man Jesus, is for Barth the real man. In these terms within Barth's juxtaposition of the true human manifest in Jesus and "natural" humanity, chosen in the self's choice for self determination, to choose to be oneself, in this sense, is precisely to choose not to be oneself[413]. The self chosen is alien to the real humanity manifest and offered in the man Jesus. It manifests itself in pride, selfishness and for the early Barth 'radical subjectivity'. This subjectivity for Barth represents the human self orientated by a desire to be oneself such that one cannot judge or conceive outside the categories of one's subjectivity. In this sense the fallenness, manifest in an orientation toward the singular projection of the self, blinds the subject from experiencing, feeling and acting outside of this fundamentally selfish orientation. As such this is consistent with Barth's opposition between the God who loves in freedom, the Christ who serves in freedom and fallen man, orientated by his drives toward self-realisation, toward selfishness and as such incapable of this freedom. Fallenness in this light is a utilitarian functioning within the self which processes information within the self-orientating categories of the self. As such objects perceived in the world, are, for Barth, interpreted in keeping with the fundamental selfishness of the fallen subject such that its value, perception and interpretation are individually processed in terms of the needs, experiences and beliefs of that subject.

Barth connotes such existence with the term 'flesh'. It serves a dual function in that it is biblically interchangeable with sinful mankind as it is synonymous with our nature as sinners (CD: 4:1 p.504) and it focuses our attention to the nature of this sinfulness as natural in the sense of biological. It is in this sense that Barth uses the term to pertain to the fact that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" (CD: 4:1

[413] As such Barth shares the Augustinian notion that the self can only be itself in the surrendering of the self to God. The will to be oneself then in this sense of self-realisation, which for Barth is indicative of the refusal to enter into partnership with God, refuses to realise the true self which can only be itself in God. This notion seems to betray Barth's debt to Kierkegaard as much as Augustine, a debt Barth was often reluctant to acknowledge, particularly after the conscious distancing by Barth of the existentialist inspired colleagues who had helped shape Barth's dialectical thought during his work with *Zwischen den Zeiten*. For a mapping of Kierkegaardian influence on Barth and Barth's reluctance after 1927 to admit to it see the final chapter of Jerome Hamer OP. Karl Barth,(Sands & co. LTD, 1962).

p.495) where Barth, while refusing a notion of the hereditary transmission of sin nevertheless wants to claim that it is part of the human from birth quoting Ps. 51:7 "behold I was shapen in inequity and in sin did my mother conceive me". Here Barth is not tracing an Augustinian argument but rather attempting to illustrate the biological universality of sin. The orientation within the subject, manifest as selfishness and pride and synonymous with fallenness is, for Barth, a functioning best understood as a fleshy biological functioning within and as the human body. Barth, following Romans 8, uses the term flesh to connote this biological nature of the realm and functioning of sin, it is at once the locus and the always already orientation of the human to sin. There are too many texts in Barth identifying sin and fallenness with nature and flesh to limit our understanding of Barth's use of these terms such as to interpret them as simply metaphorical. Barth, following Romans 8 sees fallenness as manifest in the nature and flesh of the human and so, for Barth, fallenness is the verifiable state of humanity such that the human is naturally and biologically orientated away from the reality of God. Sin is the activity which is synonymous with this fallenness, it makes it real. The drive is for pride and self assertion, it orientates the self away from both God and the neighbour it is "at the very core of his [man's] being – the heart, as the Bible puts it" where he is "not good but evil, not upright but corrupt, not humble but proud...and therefore hating his God and his neighbour" (CD: 4:1 p.495). Fallenness is the drive towards self-realisation, which is at once a refusal to see the dependency of the person on God and a refusal to respond to God's free grace filled election. As such it makes fallenness real and as such it is an enslavement to the biological orientations within which orientate it. It is a decision which for Barth is marked by this enslavement, as it is, at once, a refusal to enter into true selfhood and assume the freedom that becomes real in the response to God's election, and a realisation of that fallenness which is made real in the human choice to absent himself from partnership with God.

Barth's use of the concept "flesh" as illustrative of human fallenness

Barth's understanding of the impetus toward this selfish realisation of fallen selfhood is manifest in a key passage in which he details the nature of man orientated toward

sin in terms of 'indwelling forces'. Here Barth gives his clearest indication of the nature of his understanding of 'flesh':

> "To be sure he [man] thinks he can take them in hand, control them, direct them as he pleases, for they are undoubtedly the forces of his own possibilities and capacities, of his own ability. In reality, however, they escape him, they have already escaped from him. They are entities with their own right and dignity. They are long since alienated from him. They act at their own pleasure, as absolutes, without him, behind him, over him, and against him, according to the law by which they arose, in exact correspondence to the law by which man himself thought he should flee from God. As he did to God, so different forms of his own capacity do now to him. In reality he does not control them but they him. They do not serve him but he must serve them. He is more their football and prisoner and the less he is aware of the reversal that has long since taken place between him and them, and the more he still rocks himself in the illusion of his lordship and mastery over them. If we are to see the disorder and unrighteousness which corrupt human life and fellowship, we must not only not deny, but consider very seriously, not merely man's rebellion against God, but also the rebellion unleashed by it, that of human abilities, exalting themselves as lordless forces, against man himself"[414]

This key passage deepens Barth's account of fallenness. Man's own abilities stand as forces within himself as "forces of his own possibilities". Man presumes himself to be in control of such drives yet in fact they now orientate human action. The "law by which they arose" is precisely the self-willing choice of man and as such are "in exact correspondence to the law by which man himself thought he should flee from God". These self-orientating drives orientate the entity that is, for Barth, Godless man. It is such selfish orientations, seen previously as orientating man against the other, God and neighbour, that are now orientated against the self "they do not serve him but he must serve them". It is a functioning within the human self, 'in control' and orientating the self. They are a series of biological orientations which orientate the self's action in the world 'acting at their own pleasure, as absolutes'. To conceive of human agency and selfhood without acknowledging this multiplicity of biological

[414] Karl Barth, The Christian Life, Church Dogmatics 4:4: Lecture Fragments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1981), 214.

functionings is impossible for Barth as the self is not 'in control' of them rather the self is comprised of them. As man's selfishness establishes himself against God and neighbour in oppositional difference he himself is comprised of this multiplicity of forces which orientate his action, self willing forces seeking their own, not his, ends. These indwelling forces, orientating the human toward and as sin are inaugurated by that which constitutes man's fallenness, his alienation from God wherein "man thought he should himself flee from God", we have seen that for Barth fallenness is a maintaining of such a situation through a refusal to enter into the freedom offered in true selfhood. Fallenness is realised in this understanding of the self which manifests itself and realises itself in the now, in the precise rejection of God which is a rejection of freedom.

This image of the human comprised of 'entities within their own right' which orientate action is striking, it is certainly in keeping with the Pauline understanding of 'flesh' from Romans 8 which Barth incessantly utilises in his account of fallenness, but it is none the less arresting for that. It completes, in a sense, Barth's account of fallenness in that such an account can be abstracted from the structure of his theology. Fallen man for Barth is firstly that man who comes to light clearly in differentiation to the real man Jesus. It is a man orientated such that selfishness and pride, which are his most potent procedures, result in the impossibility of a negation of the self which is, for Barth, required to love freely. This is so as Barth's understanding of love is based on a theocentric and Christocentric analysis of God's love manifest in the grace of election, and Christ's love for the Father manifest in the free subordination of the self to the will of God. As the self represents the biological and consequently epistemological situation within which perception and choice is always structured in accordance with the utilitarian drives of the self, a surrendering of this self is necessary for freedom. Such freedom is impossible for the self within the Barthian architectonic for such a subject, as perception and experience, knowledge of sin and its other, and his or her rational processes are all orientated by these selfish utilitarian functioning such that outside of this radical subjectivity fallen man cannot perceive. Such fallenness for Barth is a universal aspect of "the flesh" which is an orientation to selfishness and self-realisation away from and opposed to God. It is conducted in response to stimuli; self-orientating drives that act as "lordless entities" for their own ends. They selfishly orientate themselves and in so doing orientate the flesh, in, and as, which, they are. The subject is not in control of them for Barth, rather they are in

control of him. This concept of personhood is striking but it is in harmony with a notion of the self which has featured already in this dissertation in an illustration of Nietzsche's understanding of the nature and functioning of the will to power, both in terms of his understanding of the self, and, briefly, in chapter three on Milbank's misconstrual of the will to power. Here we saw Nietzsche's account claiming that "The assumption of one single subject is perhaps unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness in general" (WP: 490). A host of "lordless forces" exercising themselves toward their own ends and thereby orientating the action of the subject in and as whom they are. For Nietzsche also, the human is composed of a multiplicity of independently acting self-asserting forces, as with Barth in his account of sin, these forces assert themselves toward self-realisation. They assert themselves, and within such an ontology the Nietzschean self is orientated against the other as each moment, each encounter, is a moment of struggle. Nietzsche's subject like that of Barth's fallen man is a "host of partly contradictory, partly congruous stimuli" (A: 14), Barth's fallen man thinking that he is in control negates a proper acceptance of the reality of fallenness and the rebellion unleashed by it, as with Nietzsche's self who "though I certainly learn what I finally do, I do not learn what motive has proved victorious" (D: 129). While our activity in the world seems to stem from our free willing agency, it is directed by a multiplicity of forces, for Barth "undoubtedly the forces of his own possibilities and capacities" but which have "escaped from him" and are as such "entities with their own right and dignity". Barth's portrayal of the functioning of fallenness, as represented above, depicts what for Nietzsche is "A tremendous assembly of living beings, each one dependant and subjugated and yet in a certain sense in its turn commanding and acting by its own will"[415]. In both accounts the human condition consists of a mask of consciousness and freedom concealing a plurality of biological functions which direct human action in the world. For Nietzsche this activity and directedness is understood as will to power, for Barth it is simply human sinfulness, the purest representation of "fallenness". Barth's account maps a development similar to the Nietzschean one which begins in dialogue with Schopenhauer's *Wille zu Leben.* This will is precisely the will to be oneself against the other. It is an orientation to manifest the I as unified,

[415] *Nachlass* June July 1885, 37.

singular and in opposition to other competing forces. In much of Nietzsche's published works it is this concept of selfhood, willing to be a self over and against the other, which he celebrates as the *agon*. It is for Nietzsche, even for the early Nietzsche, natural, as for Barth "[man] at the very core of his being – the heart, as the Bible puts it – is not good but evil, not upright but corrupt, not humble but proud...and therefore hating his God and his neighbour". For Nietzsche and Barth however the self, as the free willing self that both, perhaps erroneously, associate with the Kantian tradition, is deconstructed. Both Nietzsche and Barth, in Nietzsche's notion of the self, orientated by the will to power, and in Barth's fallen man, reject a free willing self in favour of a conception of a self which masks a plurality of self realising drives that orchestrate human action.

Barth's account seeks to pay respect to the notion of the biological nature and therefore universality of sinfulness while differentiating this from an hereditary account, which for Barth is deterministic and fatalistic. The self for Barth is not determined by sin although sinfulness is the universal facticity of our biological determinism[416]. The 'self' in this sense, as will be explored further in the concluding section, is the 'real' human, in terms of the human represented in Christ, as opposed to the natural self orientated by a biology of sinfulness. As such a full account of this will be treated in an illustration of the functioning of the practical response to such sin in Barth's doctrine of reconciliation. The nature of the 'real human' will further illustrate the precise nature of this sinfulness which it engages, opposes and overcomes and will serve to propel it further in the direction of Nietzschean understandings of will to power.

To this point however I have illustrated the nature of fallenness for Barth as a universal fact of natural sinful selfhood. As such we have seen the root of the situation which Barth sees as the root of the impossibility of stable reference. The human determined by sin is structured by orientations driven to self realisation; as such this situation participates in the sealing of the subject from interaction with the world, such that its perceptions can reflect only this fallen self and not this reality. In that, for Barth, the manifestations of such orientations are pride and hubris, the human is, for Barth, propelled into an alienation from objects outside itself and forced to perceive, conceive and linguistify these objects always in terms of self-orientating drives.

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[416] Not determined by sin as God for Barth imminently and eternally calls humanity into freedom through participation in His Freedom offered ontically and noetically in the man Jesus.

Similarly Nietzsche's perspectivism issues from a subjugation of the will to know to the will to power. As Nietzsche's self is determined by the plurality of biological drives orientating its being and knowing, always in terms of that same subject who houses and exists as that plurality of drives, so too with Barth's fallen man, subject to orientating forces that drives the self who houses these forces, such that it cannot perceive outside the limiting categories of such forces. This enslavement to sin occludes a 'pure' relation between subject and object and thus the relation between signifier and signified. Barth's tracing of the void between signifier and its destined signified, to this fallenness, has illustrated the core interrelationship between Barth's theology of language and his anthropology, and as such the first goal in examining Barth's notion of sin has been realised. This semiotic nihilism, an aspect of Barth's anthropology running from Barth's ontology to his theology of language, has, in both instances been explicated with reference to Nietzschean thought which is never alien to but rather preserved in Barth's analysis. The difference, of course, is that this 'Nietzschean' subject, Barth's 'fallen man' does not exhaust Barth's concept of the self. God's election of man in the man Jesus serves as the ontic and noetic grounds for the transcending of this fallen self. Ontic in that it stems from God's initiative in binding Godself from all eternity with man in the man Jesus. As such by virtue of God's graceful initiative God refuses to tolerate man's fallenness and takes man's fallenness, as man's otherness to God, on Godself, collapsing the space as God's being is moved, bound to humanity in the man Jesus. Noetic in that this election of humanity in Jesus, called to be precisely God's Humanity, illustrates at once true God and true man. This identification of true humanity with the man Jesus reveals the nature of sinfulness which is opposed to the life of Christ. This salvific revelation opens up in the human person the capacity to respond in freedom to God's election, as the categories of sin and its other assume meaning from opposing or representing that revealed as God's will in the man Jesus. To respond in faith to God's graceful revelation is to actualise this freedom. A freedom which, for Barth, is not ours by right, but offered and given to us in God's election of humanity. Human freedom is, as such, a response made in freedom to participate in the freedom of God's love. Commensurately for Barth, not to respond is precisely not to respond in faith and therefore the choice between true humanity and its other is never realised by the person and as such a free choice cannot be made; there are no alternatives, as the other of sin, manifest and realised as and through the man Jesus is not known. In this light

the choice to refuse to respond in freedom to God is merely the assertion and actualisation of drives which orientate the self away from God and as such is both a choice which is not free and a choice not to participate in freedom. This understanding of election for Barth envisions a fallen and reconciled self existing within the self concomitantly, each being realised in the actions of the self. This is a crucial and original aspect of Barth's analysis issuing from his, in many ways unique, account of double predestination which also explicitly refuses the superimposition of a linear temporality on the condition of fallenness and its other. The manner of such actions are central to Barth's doctrine of reconciliation as it orientates itself toward an explicitly political theology. This understanding will maintain the concept of double predestination manifest here, and complete the portrayal of Barth's understanding of language in terms of this participation in the designatory orientation of fallen and true humanity. A participation which never establishes a safe ground of meaning or a stable or sanctified ontology but rather keeps such accounts of sign and self as have been associated with the Nietzschean tradition in play.

Chapter Seven

Reconciliation of self and sign in Barth's Christology

Barth's understanding of the practical implications of fallenness serves a dual function in this chapter. It articulates the ontological grounding for Barth's semiotics discussed in chapter 5 and illustrates the nature of Barth's anthropology involving at once a man enslaved to sin and a man elected by God and called to freedom and responsibility in this election. Barth proceeded, as we have seen, through rejecting Augustinian notions of fallenness which for Barth are marked by two key elements that he must reject. Firstly Augustine can, for Barth, engage in speculation which attempts to account for fallenness in terms of a moment which inaugurates a lapsarian state. Barth's method prohibits such an account and Barth at no stage offers an analysis of what was prior to or led to fallenness. The binary opposition between a pre-lapsarian and a post-lapsarian humanity never represents the framework within which Barth incorporates notions of fallenness. In keeping with this Barth never traces an hereditary account of sin passed on from generation to generation. Rather Barth conceives of fallenness through the hermeneutic of Christ. Christ reveals humanity as God intended and the other of this humanity maps the opposition between "intended" humanity and "fallen" humanity. Barth's depiction then centres on the antithesis between these two humanities, fallen and elected. The emphasis in Barth is on the latter. Freedom is the ontic and noetic watchword in election, as he proceeds to chart his understanding of fallenness, as both ontological, as in the basic separation of God from the world, and epistemological, as an enslavement to sin blindly pursued, as the nature of sin and its other, righteousness, is unknowable by virtue of what amounts to an "enslavement" to sinfulness. As freedom, ontological and epistemological is the content of election, the fallenness which election challenges is marked by an absence of freedom. Election overcomes this ontologically as God binds God's being to humanity in the man Jesus and as such overcomes the abyss separating God and man, freedom and enslavement. Epistemologically in that the content of this binding in the man Jesus reveals humanity as God intended, revealing righteousness and thereby sin, its other.

This ontic and noetic impact of election is the hallmark of Barth's framework within which he treats of fallenness. Fallenness, revealed as that other, manifested

through contrast with the election and establishment of real humanity in Christ, is marked by an enslavement. It is an enslavement to the "flesh" a series of self orientating drives which orientate the subject toward self orientation, which is understood as pride and selfishness. These characteristics which stem from and are the clearest explication of "the flesh", lead the subject to establish himself as the arbiter of right and wrong and lead to a self assertion which orientates the subject away from God and others. Man for Barth can do no other than this, such is his nature.

This, for Barth, the functioning of fallenness as enslavement to self orientation, also grounds his "perspectivist" semiotics outlined in the first section. This orientation seals the subject from the world and God such that words become, form and content, structured and interpreted by this subject in terms of his own ends. He cannot interpret outside of these ends and each interpretation is, as such, an interpretation for and in terms of the self. As such the subject for Barth remains sealed within his own criteria, orientated by fallenness such that each interpretation can only tell a fundamentally selfish story, orientated by selfish drives. This explains then why words for Barth do not transfer the meaning of each self to the other, as they are only understood in the terms of the hearing self who utilises such grammar in his own terms. Barth's analysis in these two key areas have been shown to parallel Nietzsche's and such parallels will be further explicated here, as the primary goal of this final chapter will be to trace the practical implications of Barth's aporetic ontology through his Christology of the royal man. For Barth this "Nietzschean" analysis of natural man holds, only if one can conceive of natural man outside of God's election of this man as His man. For Barth any analysis of humanity outside of its status as *elected* humanity, however, is an impermissible abstraction. This, as we have seen, is the precise content of his doctrine of double predestination. Fallenness and reconciliation cannot be conceived of as two distinct times in human history nor can they be attributed to some and not to others, dividing an elect and a reprobate. Rather human fallenness and its other concomitantly participate in the reality of each human self. As humanity, orientated to self away from God and others, and humanity, called always and at once into partnership with God and fellowship with others. To refuse this call is, for Barth, not a choice made in freedom, as freedom is only realised as the noetic framework established through the response in faith to Christ. It is rather the continuous realisation, in the sense of making real, of the fallenness orientating action in the world. The response of faith opens up the possibility of responding to God's election through seeing, manifesting

and realising the righteousness illustrated in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Neither action it seems for Barth exclusively determines the human, as the reality of election in terms of sanctification (CD: 3:2 p.187) is infinitely deferred. Rather both fallen and reconciled modes of being concomitantly realise the fallenness and election of man in every now. This further explains Barth's notion of language as potentially being restored to its referent without the stability and safety of meaning every being fully restored. Each signifier can always and at once participate in both meaning and non-meaning. This final section seeks to ground this aporetic semiotics and ontology in Barth's Christology of the royal man. The goal is to begin to illustrate the practical theological significance of Barth's theocentric anthropology and show again how such a theology confronts a Nietzschean grammar without either dismissing it or allowing it normative status such that it becomes the lexicon of theological expression.

To begin I will further explicate the Nietzschean ontology which I believe is never omitted from a properly aporetic account of sign and self such as the one Barth offers. Once again the portrait of Nietzschean will to power, previously explicated through Dawkins' understanding of the orientating functioning of DNA, will come into focus. Here however it will be paralleled with a Christological response to such an ontology and an illustration in terms of practical and political theology of the kind of effects associated with such an account of reconciliation. In so doing I hope to illustrate the manner in which a Christology such as Barth's can incorporate Nietzschean semiotics and ontology while also refusing their status as a full and comprehensive account of human self and sign.

7:1 Barth's fallen man in light of Nietzschean ontology

Barth conceives of the manifestation of 'fallen man' orientated by the flesh as an entity, not consigned to the past, but as an aspect and analysis of humanity which exists concomitantly with the calling of this humanity into partnership with God through God's electing grace. Viewed "by itself" Barth's fallen man is striking in its similarity to the Nietzschean subject. Both attempt to trace the orientation to power, for Barth the sin of selfishness and pride, to a core and universal functioning of human biology. To this end in an explication of the will to power I utilised the work of Dawkins, as Dawkins focuses on DNA not in terms of the precise manifestation of

each gene in the structuring of human selfhood but, by virtue of an intentional stance, to the utilitarian functioning which orientates the mechanics of each genetic switch. Nietzsche's ever increasing appropriation of the natural sciences after 1883 seeks not to trace each human attribute to its, in Nietzsche's terms, "organic" root, but to illustrate the universal principle of 'struggle' at work within the basic cellular structures of the human self. Nietzsche's goal is less to trace the biological ground for the construction of the human organism, as to portray each competing entity within the cell as a microcosm of the human self. Similarly Dawkins "Darwinian"[417] conception of life centres less on the explicit link between genes and the traits of the organism as on the workings of natural selection in the realisation of the genes, not only in terms of their being passed on but even in terms of their coming to gain prominence within the organism. The principle of struggle, as with Nietzsche, is the point being stressed[418].

For this reason it would be wrong to interpret Nietzsche's view such that "nothing is "given" as real except our world of desires and passions, that we can rise or sink to no other "reality" than the reality of our drives – for thinking is only the relationship of these drives to one another" (BGE: 36) as behaviourism. Behaviourism, certainly in its manifestation in the work of Skinner, sees the subject not best understood as being orientated by beliefs and desires but essentially as an organism determined by basic biological stimuli. Nietzsche sees the biology of the subject and the thoughts and beliefs of the subject as inextricably interwoven, although both are orientated by and

[417] Which is often at times alien to that of Darwin himself.

[418] In this sense the mapping of the human genetic code by the Human Genome Project would not be of significant interest to the Nietzsche we see engaging with natural science through his encounter with Roux (see Ch. 3). The focal point for the project is to trace human characteristics to the precise genetic orientation which gives rise to them, ideally identifying genes for, say, diseases which can then be countered. Nietzsche's engagement with the natural sciences has more in common with Dawkins in that it is focussed on the Darwinian emphases of competition and selection and the ramifications of these factors for understanding the orientating natural principles in the evolution of the human self. With Roux's embryology Nietzsche charts the development of struggle within the organism to character traits such as hair colour etc., his focus however is not in the explicit linking between internal struggle and the specific traits, but rather how this provides a microcosmic model for the process by which the individual comes to certain opinions and beliefs. For Nietzsche then there could never be a gene which determines certain beliefs. Nietzsche's interests lie in the fact that the principles which govern their interaction are the same principles that create the mental framework within we judge think and believe. As he writes in a key note as early as 1872 "Darwinism is right in pictorial thinking too the stronger image consumes the weaker one", the process by which the stronger image is in fact stronger, is determined by the principle of the will to power. It is stronger as it represents power and enhancement to the subject. It is chosen by the subject as it represents enhancement or power to them.

subordinate to the same principle, the will to power[419]. The human being develops thoughts and positions not in response to Skinnerarian 'stimuli' but in the context of a series of drives which orientate the subject towards conceiving of reality in the context of their functioning, but not as a direct unmediated consequence of their stimulus. Struggle and competition is the universal force and organic life, for Nietzsche, genetic functioning, for Dawkins, are merely specific cases of this propulsion. Like Barth's fallen man the anthropology of Nietzsche and Dawkins is marked by a core biological orientation which orientates the self into struggle and competition with others, this is their focus rather than the tracing of particular biological or genetic stimuli to its resulting action, trait or characteristic in the person. This is significant as the Nietzschean self holds beliefs and positions not in behavioural response to biological stimuli as the conditioned reflex of an automaton, but rather such drives are spawned by and filtered through the self realising principle of the will to power. They are interpreted, in light of the will to power which gave rise to them certainly, but in the Nietzschean subject there is a process of interpretation, in light of various cultural and environmental factors, which mediates between the biological orientations and the thoughts beliefs and desires of the subject[420].

It is this process which represents the framework which orientates the 'choices' and aesthetic orientations of the person for Nietzsche, orientating them in ways not dissimilar, as will become clear, from Barth's fallen man. It is a framework that, for Nietzsche is alien to the 'non-material', purely epistemological categories of the Kantian subject as it is grounded in the "organic" functioning of basic human biology. It is though, not limited to a 'materialism' in the sense of behaviourism. This placing of Nietzsche between the tradition of idealism, as he saw it, and behaviourism, is manifest in his attack on the aesthetics of Kant and to a lesser extent Schopenhauer (GM: "What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals"? 6,8) in response to both, in differing ways, maintaining a notion of the sublime. Kant, for holding to a belief in aesthetic appreciation of the sublime as being the response of positive aesthetic appreciation in

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[419] As such the content of the word 'power' in will to power is for Nietzsche entirely dependent upon the social matrix of the individual which infuses this orientation with semantic content. See Chapter 2, 86 ff.

[420] They are nevertheless for Nietzsche mediated in accordance with the principle of the will to power. Struggle for power, enhancement and replication characterise the internal struggle which leads to the formation of the mind. The struggle for power, enhancement and replication similarly characterise the choices made by this mind.

the subject "*without interest*"[421] (GM: "What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals"? 6), Schopenhauer, for tracing aesthetics boldly to core biological desires such as sexual urges. Both fail for Nietzsche to take account of the utilitarian structuring of the mind by the will to power which in and of itself seeks to interpret in light of self-propulsion, "What is good? – All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man" (A: 2). The will to power creates the mind for Nietzsche such that the best interests of power are served by the judging and feeling of the organism. Judgement and interpretation for Nietzsche, structure human activity in the world, although they are filtered however and determined through the functioning of the will to power.

This difficult aspect of Nietzschean thought to interpret is clearer through parallel with Dawkins' account of genetic functioning, as I highlighted in an earlier chapter. The human aesthetic response in its varied forms has parallels with the functioning of attraction in more basic organisms, in that it is subordinated to the will to enhancement. As such attraction in animal species is orientated by the desire for a good host for genetic strands, the most powerful and apt for survival among species have the widest range in choice of mate. Human aesthetics for Nietzsche is far more nuanced and sophisticated, yet subject ultimately to the same principles, for these are the orientating principles of all life. For Nietzsche "Nothing is so conditional, let us say circumscribed as our feeling for the beautiful" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man'19). The object judged, is not the orientating principle of aesthetic judgement, rather the subject who perceives is the element whose attributes connote value. The object for Nietzsche is entirely valueless "Of what can knowledge consist? - 'Interpretation' the introduction of meaning into things, not 'explanation'" (WP: 486). In relation to the act of judging, for Nietzsche the object judged is seen entirely in terms of the perceiving subject, and therefore judgement is ultimately the perceived value of the object in terms of the subjects own basic orientation. Within the framework of Nietzschean ontology this can only mean that the subject's interpretation and value judgements are entirely structured and determined by the subject's understanding of power and its other. If it represents power and the

[421] For Nietzsche this notion envisions an aesthetic response to an object of such status as that is manifests its beauty to the subject in a non-perspectival fashion. The subject's interpretation of such an object is conducted through a semantic functioning that transcends the core interests of the self and, by virtue of this, for Nietzsche the concept is to be rejected.

enhancement of the subject's power, in the conception of the perceiving subject[422], then its value is affirmed, desired or lauded. It reflects primarily on the subject and its own self-understanding. For Nietzsche "...species cannot do otherwise than affirm itself alone in this manner. Its deepest instincts, that of Self-preservation and self-aggrandisement is still visible in such sublimated forms" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 19). The identification of the beautiful, for Nietzsche, is a representation of that which is valued by the identifier[423], and this is always already an aspect of the will to power. In highlighting this aspect previously I associated Nietzschean aesthetics with a "meme" theory of mind wherein natural selection orientates the evolution of a human mind such that the mind evolves to bind what it considers "life enhancing" notions to itself. This can stem from the desire to "fit in" which leads to broadly uniform aesthetic valuations among communities, the valuation leading to the acceptance of the individual within the community[424]. The goal in the judgement is the preservation and enhancement of the DNA which orientates the interpretation in this manner. Again a limited behaviourist model of interpretation fails to do justice to Nietzsche's specific understanding. Similarly the urge to alienate oneself from the community is also a manifestation of the same principle, the experiential matrix of the subject has simply lead to a differing identification of "power". Whereas for animal species this identification of 'power' and therefore attraction is uniform, in humans it is varied. This concept is central to Nietzsche's writing on the phenomenon of asceticism, where the will to life precisely

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[422] Which may in fact be flawed. This is precisely the situation which marks for Nietzsche the life negating choices of asceticism. For Dawkins the phenomenon is also manifest in both humans and the animal world. Songbirds orientated by evolution to sing in order to attract a mate may do so to such an extent as to expire in the effort and so the struggle for DNA replication ultimately leads to these same genetic orientations not being passed on in such an instance. Humans, who memetically adopt the values of a society such that they, like Nietzsche's ascetic, in an effort to procure and manifest the power they are being orientated to seek by their DNA, chose a celibate lifestyle and so the blind functioning of genetic orientation leads to an evolutionary *cul-de-sac*.

[423] As such for Nietzsche in both the Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morality the line between the core aesthetic and ethical valuations is blurred. Judgements of the aesthetic value of an object is determined by precisely that which the subject values and thus for the Nietzsche of these two works the aesthetic judgements are commensurate with either strong morality, in that they are 'life-affirming', or decadence in that they manifest a *resentiment* against life.

[424] As Daniel Dennett writes of this principle "The haven all memes depend on reaching is the human mind, but a human mind is in itself an artefact created when memes restructure a human brain in order to make it a better habitat for Memes. The avenues for entry and departure are modified to suit local conditions, and strengthened by various artificial devices that enhance fidelity and prolixity of replication" see D. C. Dennett, Consciousness Explained, (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1991), 207. The mechanics through which Nietzschean will to know is structured through the orientating principles of the will to power maps the process through which natural selection structures a haven for memes. In both instances the struggle for power, genetic replication in Dawkins, structures the nature and functioning of human judgement.

leads to the rejection of life (GM: "What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals"? 6,8). Similarly in Dawkins the desire to pass on one's DNA orientates judgement, yet that which is valued as most "high" in certain communities is monastic asceticism and so in an effort to meet the criteria of the genetic orientation, the prospect of passing on the DNA is refused. For Dawkins this is simply a "viral meme"[425] whereby a "proper" genetic functioning reaches a genealogical "dead end". Similarly for Nietzsche Christianity and the asceticism it spawns is a disease, a curious twist in which the will to power takes up arms against itself.

A memetically orientated disposition to privilege the powerful or more specifically that which can enhance the individual's power, structures judgement in both Nietzsche and Dawkins. Nietzschean epistemology, his will to truth, is merely a manifestation of his ontology, his will to power. Perspectival semiotics is based in a fundamental ontology for Nietzsche in which all interpretation is structured by and in accordance with the goals of the self. So too for Barth's fallen man, whose fundamental orientations structure the act of judging such that a non-perspectival account of reality is impossible. While the accounts of Barth and Nietzsche draw upon radically divergent lexicons both account for perspectival epistemologies as being based upon a fundamental orientation of the flesh to self assertion such that the self is determined by its own criteria. In both self assertion and selfishness seals the perceiver off from others leading to a radically perspectivist epistemological framework. Barth, like Nietzsche, grounds a radically perspectival epistemology in terms of a core biological orientation, the unifying principle of such epistemology is that for both each value judgement while being determined by the self is structured by the desire for power and enhancement of this self. It is not simply perspectival but sealed within the context of each individual and orientated such that its procedure orientates the self into competition, struggle and confrontation with the other. It is this understanding which clothes the manner in which Barth's account of the impossibility of stable signification is traceable to his understanding of fallenness. I hope to illustrate the way, in practical terms, in which Barth's account of reconciliation abates this situation, firstly however I will show how this "Nietzschean" element in Barth's "fallen man" can help explicate, not simply his position in relation to a perspectival epistemology, but an ontology of violence. It is in relation to these two strands, noetic

[425] see Richard Dawkins, "Viruses of the mind", in *Dennett and his Critics*, ed. Bo Dahlbom. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989).

and ontic, that Barth's doctrine of election has been introduced and from witnessing the practical manifestations of fallenness in terms of these two areas I hope to illustrate the practical and political significance of Barth's account of reconciliation.

7:2 Violence in perspectival epistemology

The will to power for Nietzsche orientates all organic life, of which humanity is but one species. It is a principle which orientates humanity toward violence, which is the most normative consequence of competition and struggle. It is not limited to Barth's claim such that fallen man "is inclined "by nature" to hate God and his neighbour" (CD: 4:1 p.494), but such natural hatred is one of its most potent and probable outcomes. As Nietzsche writes "To refrain from mutual injury, mutual violence, mutual exploitation, to equate one's own will with that of another : this may in a certain rough sense become good manners between individuals if the conditions for it are present (namely, if their strength and value standards are in fact similar and they both belong to *one* body)" (BGE: 259), but we must be clear, that, for Nietzsche, to take this any further than a mannerism made possible by occasional equitable circumstances is to reveal it "as the will to the denial of life, as the principle of dissolution and decay" for "life itself is essentially appropriation, injury, overpowering of the strange and weaker, suppression, severity, imposition of one's own forms" this is "a consequence of the intrinsic will to power which is precisely the will to life" (BGE: 259). This is a theme which has been laced through the readings of Nietzsche throughout this thesis, that life both internal, within the organism, and external, between such organisms, is orientated by struggle for power, for Dawkins struggle for the replication of DNA. Such struggle between unequal forces is the norm and where this occurs an exchange involving the violence of differing strengths is manifest. This theme in Nietzsche is constantly returned to, that "in nature the rule is not the state of distress, it is superfluity, prodigality, even to the point of absurdity. The struggle for existence is only an exception, a temporary restriction of the will to life; the struggle, great and small, everywhere turns on ascendancy, on growth and extension in accordance with the will to power, which is precisely the will to life" (GS: 349). This element in Nietzsche reaches a crescendo in later texts but is maintained from his early engagement with the pre-Socratics such as Heraclitus. Each

organism is in an incessant state of becoming, in constant flux, each interaction of each organism with another involves an enhancement or a loss of power. Again Dawkins understanding of natural selection served to explicate Nietzschean notions of the orientating principle involving all in struggle "Why are forest trees so tall? Simply to overtop rival trees… God's utility function seldom turns out to be the greatest good for the greatest number. God's utility function betrays its origins in a uncoordinated scramble for selfish gain" (RE: p.121). If the human is orientated by genetic propulsions each seeking to create the environment in which they can best replicate themselves then such orientation involves each subject in direct competition with other selves. Neither share the terminology of Barth, speaking explicitly of being orientated 'by nature' 'to hate'. Both are seeking to portray their universal biological orientating principle, for Nietzsche the will to power, for Dawkins the functioning of DNA, as a meta-moral principle and so such a superimposition of an emotional state to the core functionings is never apposite. It remains however a fundamentally selfish orientation which causes the self to struggle with the other, often violently[426]. Indeed for Nietzsche such play of forces is to be affirmed, it is life, the vivid manifestation of will to power as it propels organisms toward self assertion this is manifest in terms of structuring both human cognitive states "what is happiness? - The feeling that power increases that a resistance is overcome"(A: 2), and basic human ontological functioning "I consider life itself instinct for growth, for continuance, for accumulation of forces, for power" (A: 6). Nietzschean attacks on Christianity are mainly focussed on what for Nietzsche is its "life negating" aspects, life meaning the unleashed play of forces characteristic of the will to power wherein "The weak and ill constituted shall perish" (A: 2). Against this is the *resentiment* characteristic of Christianity with its "pity creed ethics" which "on the whole thwarts the law of evolution, which is the law of selection. It preserves what is ripe for destruction, it defends life's disinherited and condemned…To say it again, this depressive and contagious instinct thwarts those instincts bent on preserving and enhancing the value

[426] 'Violence' here should not be interpreted as being limited to physical violence. For example, for Dawkins the cause and principle behind trees outgrowing other trees is precisely that of a lion whom after taking over a pride and mating with the lioness' (whom often come in season shortly after giving birth to a litter) seeks out and kills each one of the new born cubs whom the lioness will have hidden. It is simply competing with the previous head of the pride in the rage to pass on DNA, the rage for power. Trees in attaining sunlight inflict similar losses in evolutionary terms on its rivals, as do humans in much interaction. The genetic loss, the loss of power for Nietzsche, is the principle which is denoted by the term 'violence' as opposed to the purely physical act of violence associated with the lion and not the other organisms mentioned.

of life"(A: 7). Similarly for Dawkins "DNA is not floating free, it is locked up in living bodies and it has to make the most of the levers at its disposal" (RE: p.105). This making use of the levers at its disposal results in "an uncoordinated scramble for selfish gain", and as he notes "this is not a recipe for happiness…So long as DNA is passed on, it does not matter who or what gets hurt in the process" (RE: p.132)[427]. Any moral interpretation, superimposing an analysis of good or evil onto the workings of DNA is asinine for Dawkins[428]. For Nietzsche, Christianity represents the absolute other of such an active construction of 'Dionysian' life (EH: "Why I am Destiny, 9). His metaphors for it inevitably treat of it as a disease or sickness (HaH: 111). For Dawkins the nature and functioning of DNA is valueless and so he can never interpret it as good or life affirming as Nietzschean understandings of life as struggle would have it[429]. However though, Christianity represents a 'virus' in terms of its role in the corruption of evolving functioning intellects[430], a viral meme whose presence contaminates a properly functioning mind and distorts its fundamental conception of reality. In the remainder of this section I hope to illustrate that Barth also holds an antithesis, not altogether dissimilar from the one held by Nietzsche as "Dionysus versus the Crucified" (EH Why I am so clever, 9). An opposition at the core of Barth's anthropology between a fallen humanity orientated by the flesh such that being "altogether flesh" they find themselves "in the power of a radical evil" (CD: 4:1 p.496) such that they are "inclined "by nature" to hate God and his neighbour" (CD: 4:1 p.494) and the absolute other of this fallen humanity, humanity as revealed and intended in the man Jesus. Dawkins' Nietzschean interpretation of Christianity as a viral presence destabilising a power orientated analysis is one which is echoed in

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[427] It should be noted however that for Dawkins "We have the power to defy the selfish genes of our birth and, if necessary, the selfish memes of our indoctrination... We are built as gene machines and cultured as meme machines, but we have the power to turn against our creators. We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators." Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, (Oxford University Press, 1976), 215. Whereas for Nietzsche such a process would be "reactive" against the principles of life, for Dawkins this is not necessarily so, and at times the principles of struggle and violence endemic to the functioning of "the selfish gene" may be seen as distasteful by society, of course at other times and in other societies the grammar of evolutionary biology may not be seen as something to be opposed but rather invoked as justification for political and military activity and even the grounding of a social order. There is nothing in the work of Dawkins which could conceivably make any grounded argument for the former as opposed to the latter being "right", as any moral evaluation of the functioning of DNA, for Dawkins, functions like the moral evaluation of a rock.

[428] As with Nietzsche who rejects any moral critique of the manifestation of power over the other, claiming the strong man is no guiltier when wielding power than the eagle swooping down upon its prey. See GM 28-29, 38-71.

[429] "DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music" (RE: p.133)

[430] see the highly controversial, Richard Dawkins, "Viruses of the mind", in *Dennett and his Critics*, ed. Bo Dahlbom. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989).

terms of the noetic functioning of reconciliation within Barthian Christology of the royal man. Indeed Barth frames this antithesis in explicitly Nietzschean terms as "the transvaluation of all values" (CD: 4:2 p.169) the transvaluation is the content of the life and death of the man Jesus and as such is the ontic and noetic content of election. I will proceed to focus on Barth's analysis of the nature of this transvaluation through his Christology of the royal man. It will be seen to map Barth's understanding of election which flows explicitly from this Christology. In both the reality of fallenness is radically and definitively encountered by the reality of the cross as its absolute inversion both ontologically and epistemologically. Ontologically as Christ binds Godself, that which is most high, to that which is most low on the cross. The nature of humanity can no longer be thought of for Barth outside of this humanity realised in the man Jesus, a humanity with God. This reality for Barth challenges every conception of humanity and shadows any analysis of "fallen man" such as he provides or one such as I have associated with Nietzsche. Man cannot be thought of, for Barth, as Godless man. Epistemologically in that Jesus, in revealing true humanity, reveals precisely the inversion of fallenness, this inversion is knowable through Christ and a framework can begin to be established such the practical and for Barth political ramifications of Christology can structure action in the world. Free and responsible participation in reconciliation is possible through the knowledge of God's will revealed by God in the man Jesus. Furthermore the core human orientation to power, for Nietzsche, to selfishness, pride and hate for Barth, is inverted through the inversion of the categories of power and its other within the Christological lexicon. To seek and appreciate the powerful, the lordly, the most high as is the fundamental natural orientation within Nietzschean thought, is maintained within Barth's Christology, but the content of such terms as 'power' and 'Lordship' is inverted. Meaning no longer power in the Nietzschean sense but precisely its inverse as Christ binding Godself from all eternity to the poor and lowly, fuses the signifier power within the Christological lexicon to serving, suffering and, on the cross, shame. The trajectory of basic human longing is reversed within the mechanics of election. This inverting of the focus of orientation and with it judgement and aesthetics, is the noetic content of election. Reconciliation for Barth has content and form in direct opposition to the ontology manifest in both his 'fallen man' and Nietzschean differential ontology of violence. It is this ontology that Barth's Christology of the Royal Man overturns as a transvaluation of all values, functioning as a deconstruction of

fallenness, of the will to violence, which is manifest in man conceived of outside of his true status as the man elected by God in Jesus Christ. As such it will be manifest again the way in which Nietzschean concepts of self and sign are incorporated and overcome within a Barthian Christocentric anthropology.

7:3 The Ontological and Epistemological significance of "The Royal Man" within Barth's doctrine of Reconciliation

In the remainder of this chapter I will frame this opposition within Barth's Christological anthropology between this fallen ontology and its Christological other in terms of the ontic and noetic content of Barth's "royal man". The methodology which marks this Christological procedure in Barth is similar to that which marks his concept of election. As such, humanity, as Eberhard Jüngel notes, is the implicit subject of Barth's Christology[431]. This is the case as we cannot understand the human, for Barth, without understanding the human chosen and intended by God such that all humanity would be chosen and intended in him. This, as I have claimed, is the central tenet of Barth's doctrine of election and is the methodological presupposition which grounds his Christological anthropology. The history of this man Jesus is the history elected by God. All humanity is elected in this history by being bound by God to God. This history represents the history of a humanity bound to God and the history of a God who binds God's self to humanity. For Barth however this does not represent two histories or two focuses of enquiry but one, but in this one history there are two movements of being as the doctrine of election involves both an elected humanity and an electing God. This involves ontological movement, for Barth, precisely because the history of election involves the movement of God in binding God's self 'from all eternity' to history. This history then, represents a binding which makes it no longer permissible to speak of the being of God without speaking of the being of humanity, as God in and as the human Jesus reveals God's self as true God, a notion which for Barth manifests "the strange destiny which falls on God in His people" (CD: 4:2 p.167). Similarly for Barth because of this history the being of humanity is unknowable outside of the being of God. By virtue of this then Barth's enquiry into

[431] Eberhard Jüngel, *Karl Barth a Theological Legacy*, tr. Garrett E. Paul (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 128. The influence of Jüngel's emphases in interpreting Barth's Christocentric anthropology will be evident in the focus of my enquiry.

human anthropology takes the form of Christology. By virtue of this the story of the fallenness of humanity as portrayed in the previous sections can never, for Barth, have the final word as ontologically the 'empire of sin's' determinative hold over humanity (CD: 4:1 p.503) is over. For Barth man is not determined by the biological functionings which orientates his being because his being cannot be understood without reference to his being in Christ. This understanding is at the core of the ontology by which Barth refuses the ontology marked by the hegemony of sin previously discussed.

There is no doubt in Barth that not only is God's Being moved in the man Jesus but humanity, as a result of God's election, manifests a specific mode of being in the world by virtue of being called by God. God becomes "totally and unreservedly human" (CD: 4:2 p.27) in Christ by going out into the "far country" to bind Godself to humanity. This encounter involves a binding of Godself to human nature in the man Jesus and "this same 'human nature' in which he and we both share became and must become something different"[432]. Human nature oriented to hate is altered in the God-man in whom there took place "an exaltation of humanity in which we (the man Jesus and all humanity) both share" (CD: 4:2 p.27). This exaltation consists in being raised by God to Godself. For Barth this is the ontological ground of human dignity and because of this "human rights and human dignity are...not a chimera" (ChrL p.270). God's action in the history of the man Jesus as the history elected by God means that no longer can human being be thought of outside of this election. God's action in the man Jesus in entering into human history and manifesting and realising true humanity means for Barth that any interpretation of the being of humanity outside of God's eternal willing is bereft.

This shift in the being of humanity in the binding of humanity to God in the man Jesus does not, as Eberhard Jüngel points out, realise a "deification of humanity"[433]. The mode of human being realised in the history of the man Jesus is a mode of being which humanity can realise and participate in but one "which does not cease as such to be a becoming" (CD: 4:2 p.46). It has reality in the life of humanity with God and can only be understood from the perspective of humanity as distinctively God's humanity. Humanity also and at once is "of the lineage of Adam" (CD: 4:2 p.45) and

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[432] The translation here is Eberhard Jüngel's and differs from that of Church Dogmatics 4:2.

[433] Eberhard Jüngel, *Karl Barth A Theological Legacy*, tr. Garrett E. Paul (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986) 134. This is precisely the root of Barth's objection to Luther's concept of the *genus majestaticum*.

so no safe "higher anthropology" (CD: 4:2 p.82) can be envisioned which negates the concomitant disharmony between human nature and the nature of humanity manifest and realised in the history of the man Jesus in which we participate. This participation, for Barth, involves the human being in a state of becoming, it is a process wherein humanity has been, is being and will be reconciled to God.

This ontological movement in and of itself is the source of Barth's understanding of a humanity that refuses the anthropological model as manifest in his own "fallen man" or in Nietzschean man, orientated by the will to power. Barth in his anthropology cannot overlook the eternal willing of God in binding this humanity to Godself. The history of the man Jesus, properly understood is the history of all humanity as all humanity is represented in him. Everything must be seen in light of this for Barth as if dogmatics attempts to proceed without constant reference to this source "then it has assuredly succumbed to some alien sway and is already on the verge of losing its character as church dogmatics" (CD: 1:2 p.123). This anthropological grounding is the source of Barth's rejection of the determination by sin which characterises the perspectival epistemology and ontology of violence which issues from it. In that God elects humanity as His humanity and that God binds His being to the being of humanity in the man Jesus, the being of man in terms of such a "fallen" ontology can no longer be determinative. As such "the empire of sin" as the ontological separation of God and humanity cannot hold as this separation is overcome in the man Jesus. This does not illustrate the manner in which the functioning of "fallen man" is overcome by a new functioning marked by an altogether different mode of being in the world. But such a new functioning, in terms of Barth's account of it, can only be understood as being grounded in this ontological encounter in the man Jesus. It is the wellspring, for Barth, of all other theology and all other theology must be seen in its light. Because of this an alternative mode of being to that characteristic of Nietzschean anthropology could not be offered, for Barth, by a mere conceptual framework which groundlessly proceeds to offer a conceptual alternative to it based on whatever passing normative standards may prevail. Because such a "fallen" anthropology is grounded in an ontology, only a radically alternative ontology can give proper grounding to an anthropology which can refuse the functioning of perspectival epistemologies and the play of forces which ensues from them. For Barth the ontological significance of election renders this fallen ontology bereft or at best a hopelessly incomplete analysis of human being; the content of this

ontological significance is the import of the noetic content of election which flows from this ontological movement, the movement of God to man in the man Jesus. I will proceed in the final sections of this chapter to articulate the manner in which, in practical terms, the ontology realised in election refuses the fallenness commensurate with an ontology of violence. In doing so I will re-introduce and complete an account of Barth's understanding of the restoration of signification.

Ontology, Fallen and Reconciled

The relation of humanity to the real human Jesus is illustrated in a key section of Barth's Christology, termed 'The Royal Man' (CD: 4:2 p.154-264). This Christological title is deliberately provocative in that it functions in an aporetic manner representative of Barth's theology of language discussed earlier. As we have seen in this aporetic theology of language, the history of the royal man is a history which, in an exaltation indistinguishable from humiliation, Jesus manifests lordship in servitude. 'Royal' then functions in referring at once to traditional notions of royalty and also to the true royalty of Jesus manifest in his words and testified to in his lordship on the cross. The life of the royal man Jesus was the word of God (CD: 4:2 p.194), this word is understood by Barth in light of and only in light of the cross, a reality which is a manifestation of the reality of the power of God. This power however "is present to men in the form of weakness, His glory in that of lowliness" (CD: 4:2 p.167). As such it calls into question the traditional functioning of 'royalty'. Royalty within the Christological context is manifest through liaison with prostitutes, tax collectors, the sinners of society and culminates on the cross of the criminal. This hanging and broken God of the cross is the content of the signifiers "royal" and "Lordly" in terms of Barth's Christology.

In the dynamics of Barth's Christology, when the God who is Lord becomes a servant, the servant becomes Lord. This understanding flows from the doctrine of reconciliation which involves a movement of God's being to humanity and an elevating of the being of man into partnership with God and has profound significance for Barth's anthropology. As such the content of Jesus' life represents the hermeneutic which Barth seeks to employ as the norm and functioning of human ethics. Again the conflation of the signifiers power/weakness glory/lowliness sets about, for Barth, the overturning of a humanity orientated by its fallenness toward a privileging of that

which is normally represented by the signifiers 'power' and 'glory'. That these should represent the highest aims of the human self is common to both Barth's fallen man and the Nietzschean subject. It is in many ways the basis of a Nietzschean aesthetics outlined earlier; the subject orientated by its will to power interprets always in light of this will to power and judges accordingly. Such orientation toward the most high, however, when seen through the light of Christ manifests a precise redirection toward that which is lowly as the signifiers power and glory become challenged in their signification by the reality of the cross. This is not limited to economic poverty and servitude for Barth (CD: 4:2 p.160ff.) as Christ identifies himself as Lord with the shameful of society, prostitutes and tax collectors, overturning the accepted ordinances of society. As such the conflation of lordship with servitude and lack of wealth as is manifest, say, in Plato's philosopher ruler, is alien to the vehemence of this "transvaluation of all values" (CD: 4:2 p.169). The direction of human judgement toward the lordly and the high is challenged by the absolute conflation of Lordship and servitude manifest in the life and death of the man Jesus. By virtue of this, for Barth, no political or social system can ever be equitable with the noetic content of election (CD: 4:4 p.226ff), as it always serves to challenge each manifestation of state and social order, it resists stable identification.

This situation enhances the illustration of Barth's understanding of the functioning of language in the previous chapter. Within Barth's semiotics, the election of humanity in the man Jesus inaugurates the challenging of each signifier with the reality of the gospel, as such signifiers have their functioning negated and restored in the moment of this challenge. Negated in terms of the stable functioning in the contextual lexicon which is decisively challenged; restored precisely in this challenging as the content and truth of the gospel binds itself to the significatory functioning. Of course Barth's aporetic account of signification cannot encompass an ensuing safe identification of meaning within any interpretation. The former functioning borne of and mediated by the flesh orientated mode of being in the world remains in concomitant disharmony with the 'restored' understanding with which it remains in constant interplay. The royal man for Barth represents the Christological ground of meaningful signification, "the real man, to whom we have to keep if we do not want to speak meaninglessly and futilely but with final substance and content" (CD: 2:1 p.153). It is to this reality that we must keep both in understanding the reality of the human condition and manifesting this reality in action in the world. This

reality, identifiable in, as and by virtue of the royal man, is the other of reality under 'the flesh'. As Barth's theology of language located both meaning and non-meaning within each signifier, unchanged in form but altered in content, this opposite to 'life in the flesh' for Barth never leads to an ethereal dualism, or distinction between the being of humanity realisable in action in the world and the infinite or eschatological deferral of this being. Rather it is grounded in the human person, participating at once in the nihilism of fallenness and the reality of reconciliation.

The natural orientation to power, to hate, for Barth, orientates the subject toward an identification and appreciation of that commensurate with power and enhancement. Such a process is orientated in accordance with the same principles which structure the aesthetics of Nietzsche wherein we identify and privilege that which represents power or the possibility of enhancement. A meme theory of mind functions on the same understanding. The practical implications of this at the most basic level are manifest in the popular aesthetics of contemporary capitalist societies wherein "our deepest instinct, ...that of self-aggrandisement is visible" (TI: 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', 19). As such that denoted as lordly, high, sophisticated, valuable, is imbued with aesthetic value representing at once our core values and that which we seek to bind ourselves to, the result of a genetic orientation to attain the conditions conducive to self-replication. For Dawkins the same principles, in a much more nuanced form, that govern the simple principles of attraction in other animals, are present. The Christological hermeneutic of the royal man conflates and radically challenges such core orientations. To seek the highest leads in an altogether different direction as that which is most high is bound to and radically manifest in that which is most low. The memetic dynamics which govern the aesthetic appreciation of say, a Ferrari, or a rambling country mansion are radically subverted within the Christological hermeneutic. For Nietzsche such objects are void of value and aesthetic appreciation, there can be no value in such objects "in themselves", for Nietzsche such valuations must be subjected to a genealogy which seeks to uncover the core grounds for such valuations. The process by which they become imbued with value is easily accounted for within the aesthetic principles wherein the will to truth is a sub category of the will to power. Such aesthetic judgement and the dynamics which give rise to it are however inverted within the framework of the royal man.

I will proceed to illustrate an example of the form of Christology Barth pursues in CD: 4:2, as here the noetic grounds which orientate the subject in a radically different

fashion from that manifest in the will to power is presented. The Nietzschean opposition between Dionysian affirmation of life, as unleashed power and strength, with its concomitant violence which is endemic to it and the Christian inversion of this, is mapped to a striking extent in Barth's theology of the Royal man. Barth seeks to aporetically relate the reality of Christ to the facticity of human fallenness as the absolute inversion of this reality of fallenness. The natural man for Barth is represented in Adam in whom, that is as man[434], all are sinners, the real man however is for Barth manifest in Jesus in whom all are justified. The form of this opposition at once identifies sin, its other and the manner in which this sin is to be overcome, housed at once in Barth's Christocentric ontology. This ontology implies that if we are to understand what God intends for humanity in the history of his action in the man Jesus, then this history is the source and destination of ethics. From this history God's will can be known and through this knowledge, revealed by God in Christ, humanity has the freedom to choose this reality. Christ is both the form and content of this revelation for Barth. It is in this sense that Barth's Christology can not tolerate a "respectful isolation" (CD: 4:1 p.125) as in revealing Christ's self for Barth, Christ challenges the functioning of each signifier in our lexicon with the significance of his life, death and history. The core orientation of the will to power is subverted by the ontic and noetic content of Christ's life, death and resurrection, wherein a hermeneutical framework is established in the believer which is the precise antithesis of that of the will to power. This is an understanding shared by both Barth and Nietzsche. Barth's understanding cannot be properly explicated without reference to the form of anthropology which Nietzsche manifests as it represents an aspect of humanity which is engaged with and encountered by Christ not exclusively as a reality past but precisely as a reality present. Because it does not refuse its other, as both fallen sign and body are never negated in a properly aporetic Christology, such a Christology refuses isolation, functioning parasitically on the linguistic and ontological reality it denies as its concomitant other. This propulsion toward ethics means that this Christology is never removed from, for example, a political theology[435]. From focusing on the ramifications of Barth's Christology in terms

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[434]"The meaning of Adam is simply man, and as the bearer of this name which denotes the being and essence of all other men" (CD: 4:1, 507-508).

[435] The relationship of such a Christology to a political theology has been controversially stressed by Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt in *Theologie und Sozialismus. Der Beispiel Karl Barths*, (Mainz: Matthias-Grunewald Verlag, 1972), and "Socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth" in George

grounding a theology of praxis, a clear juxtaposition can be illustrated which echoes the juxtaposition manifest in Nietzsche "Dionysus versus the Crucified" (A: 9)

The political ramifications of Barth's Christological anthropology establishes his doctrine of reconciliation as the antithesis of his fallen man which is orientated by the same form of functioning, and with the same results, as Nietzsche's man orientated by the will to power. Barth consistently focuses on the fact that the history of Christ represents the history of lordship but as a lordship manifest in servitude, for Barth "it is a piece with this that – almost to the point of prejudice – He ignored all those who are high mighty and wealthy in the world in the favour of the weak and meek and lowly" (CD: 4:2 p.168). This affinity with those "in the shadows" for Barth is "no mere egalitarianism" (CD: 4:2 p.169). Rather the transvaluation of all values represents an active and effective juxtaposition in concomitant disharmony between the reality of fallen man and the reality of true humanity. It represents for Barth an active assertion of God's will, to be, not only the God of humanity, but the God bound from all eternity to the poor and suffering, those "bungled and botched" for Nietzsche who laments their being 'preserved by Christianity' despite their being "ripe for destruction" (A: 7). As Barth writes "The saying of Mary in the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:51ff) might well be set over the whole of this inversion: "He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty with their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich hath been sent away empty" (CD: 4:2 p.171). While this should not be understood as a Barthian orientation toward a theology of a preferential option exclusively for the poor by God[436] the dynamics of how this relates to such praxis reveals at once, Barth's method, the orientation of this method towards action, and the nature of sin as Barth understands it.

While God for Barth has no preferential choice for the economically lowly (CD: 4:2 p.172) over and against others, God's self-disclosure in Christ represents an

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Hunsinger, ed. *Karl Barth and Radical Politics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976) p. 46-76. Marquardt's contention that Barth's theological ontology is formed from a starting point of socialism such that praxis takes the place of ontology in Barth's thought (*Theologie und Sozialismus*, 321-326) is not shared in the treatment above. Undoubtedly Barth's Christology constitutes a political imperative, the difference however is that it is this Christology for Barth which informs and inspires praxis rather than the other way around. Marquardt's work however is highly significant in highlighting the political orientation of Barth's Christology.

[436] For such a view see Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt in *Theologie und Sozialismus. Der Beispiel Karl Barths*, (Mainz: Matthias-Grunewald Verlag, 1972), 159 where "'God' can be no longer thought apart from revolution".

ontological union between God's self and the poor. Jesus testifies to this union binding himself to the hungry, the imprisoned, the sick (Mt.25: 31-46), the parabolic format maintained in speaking of judgement through the gospel accounts is left behind as Jesus identifies himself in the first person with the lowly and shamed in Mt. 25:31-46; it is Jesus himself, as the poor, hungry and needy, who is hungry, thirsty and imprisoned. This union is examined by Barth as being manifest in word and deed (CD: 4:2 p167-170), word in that Jesus speaks, for example, of the temporal and eschatological transvaluation, as manifest in the Lukan account of the rich man and Lazarus (CD: 4:2 p.171). The particular imperative, for Barth, forces the ethical implication in his Christology that the lordship of the serving is not an ethereal or metaphorical proposition. As such for Barth, Christ provides the hermeneutic to which we must bind ourselves in our action in the world. The Lukan account of Lazarus markedly juxtaposes the temporal reality with the transvaluation of such standings in the eschatological kingdom. The parable maps the reversal in fortunes and status, precisely reversing the normative functioning of the signifier 'power' and its other. For Christ the last are first, as Lazarus is exalted in the kingdom while the rich man is humbled. This reversal is testified to throughout the gospels, in terms both of eschatological reversal, such as in the beatitudes, in terms of a radical inversion of the normative ordinances of society such as burying the dead and eating on the Sabbath, and in terms of the core reversal of basic normative relations, both familial and in terms of loving enemies. In all the juxtaposition is maintained such that the last are first and the first last manifesting a radical transvaluation of that which is representative of normal 'flesh based' value judgements. This maps the exaltation of humanity on the cross, which is precisely an exaltation indistinguishable from humiliation. This reversal is manifest through both the word and deed of the man Jesus. The word as the content of Jesus' ministry, for Barth juxtaposing two radically alternative modes of being. Deed in that God in Christ binds God's self to the poor and suffering from all eternity, binding and reversing that which is exalted and that which is humble. The former flows from and is dependant on the latter.

Again because of the content of Christ's ministry this for Barth is no metaphorical union, God reveals God's true self as poor, suffering and serving in the life of Jesus, conflating the concepts of power in a "Nietzschean" sense and the lordly and sovereign power of the God who loves in freedom. This union for Barth (CD: 4:2 p.170) means that in the poor and suffering Jesus reveals God's self. The implication

of this in terms of an ethics of active engagement is that when and because the God who is lord becomes a servant the servant becomes Lord. To serve and orientate one's focus to God is by virtue of God's self disclosure to orientate one's action and service in terms of the poor and suffering, realising the immediacy of Mt. 25: 31-46[437]. Because of this while God Godself does not have a preferential option for the poor in Barth, God's revelation of God's Self means that to serve God is to serve God where and in whom God reveals God's Self. An ethical imperative is given in the word and deed of Christ which the Christian for Barth must respond to. This response or lack of it, for Barth, is the realm of human agency and action. It is an imperative which stands as the exact antithesis of the ontology of power manifest in Nietzschean thought. The conflation of the lord and the servant in the life and death of the man Jesus, radically subverts the traditional understandings of lordship, power and their other within a Nietzschean conceptual framework. As Nietzsche well understood the Christian "transvaluation of all values" functions parasitically on the will to power. The corollary of this metaphor is that if it is to be the case then both elements must be present, the viral presence which is provided by the Christology of the royal man does not represent the final word on anthropology, as Barth in his semiotics, as we have seen, understood well. This ontology then is that which grounds Barth's theology of language, it issues from it as the fallenness represented in fallen humanity is that which, for Barth, alienates human language from its referent. Determined and sealed by the reality of 'the flesh' immediacy between subject and object is impossible. Furthermore the reconciliatory reality of God in Christ is that which represents the possibility of meaningful reference for Barth as God, in binding God's self to humanity, binds human signifiers to their transcendental signifieds imbuing words with Christological meaning. This process, as I have shown, by virtue of never identifying a safe locus of meaning propels such a Christology of language toward ethics. It does so not simply by establishing a Christological hermeneutic such that human agents can direct their action to God but moreover from residing always and at

[437] This aspect illustrates the inner fusion of ontological and epistemological elements within the Christological transvaluation. The noetic content of election is entirely dependant on its ontological grounding. The directedness of action toward the poor suffering and lowly, the political imperative of such Christology, only results from the acceptance of the fact the God who is Lord became a servant. Such an understanding means that not only can the conceptual framework not refuse its Nietzschean 'other' without an ontological basis, but the precise nature of this ontological basis is central. In this respect such a christlogically grounded praxis could not issue from an Arian Christology as the conflation of that which is precisely 'most high' with that which from the Nietzschean perspective, is most low, is never present.

once within both fallen sign and body, challenging each signified and deed with the reality of the cross.

Ontically then the life and act of the real man binds real humanity to God such that sinfulness is overcome. Noetically the revelation of God as true God in the man Jesus articulates the being of God for us such that we assume the power to bind ourselves to this truth. This power is for Barth the source of human freedom and agency. The reversal of the cross as it functions linguistically and ethically also completes our understanding of how sin functions for Barth. If we are to serve God for Barth we must know where God is to be found. God reveals God's Self in the man Jesus and the precise nature of this revelation reveals God's Self in servitude and suffering. To serve God then for Barth, as we have seen, is to orientate one's action toward the serving and suffering. As our natural (sinful) orientation propels the self toward power and lordship (CD: 4:1 p.452), the royal man for Barth imbues these signifiers with real meaning and to keep to this is precisely to orientate one's action toward power and lordship, properly understood, in light of the aporia of exaltation and humiliation represented by the cross. As such the hubris which is the most potent procedure and orientation of fallenness, is, in light of the cross, to be transvaluated as in the royal man the power and lordship of servitude is the revelation of God's true self. The 'upward' orientation which is the norm and functioning of sinfulness is for Barth transformed by being directed to that which is most low. The drive toward self-realisation which is the legacy of our fallen 'nature' is for Barth the drive toward lordship and power. The cross for Barth reveals the true nature of lordship and power as precisely the opposite of the functioning of the signifiers in their traditional usages. It thus frames the opposition between a fallen orientation to power and a reconciled orientation toward the power manifest in the man Jesus.

Through an understanding of the functioning of power in light of the cross, which is the ontological and ethical locus of reconciliation, the rejection of an ontology such as is found in Nietzsche, or indeed is illustrated by Barth in his account of "fallen man", is offered. It is a rejection wherein an ontology such as Nietzsche's is never dismissed as the process of its overcoming is ongoing. Rather the Nietzschean ontology is kept in play shadowing any identification of semiotic and ontological reality which refuses to be constantly re-interpreted anew. A proper understanding of the self cannot but incorporate a Nietzschean analysis, as this, for Barth, is the legacy of humanity as "the lineage of Adam" (CD: 4:2 p.45). But neither for Barth can

humanity be understood outside of God's eternal and grace filled decision to choose this humanity as His humanity. Any analysis of humanity which omits the specific status of humanity as elected by God omits not only a central aspect of humanity but also refuses to acknowledge the basis of human dignity. It is this understanding of the dignity of the lowly made possible by the self humbling of God that Barth adds to an analysis of humanity which manifests the central elements of Nietzschean thought.

Conclusion

Barth's doctrine of reconciliation then provides a Christological imperative to take seriously the ontology seen throughout the trajectory of Nietzschean thought. Within such a doctrine the nihilistic semiotics and ontology of violence endemic to Nietzschean accounts are manifest as only through an acknowledgement of the nature and functioning of fallenness can justification have any coherent import. As I have shown, to focus on this element of Christology is to see the propulsion in a Christology such as Barth's toward ethics. Its opposition between sin and salvation, between power[438] and its Christological antithesis, clarifies and orientates a doctrine of reconciliation toward praxis. The "transvaluation of all values" (CD: 4:2 p.169) Barth's Christological realism espouses is precisely a reversal of the orientations that, for Nietzsche, structure the human condition. Orientations to power such that each interpretation is structured for Nietzsche in accordance with the blind utilitarian goals of the organism leading to what he holds as "the falsification of the evidence of our senses" (TI: 'Reason in Philosophy', 2) synonymous with the functioning of language. Orientations to power such that "life itself" is nothing more than "instinct for growth, for continuance, for accumulation of forces, for power" (A: 6). These semiotic and ontological identifications are comprehensively rejected in a Christology such as Barth's in favour of the semiotic and ontological possibilities opened up in the act of God becoming human. These possibilities, however, never allow for a dismissal of the semiotic and ontological situation identified in Nietzsche, as the reality of human fallenness is never something that a Christology such as Barth's can take lightly. Rather it serves to frame and give practical cohesion to the noetic and ontic content of reconciliation. Furthermore it identifies what Nietzsche well understood,

[438] In the Nietzschean sense.

that Christianity is orientated against the form of life as will to power, rather, as Nietzsche writes, it "preserves what is ripe for destruction, it defends life's disinherited and condemned" (A: 7). By virtue of the precise identification of God with the "lowest" in society (Mt.25: 31-46) the Christian for Barth is orientated towards a serving of the poor which is an antithetical orientation to that which is natural for the human orientated by power, for Nietzsche, to "hate God and his neighbour" (CD: 4:1 p.494) for Barth. As such, such a Christology not only responds to the semiotic and ontological identifications of the Nietzschean tradition but also begins to structure a practical imperative to overcome the 'fallenness' of will to power as it manifests itself in social existence.

Such a practical orientation has the trajectory of Nietzschean thought in its service as by virtue of identifying the complementarity between a nihilistic semiotics, differential ontology and an account of fallenness manifest in Barth's doctrine of reconciliation, a detailed account of the social significance of nihilism and violence is constantly offered. In understanding this in terms of its fundamental interrelationship with an account of fallen humanity, a semiotic, ontological and social account of reconciliation can be structured in terms of the contemporary lexicon. Not based on the core persuasiveness of such accounts but precisely by virtue of its functioning always already in such 'dialectical' theological systems as is found in Barth's Christology. Drawing on the relationship between such a Christocentric anthropology and the thought of Nietzsche can serve rather to frame an account of fallenness which is more difficult in a theology where the justification of humanity in God's graceful election is already the source of this understanding of fallenness, and, as such, serves as the narration of a fallen ontology which precisely cannot be seen in its own terms, in isolation. It represents then a grammar which not only allows for a perspective on an aspect of humanity unidentifiable theologically outside of an account of God's graceful election[439], but also provides a lexicon from which such theology can draw in explicating an account of reconciliation utilising a semiotics and ontology which are manifest in explicitly non-theological circles. As such a Nietzschean perspectival semiotics and ontology of violence can be utilised in a Christological anthropology such as Barth's, which, as I have shown, it so closely parallels.

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[439] Which, as is often noted, obscures an isolated account of sin and fallenness in a theology such as Barth's.

It is also significant however that the focus entered into in the last three chapters serves to highlight elements within Barth's theology that are infrequently stressed. The aporia in Barth's epistemology and theology of language is never decided or taken out of play, as the stasis of safe meaning is never restored. As such it can never reside in a stable theological grammar and by virtue of this in a properly Barthian theology "Our viewing and conceiving of God and our speaking of him will never be a completed work showing definitive results: and therefore we can never view what we do as something which has already "succeeded". In this respect the hiddenness of God as the point of departure of this activity of ours defines at the outset the limit which will not be infringed even at the finishing point" (CD: 2:1, p.208). A theological enterprise which takes seriously both the reality of God knowable in His revelation and the hiddenness of God and the semiotic and epistemological crisis which emanates from it[440] both resists the stasis of localising meaning and is always forced to conceive of itself anew. As such, a focus on the semiotics and ontology central to both a Nietzschean perspective and manifest in Barth, provides a corrective element to any exclusivist readings of Barth. A focus on a Nietzschean semiotics and ontology in terms of its functioning within Barth's Christology both assists in providing a lexicon which aids the coherence of Barth's accounts within the contemporary climate and focuses attention to the self understanding of such a theology as a theology in process, aware of its construction within the radical semiotic instability proper to such endeavours.

The form of Nietzschean thought then, identified at the outset as alien to that of Christian theology, can be seen to find a voice in a Christological method such as the one outlined in the last three chapters. Moreover such a method allows for a theological engagement with Nietzschean themes which distinctly avoids the polar flaws identified with such projects as radical theology and radical orthodoxy, in that Nietzschean thought neither becomes normative such that the identity of the theology as Christian theology is surrendered, as in Thomas Altizer, nor does Nietzschean thought fail to find any voice in the resultant theology, being dismissed as 'one more mythos'[441] as is manifest in the radical orthodoxy of John Milbank. Here Nietzschean

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[440] "The true God, himself removed from all concretion, is the origin of the *crisis* of every concrete thing, the Judge, the negation of this world" *Epistle to the Romans*. Translated from the sixth edition by Edwyn C. Hoskyns. (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 82.

[441] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 278.

thought has been kept in play and utilised as a description of fallen humanity which is never omitted in a theology that seeks to take the semiotic and ontological functioning of fallenness seriously. Such thought though has also been rejected as a full understanding of the human, central to a doctrine of election, can never be attained outside of an analysis which takes into account God's graceful calling of humanity to be His humanity. As such, for Barth, an account of humanity which does not have as its source and norm the human Jesus can never represent a complete picture of humanity. Only through a focus on the one human whom God uniquely intended can the nature of humanity be, for Barth, properly understood. These two elements then structure a Christological anthropology such as Barth's, both the humanity orientated by its fallenness, and as such in need of reconciliation, and the humanity chosen and realised in Christ, precisely as God's elect humanity. A focus on both has practical coherence, as in attempting to identify the nature of both fallenness and reconciliation the real and practical nature of sin is articulated as well as the nature of reconciliation, shown in this chapter to orientate, through the noetic content of such an account, Christology toward an ethics of active engagement.

This dissertation has attempted to illustrate a way in which Nietzschean thought could be incorporated into a theology without either losing its identity as Christian theology, or retaining such identity while simply denying the validity of Nietzschean thought. While Nietzschean thought seems alien to that of Christian theology, I offered a reading of Barth's account of both fallenness and the reconciliation of self and sign which proposed that such thought is already to be found within an orthodox account such as Barth's. I have claimed that a radically perspectivist semiotics and an ontology of violence are manifest in a theology such a dialectical theology which keeps them in play while opposing them with the reconciliation of self and sign which is the ontic and noetic content of the doctrine of election. The concomitant disharmony between these two accounts maps the grammar of the salvific process, a process that can never be isolated in the past but is ongoing. Because it is ongoing a theology which strives to be faithful to it must attempt to represent this aporia between fallen and reconciled humanity and as such the semiotics and ontology endemic to the Nietzschean tradition can serve a significant theological function. As such the theology illustrated in the final three chapters can be seen to incorporate the semiotics and ontology identified in chapters 1 and 2 while avoiding the polar flaws featured in chapters 3 and 4. To accept such thought in isolation is to testify to an

ontology which fails to recognise humanity in terms of its status as the humanity elected by God in the man Jesus and is, as such, an impermissible abstraction. To allow it to function however within a Christological metaperspective is to give it a voice which can participate in a Christocentric theology such as is offered by Karl Barth.

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