

Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's "Genealogy."* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Hardback. £30.00

Book review by Paul Bishop, Glasgow

In the 1880s an elderly Englishwoman called Emily Fynn used to visit the small Swiss town of Sils-Maria, accompanied by her daughter. During these visits she enjoyed, as did other hotel-guests, the company of a retired German professor in his mid-forties. Together they attended the small musical entertainments that took place in the hotels, where pieces by, say, Grieg and sometimes Wagner were performed. On one occasion he complimented her daughter, also called Emily, on the quality of her paintings, her favorite subject being flowers. But what the young painter should really do, the professor advised, was to include something ugly, which would serve to intensify the beauty of the flowers; and the next day, as a joke, he brought her a small toad he had caught. How he seemed to enjoy this little prank! In return (and, in a way, as revenge) the mother and the daughter decided to send him a small gift—a jam-pot, from which, when he carefully opened it, there leapt a host of grasshoppers! And presumably everyone had a good laugh at this sight, too. On another occasion, a masked ball was held, at which the daughter delighted him by dressing up as a Russian court lady, and then a Russian peasant (—could it have been that her costumes reminded him of a certain Russian lady of his former acquaintance ...?). And a year or so later, the Englishwoman and her daughter met up with the professor in a hotel in Menaggio, where the tranquillity of Lake Como seemed to suit him, and they spent a pleasant afternoon on a hotel terrace, listening to his conversation.

Aside from all this laughter and enjoyment, however, there was one rather odd moment. When Emily Fynn, the mother, asked him about his works, the professor's eyes filled with tears, and he begged her, a committed Catholic, not to read the books he had written. For there was, he told her, "so much in them that was bound to hurt her feelings."¹ Whether Mrs Fynn ever disregarded the friendly professor's urgent advice,

¹ See the footnote on p. 7, which refers to Resa von Schirnhofer's account as recorded by Hans Lohberger, cited in Sander L. Gilman (ed.), *Conversations with Nietzsche: A Life in the Words of His Contemporaries*,

and read any of his works, is not recorded, but it is not hard to imagine how this “old, sickly, intelligent” woman might have responded to such passages as the following:

[The noble, the powerful] are not much better than uncaged beasts of prey toward the outside world [...] There they enjoy freedom from all social constraint [...] they step *back* into the innocence of the beast-of-prey conscience, as jubilant monsters, who perhaps walk away from a hideous succession of murder, arson, rape, torture with such high spirits and equanimity that it seems as if they have only played a student prank, convinced that for years to come the poets will again have something to sing and to praise. At the base of all these noble races one cannot fail to recognize the beast of prey, the splendid *blond beast* who roams about lusting after booty and victory; from time to time this hidden base needs to discharge itself, the animal must get out, must go back into the wilderness.²

Such a passage is, as the Germans say, “strong tobacco”—even for someone such as Thomas Mann, who regularly rolled himself large cigars of such smoky rhetoric. In front of this “clinical picture of infantile sadism,” Mann wrote, “our souls writhe in embarrassment,” even if he also acknowledged that, understood in its entirety, “the whole aesthetic phantasm of slavery, war, violence, glorious brutality whisks itself off to a realm of irresponsible play and scintillating irony.”³

In other words, one of the problems with Friedrich Nietzsche—for he, of course, is the professor in question—is his *style*. For his part, Christopher Janaway is utterly open about his own discomfort—and, by extension, ours—when reading such passages as the one quoted above. But he also aims to explain why Nietzsche should have chosen to write like this. “Nietzsche sets out to embarrass, amuse, tempt, shame, and revolt the reader,” he writes, in order “to test our attractions and aversions” (p. 91). “At least some of these uncomfortable passages are uncomfortable,” it is suggested, “because the writing is

tr. David J. Parent (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 195. For further details of Nietzsche’s friendship with Mrs and Miss Fynn, see Raymond J. Benders and Stephan Oettermann, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Chronik in Bildern und Texten* (Munich and Vienna: Hanser, 2000), pp. 612 *et passim*.

² *On the Genealogy of Morals*, I, §11; cited p. 95.

³ Thomas Mann, “Nietzsche’s Philosophy in the Light of Recent History” (1959); cited p. 95.

openly concerned with probing *the affects of the reader*,” and “to this end the literary violence is an effective means” (p. 96). In other words, “arousing the affects is central to Nietzsche’s aims as a writer, and [...] it deserves to be so because of the prominence of affects in his explanation of the genesis of our moral attitudes” (p. 209). Because, “in convincing us of cruelty’s role in the genesis of guilt and punishment,” Nietzsche “seduces us into acknowledging, beneath our more obvious feelings of anger and disgust, a streak of joyfulness in seeing and making suffer” (p. 209).

Thus Nietzsche’s style is intimately bound up with the goals of his philosophical project,⁴ which is, in the words of *Daybreak*, to teach us how to “think differently”—in order for us to be able to “feel differently” (*wir haben umzulernen,—um endlich, vielleicht sehr spät, noch mehr zu erreichen: umzufühlen*).⁵ Consequently, Nietzsche “stimulates dormant affects in order to educate us about their explanatory role and lead us to suspend, question, and eventually transform our ways of feeling and valuing” (p. 252). Nowhere is this strategy more powerfully in evidence, Janaway believes, than in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), a text in which “one encounters an incomparable voice that has permeated many of the cultural dialogues of our age, a mind of great depth and ingenuity, and a literary masterpiece whose power, subtlety, wit, and attention to psychological detail repay almost endless close reading” (p. 245). One of the fruits of Janaway’s own close reading is his new book, in which he explores the project of the *Genealogy* to “discover truths about why we hold our contemporary moral values and to persuade us that we could shift our allegiance to different, healthier values” (pp. vi-vii). For, in Nietzsche’s view, “diagnosis and cure” demand “not merely the construction of philosophical arguments, but a personal confrontation with conflicting and uncomfortable feelings that stem from our drives” (p. vii).

⁴ This link is made by Nietzsche himself in his discussion of *On the Genealogy of Morals* in *Ecce Homo*: “Every time a beginning that is *calculated* to mislead: cool, scientific [*wissenschaftlich*], even ironic, deliberately foregrounded, deliberately holding off. Gradually more unrest; sporadic lightning; very disagreeable truths are heard grumbling in the distance—until eventually a *tempo feroce* is attained in which everything rushes ahead in a tremendous tension. In the end, in the midst of perfectly gruesome detonations, a *new* truth becomes visible every time among thick clouds” (*Ecce Homo*, “On the Genealogy of Morals”; cited pp. 45, 92).

⁵ *Dawn*, §103; cf. pp. 14, 46, 121, 250.

At the same time the *Genealogy* engages, as Janaway shows, in a debate with Nietzsche's friend, the philosopher Paul Rée, the author of *The Origin of Moral Sensations* (1877). In 1877, Nietzsche had envisaged, together with Rée and Albert Brenner, forming "a kind of monastery for free spirits," a "school for educators," or an "ideal colony";⁶ an idea that was later also to occur to Lou von Salomé, who fantasized about how the "trinity" of herself, Nietzsche, and Rée, might form a similar kind of scholarly community in Paris⁷ —a project which, for well-known biographical reasons, never came about. Rather than simply assuming a debt on the part of the *Genealogy* to the *Origin of Moral Sensations*, Janaway notes Nietzsche's important divergences from Rée (p. 25, footnote), and he argues persuasively that the actual target of Nietzsche's moral critique (in sections 1 to 3 of the first treatise), ostensibly directed at the thinkers described (in the preface) as "these English psychologists," is, in fact, Rée.

Now Rée had been swift to dismiss, in the context of the Kantian distinction between "empirical" and "intelligible" character, the notion of "intelligible" freedom (pp. 109-110), and at another level the *Genealogy* is a debate with Schopenhauer. This "struggle" with Nietzsche's former philosophical master had already emerged in his critique of pity (*Mitleid*), expressed a passage in *Daybreak* where Nietzsche suggests that we "present ourselves as the more powerful and as a helper, if we are certain of applause, if we want to feel how fortunate we are in contrast, or hope that the sight will relieve our boredom."⁸ And in the third treatise the "persistent presence" of Schopenhauer as "a subtext for the later Nietzsche," as Janaway describes it, becomes evident in section 12, where the words "pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge" capture, in the form of direct verbal quotation, the essence of Schopenhauer's conception of aesthetic experience, in opposition to which stands, Janaway argues, Nietzsche's "perspectival

⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari, 8 vols (Munich; Berlin and New York: dtv; Walter de Gruyter, 1986), vol. 5, p. 216; cf. pp. 23-24.

⁷ Curt Paul Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Biographie*, 3 vols (Munich and Vienna: Carl Hanser, 1978), vol. 2, p. 125.

⁸ *Daybreak*, §133; cited p. 64.

‘knowing.’”⁹ (Schopenhauer’s account is examined by Janaway in some detail [pp. 193-98, 199-201].) Instead, section 6 disputes Kant’s exclusion of (sexual and all other) desire(s) from his notion of aesthetic judgment, taking its stand on Stendhal’s definition of beauty as *une promesse de bonheur* (p. 189). Yet the assumptions of Nietzsche’s argument in section 12 remain, Janaway suggests, “impeccably Schopenhauerian” (p. 200); and he goes so far as to say that “it would be wrong to speak of an outright rejection of Schopenhauer on Nietzsche’s part” (p. 201). Yet Nietzsche’s perspectivism affords him, not just (a) different view(s) of Schopenhauer, but altogether “*more eyes, different eyes*”¹⁰—not least, as Janaway emphasizes, because of Nietzsche’s incorporation into the knowledge-producing process of the *affects* (pp. 205-206).

In his preface to the *Genealogy* Nietzsche confers upon his readers an awesome status, inasmuch as their task is, according to Janaway, “one never before attempted or conceived,” and one he outlines as follows:

Huge personal effort is required. The future of humanity is at stake. Our trusted values must be unlearned, we will need to become emotionally involved with the subject matter to the extent of great elation and despair, and yet we start virtually in the dark, necessarily unknown to ourselves and guided only by a piece of writing that nobody yet knows how to read. (p. 33).

For we must, in Nietzsche’s words, stop “hypothesizing *into the blue*,” and instead undertake a “real *history of morality*.”¹¹ In the first treatise, this history involves an investigation of the celebrated contrast between the conceptual pairs, “good–bad,” “good–evil”; and, in the second, the advancement of the hypothesis that the “bad conscience” had been created by “the animal–human” in order “to cause him pain after the *more natural* outlet for this *desire to cause pain*” had been “blocked.”¹² Or, as

⁹ *Genealogy*, III, §12; cited p. 187.

¹⁰ *Genealogy*, III, §12; cited pp. 200, 203.

¹¹ *Genealogy*, “Preface,” §7; cited p. 43.

¹² *Genealogy*, II, §22; cited p. 43.

Nietzsche's account in *Ecce Homo* of the second treatise makes clear, conscience itself, far from being "the voice of God in Man,"¹³ is "the instinct of cruelty that turns back after it can no longer discharge itself externally."¹⁴ Against Ivan Soll's claim that Nietzsche contradicts the position of "psychological hedonism,"¹⁵ Janaway notes, rightly, Nietzsche's emphasis on "the pleasure involved in inflicting suffering and the transference of this pleasure to the case of self-inflicted suffering," observing that "the vocabulary of pleasure, joy, satisfaction, or feeling good in relation to cruelty is prevalent throughout the essay" (p. 128). Yet how does this model explain "guilt-consciousness"? Can we really take pleasure in our displeasure?¹⁶

In fact, Nietzsche offers us two different accounts. First, in terms of "a psychological process supposed to occur in each individual as a consequence of the adaptation of the instinctual nature of humans to a socialized environment," Nietzsche articulates the idea that, "because of a standing human tendency to gain pleasure from inflicting suffering and an enforced incapacity to inflict it outwardly, human beings who are subjected to the conditions of a settled society gain pleasure from inflicting suffering on themselves" (pp. 132, 131). Second, however, on the level of "a cultural regularization of exchange between individuals" (p. 132), he argues that "the feeling of guilt [...] had its origin [...] in the oldest and most primitive relationship among persons there is, in the

¹³ In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes: "In human beings, *creature* and *creator* are combined: in humans there is material, fragments, abundance, clay, dirt, nonsense, chaos; but in humans there is also creator, maker, hammer-hardness, spectator-divinity and seventh day:—do you understand this contrast?" (§225; cited pp. 68, 123, 261). And in *Daybreak*, he argues that the "the gods which are in us" are "our reason and our experience [*unserer Vernunft und unserer Erfahrung*]" (§103; cited p. 46).

¹⁴ *Ecce Homo*, "On the Genealogy of Morals"; cited p. 124.

¹⁵ Ivan Soll, "Nietzsche on Cruelty, Asceticism, and the Failure of Hedonism," in Richard Schacht (ed.), *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche's "On the Genealogy of Morals"* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1994), 168-92; cited p. 128.

¹⁶ According to the psychoanalyst Edmund Bergler (1899-1962), precisely this mechanism of "pleasure-in-displeasure"—which he dubbed "psychic masochism"—lies at the heart of neurosis, and explains much of our unhappiness; for further discussion, see *The Battle of the Conscience: A Psychiatric Study of the Inner-Working of the Conscience* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute of Medicine, 1948); and *The Superego: Unconscious Conscience—The Key to the Theory and Therapy of Neurosis* [1952] (Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 1989). Bergler's account reads like a baroque elaboration of the insights of the second treatise in Nietzsche's *Genealogy*.

relationship between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor.”¹⁷ Can these two explanations, “the internalization of instincts” and “the debtor–creditor relationship” (p. 133), be reconciled? For Janaway, they can, and he offers the following schematic reading:

The consciousness of guilt is a means of punishing oneself, and punishment originates in the debtor–creditor relationship; hence it makes sense for Nietzsche to say that consciousness of guilt originates in the debtor–creditor relationship. But self-punishment is also a form of self-cruelty or self-persecution, an outlet (or inlet) for the instinctive drive of living beings to dominate over something. Hence, if consciousness of guilt is a form of *self-punishment*, then Nietzsche can intelligibly claim both that it originates in internalization of the instincts and that it originates in the debtor–creditor relationship. (p. 134)

As Janaway teases out the implications of this logic, “we make suffering thus meaningful in order to perpetuate our primitive cruelty to ourselves, in order to satisfy our even more primitive need to inflict suffering, in order to continue to satisfy our natures by discharging power” (p. 137).

Although the actual term “will-to-power” is never used in the first treatise, occurs only three times in the second treatise, and the concept of “the strongest, most life-affirming drive” does not fully emerge until the third treatise (p. 142-43), the will-to-power informs the first and second treatises at a deep level. Nietzsche’s exploration of the relationship between the ascetic and the barbarian, for instance, turns into an argument which revolves around the will-to-power (p. 127). And the will-to-power turns out to be a multi-directional drive: it may be directed *inward* or *outward*, and in the latter case it may be *active* or *reactive* (p. 145). Hence Nietzsche’s ambivalence regarding the will-to-power, as it gives rise to asceticism, to the slave revolt in morality, to the bad conscience—and hence, in a sense, to aesthetics:

This artists’ cruelty, this pleasure in giving oneself—as heavy resisting suffering matter—a form, in burning into oneself a will, a critique, a contradiction, a contempt, a “no”; this uncanny and horrifying-pleasurable work of a soul compliant-conflicted with itself [*diese unheimliche und entsetzlich-lustvolle Arbeit einer mit sich selbst willig-zwiespältigen Seele*]

¹⁷ *Genealogy*, II, §8; cited p. 132.

[...] this entire *active* “bad conscience,” as the true womb of ideal and imaginative events, finally brought to light [...] a wealth of new disconcerting beauty and affirmation [*eine Fülle von neuer befremdlicher Schönheit und Bejahung*] and perhaps for the first time beauty *itself* ... [*vielleicht überhaupt erst die Schönheit ...*]¹⁸

Does Nietzsche’s position, that the world “seen from inside [...] determined and described with respect to its ‘intelligible character’ [...] would be just this ‘will to power’ and nothing else,”¹⁹ necessarily lead to a “global metaphysical volitionalism” (p. 153), to—horror of horrors!—a kind of vitalism? Some critics, such as Maudemarie Clark, strongly contest the idea that Nietzsche espouses any kind of “cosmological” view (p. 155),²⁰ and Janaway joins company with those who would dispute that the will-to-power, as a cosmological doctrine, parallels Schopenhauer’s argument for the metaphysical will (p. 156). In one sense, of course, much depends on whether, in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche alike, *the world* refers to “a real enduring essence [...] that lies beyond its representation in experience” (p. 153), or whether *the world* can be understood in a richer sense as the sum of all experiential possibilities, as the locus of our physiological and psychological *Dasein*, as the complex array of thought and felt relations that constitute the human environment (or, in phenomenological terms, the *Lebenswelt*)—and there is good reason to assume the latter is indeed the case. After all, as an avid reader of contemporary science, Nietzsche knew, for example, *Der Kampf der Theile im Organismus* (1881) by the embryologist Wilhelm Roux, *A Text Book of Physiology* (1877) by Michael Foster, and *Biologische Probleme* (1884) by the zoologist William Rolph (p. 159),²¹ and there are, as Janaway readily concedes, important areas of overlap between the Schopenhauerian notion of the will in nature and the *Bildungstrieb* of earlier

¹⁸ *Genealogy*, II, §18; cited p. 147.

¹⁹ *Beyond Good and Evil*, §36; cited pp. 153 and 154.

²⁰ See Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 212-218.

²¹ On this aspect of Nietzsche’s sources, see Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Romantic *Naturphilosophie*;²² as well as, one suspects, Spinoza's concept of *conatus* or the (related) Goethean notion of *nisus*.

In the preface Nietzsche makes the famous claim that the third treatise offers “an instructive example” of “the art of interpretation,” by providing an exegetical “commentary” on an “aphorism.” But which aphorism? Not, Janaway argues, the epigram that precedes the treatise—an excerpt from *Thus spake Zarathustra*—but rather section 1 itself, of which sections 2 to 28 form the commentary. (In the spirit of genealogy, Janaway points out that, in the original manuscript, section 2 formed the beginning of the treatise.)²³ These sections are said to make best sense as “an expansive illustration of the complex of thoughts that may lie behind, or encoded in, an aphorism,” if that aphorism is taken to be, in fact, section 1 (p. 175). What, then, of the quotation from *Zarathustra* (“Carefree, mocking, violent—thus wisdom wants *us*: she is a woman, she always loves only warriors”)²⁴ that stands at the head of the third treatise? Drawing on the work of Kelly Oliver,²⁵ Janaway suggests that the passage anticipates Nietzsche's answer to his question in section 23, “*where* is the opposing will in which an *opposing ideal* expresses itself?”²⁶ for “the ‘warrior,’ who does not appear in the essay itself, stands ready as the opponent—carefree, mocking, violent—to the ascetic, priestly men of learning, who are seen in contrast as meek, non-impulsive, and self-renouncing, burdened by their solemn pursuit of knowledge, and reverential towards truth” (p. 178). But Nietzsche has already suggested in section 10 that philosophers, by imitating the figures of “priest, magician, soothsayer [...] religious human generally,” had shown themselves to be “inactive, brooding”—and “unwarriorlike.”²⁷ So while the “wisdom-is-woman”

²² See Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*, pp. 8 and 55 (cited p. 160).

²³ For further discussion, see Maudemarie Clark, “From the Nietzsche Archive: Concerning the Aphorism Explicated in *Genealogy* III,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 35 (1997), 611-614; cited p. 171.

²⁴ *Zarathustra*, “On Reading and Writing”; cited p. 167.

²⁵ Kelly Oliver, “Nietzsche's Abjection,” in Peter Burgard (ed.), *Nietzsche and the Feminine* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), pp. 53-67; cited p. 178.

²⁶ *Genealogy*, III, §23; cited p. 178.

²⁷ *Genealogy*, III, §10; cited p. 192.

epigraph delivers “a set of resonances that are uniquely its own” (p. 179), Nietzsche’s illustration of the art of exegesis turns out, on Janaway’s account, to be disarmingly straightforward: “a clipped aphorism about the meanings of the ascetic ideal (some of its many manifestations and the psychology behind them) and the ultimate single meaning of its power is unfolded into a complex treatise about the many meanings of the ascetic ideal and the ultimate single meaning of its power” (p. 184). In contrast to the “will to extremity,” or even “will to perversity,” evinced by some recent commentators, according to whom Nietzsche testifies to “a supposed bottomless irony and arbitrariness in all writing and an inability of meanings ever to be stable or decidable,” stands Janaway’s own attempt “not to view [Nietzsche] through the filter of the late twentieth century’s more extreme efforts in theorizing” (p. 185).

The subject of the third treatise is the ascetic ideal, and Janaway links the *Nachlass* aphorism, “truth is ugly: *we possess art* lest we perish of the truth,”²⁸ with Nietzsche’s claim in section 25 that “art, in which precisely the *lie* hallows itself, in which the *will to deception* has good conscience on its side, is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science.”²⁹ As candidates to “counter the ascetic ideal” emerge, on Janaway’s account, two different goals—“self-affirmation and aesthetic self-satisfaction”; but they “tend in different directions” (p. 243). Inasmuch as “the ascetic ideal [...] has at its core the unconditional valuation of truthfulness, and to escape this valuation one would have to pursue the goal of creative *falsifying*—distortion, artifice, stylization—in regard to oneself,” then “aesthetic self-satisfaction looks to be a distinct goal from that of total self-affirmation” (p. 244). But is this really so? Janaway’s answer to this question is offered in the final chapter, which takes us to the heart of his examination of what, if anything, it means to go “beyond selflessness.”

According to Janaway, *self-affirmation* means “saying yes to one’s life in its entirety and in every detail,” whereas “aesthetic (or quasi-aesthetic) *self-satisfaction*” involves “the shaping of one’s character so that every part of it contributes to a

²⁸ *Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 13, 16[40], 500 = *The Will to Power*, §822; cited p. 233.

²⁹ *Genealogy*, III, §25; cited p. 233.

meaningful whole in the manner of a work of art” (p. 254). Nietzsche’s “affirmative ideal,” Janaway explains, is “to ‘own’ oneself without remainder: to be so intimately attached to everything about oneself—for no other reason than its simply being oneself—that no imagined possibilities are wished for in preference to the actuality” (p. 259)—or, in Zarathustra’s words, “one must learn to love oneself with a sound and healthy love, so that one may endure it with oneself and not go roaming about.”³⁰ With reference to Nietzsche’s dictum that “a human being should *attain* satisfaction with himself [*daß der Mensch seine Zufriedenheit mit sich erreiche*]*—*be it through this or that poetry or art,”³¹ Janaway observes that “Nietzsche’s conception of self-satisfaction” is essentially “dynamic,” inasmuch as it emphasizes “the *transition* from raw material to beautiful form, the *work* that this requires, the *achievement* of satisfaction by one’s own exertions” (p. 261).

Now the “classic text” for the conception of self-affirmation is the test proposed by the daimon in §341 of *The Gay Science*—but how exactly is this test supposed to work? And how can the apparent tension between self-affirmation (“the acceptance of the whole *truth* of one’s life—what is and what was”) and “the self-satisfaction to be attained through artistry,” which consists in “actively making one’s character pleasing by falsifying it,” be resolved? Janaway offers various solutions. Perhaps self-affirmation and aesthetic self-satisfaction do not exclude or oppose one another, instead one being encompassed in the other? (As a critique of Alexander Nehamas, however, who suggests that “the value of everything depends on its contribution to a whole of which it can be seen as a part,”³² Janaway points out that the presentation of the eternal return evokes “not so much a crafted unity where every part makes sense in the whole, but rather a joyful acceptance of a different sort of wholeness”; that eternal return and the related notion of *amor fati* “emphasize confrontation with something that we might dare to call a real self, the necessary aspect of what one is and was, the unchangeability of one’s life”;

³⁰ Zarathustra, “Of the Spirit of Gravity,” §2; cited p. 259.

³¹ *The Gay Science*, §290; cited p. 261.

³² Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), p. 142; cf. *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), chapters 5 and 6; cited p. 262.

and that, for Nietzsche, “what constitutes the individual is a composite of hierarchically related drives” [pp. 262-263].) Or perhaps “self-fashioning *presupposes* truthfulness about oneself” (p. 263)? Or perhaps the “tension” between “truthful affirmation and artistic style-giving” is “a strength of Nietzsche’s position” (p. 264)? Or perhaps, as Aaron Ridley has suggested, “every character needs sooner or later to deceive itself, and Nietzschean truthfulness can only ever be taken so far, no matter how much strength of spirit one has,” so that “style [...] is not so much a matter of opportunistic self-exculpation as the (honest) last resort of a soul that can face no more.”³³ Thus, for Janaway, there remains the possibility that “the wholeness of self-affirmation and the wholeness of self-styling are both manifestations of the same high ideal of intellectual conscience” (p. 264).

Janaway’s discussion of the mechanism of affirmation requires one to reconsider the nature of the self that is being affirmed. Part and parcel of his critique of the current morality of *Entselbstung* (or “selflessness”)³⁴ is the way Nietzsche advances the view of the self as something essentially *plural* (cf. pp. 4, 213)—or rather, the idea of the *unity-in-plurality* of the self (cf. p. 20). On this view of the self, “all human individuals have an unalterable core, constituted of certain organic states, which gives a unity to their character through the myriad acts and states of mind that are theirs” (p. 20). (Later on, this notion of a “changeless underlying self” was problematized by one of Nietzsche’s most attentive readers, Ludwig Klages, who examined the problem of the reality of the ego in *The Psychological Achievements of Nietzsche* [1926].)³⁵ The ideal of selfhood, thus conceived, is embodied in Nietzsche’s notion of the “sovereign individual,”³⁶ and Nietzsche’s “positive conception of free will,” Janaway explains, “involves acting fully within one’s character, knowing its limits and capabilities, and valuing oneself for what one is rather than for one’s conformity to an external standard or to what one ought to be”

³³ Aaron Ridley, *Nietzsche’s Conscience* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 140; cited p. 264.

³⁴ *Ecce Homo*, “Daybreak,” §2; cited p. 28.

³⁵ See Ludwig Klages, *Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches* (Leipzig: Barth, 1926), pp. 38-39 (on distinction between the ego and the vitality or “soul” of an individual being) and pp. 161-162 (on the problem of the reality of the ego).

(p. 118). In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche had argued, contra Kant, that “it is selfish to consider one’s own judgement a universal law”—and that such selfishness is, moreover, “blind, petty, and simple, because it shows that *you haven’t yet discovered yourself or created for yourself an ideal of your very own.*”³⁷

Instead, Nietzsche embraces the Pindaric imperative—“we, however, want to *become who we are*”—which means a commitment to becoming “human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves!”³⁸ And there is, as Janaway recognizes, a model for this Pindaric self: as an ideal of “giving style to one’s character,” Nietzsche suggests we turn to Goethe.³⁹ In *Twilight of the Idols*, Goethe is presented as “a spirit become free [*freigewordener*],” who “dares to allow himself the whole compass and wealth of naturalness, who is strong enough for this freedom,” and who “stands in the midst of the universe with a joyful and trusting fatalism.”⁴⁰ With reference to *Beyond Good and Evil*, §188, Janaway notes “how much the right kind of freedom stems from acknowledging and submitting to constraints” (p. 119)—or how, in the words of Goethe’s sonnet on “Nature and Art” (*Natur und Kunst*) (1800), “Constraint is where you show you are a master” (*In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister*).⁴¹ And Nietzsche’s examples of the things for which it is worth living on the earth—“virtue, art, music, dance, reason, intellect” (*Tugend, Kunst, Musik, Tanz, Vernunft, Geistigkeit*)⁴²—or, in other words, “something transfiguring, subtle, mad, and divine” (*irgend etwas Verklärendes, Raffiniertes, Tolles und Göttliches*)—⁴³ are embodied in “the admired wholeness” (p. 266) of someone like Goethe, in the embrace of

³⁶ *Genealogy*, II, §2-§3; cited p. 116.

³⁷ *The Gay Science*, §335; cited p. 122 (Janaway’s emphasis).

³⁸ *The Gay Science*, §335; cited p. 122.

³⁹ *The Gay Science*, §290; cited p. 260.

⁴⁰ *Twilight of the Idols*, “Expeditions of an Untimely Man,” §49; cited p. 118.

⁴¹ Goethe, *Selected Poems*, trans. John Whaley, introd. Matthew Bell (London: J.M. Dent, 1998), p. 83.

⁴² *Beyond Good and Evil*, §188; cited p. 266.

⁴³ *Beyond Good and Evil*, §188.

“reason, sensuality, feeling, will” (*Vernunft, Sinnlichkeit, Gefühl, Wille*).⁴⁴ Indeed, it could be argued that Nietzsche’s outlook is fundamentally Goethean when, in *The Gay Science*, he argues that “all great problems demand *great love*, and only strong, round, secure minds who have a firm grip on themselves are capable of that” (*die großen Probleme verlangen alle die große Liebe, und dieser sind nur die starken, runden, sicheren Geister fähig, die fest auf sich selber sitzen*).⁴⁵

In this respect Janaway’s argument could be taken further, and one longs for the contours of the self-beyond-selflessness to be delineated with greater precision. In *Donner la mort* (1999), Derrida modifies Leibniz by introducing the notion of *égodicée*, the prevailing conception of autobiography as self-justification, and it is beyond just such a conception that Nietzsche seeks to take us.⁴⁶ “Much shall be revealed,” Zarathustra tells us, at “the great noontide,” and “whoever proclaims the ego wholesome and holy, and selfishness blessed, verily, he will also tell what he knows, foretelling: ‘Verily, it is at hand, it is near, the great noontide!’”⁴⁷ But for those who cannot wait until the great noontide, this Nietzschean “selfishness” (*Selbstsucht*) is essentially a *bodily self*, the self of the *higher body* that unites “*body*” and “*soul*”:

And at that time it also happened—and verily, it happened for the first time—that [Zarathustra’s] word pronounced *selfishness* blessed, the wholesome, healthy selfishness that wells from a powerful soul—
—from a powerful soul to which belongs the high body, beautiful, triumphant, refreshing, around which everything becomes a mirror:
—the supple, persuasive body, the dancer whose parable and epitome is the self-enjoying soul [*die selbst-lustige Seele*]. The self-enjoyment of such bodies and souls [*Solcher Leiber und Seelen Selbst-Lust*] calls itself “virtue.”⁴⁸

⁴⁴ *Twilight of the Idols*, “Expeditions of an Untimely Man,” §49; cited pp. 266-67.

⁴⁵ *The Gay Science*, § 41; cited p. 41.

⁴⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Donner la mort* (Paris: Galilée, 1999), p. 90.

⁴⁷ *Zarathustra*, “Of the Three Evil Things,” §2, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1982), p. 303 [translation modified].

⁴⁸ *Zarathustra*, “On the Three Evils,” §2, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 302.

Such a self would be, in the sense that the French philosopher Michel Onfray uses the term, a hedonist self (and, by the same token, a tragic self), and Janaway's remark to the effect that Nietzschean philosophy is "not a matter of whether to imitate Nietzsche's style, a worthless dead-end which Nietzsche rightly discourages and makes virtually impossible" (p. 266), recalls Onfray's observation that "to be Nietzschean means taking Nietzsche as a starting-point for one's thought,—not thinking like Nietzsche."⁴⁹ Nor is it insignificant that, at the crucial moment in the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche's argument about morality turns into one about aesthetics. A recent French study-edition of the second treatise juxtaposes a discussion of the text with an analysis of Picasso's painting, *Bullfight: Death of the Torero* (1933),⁵⁰ but the *Genealogy* is not only about blood, guts, gore, power, pain, cruelty, and suffering on the grand scale of the bull-fight: it is also about why, in the midst of all beauty, there is a moment of negation; or, as Nietzsche tried to suggest to the daughter of the gentle Englishwoman whom he had met in Sils Maria, for every bunch of flowers, there will also be—a toad ...

⁴⁹ "Être nietzschéen, c'est penser à partir de Nietzsche—pas comme lui" (Michel Onfray, "À ceux qui ne veulent pas jouir: Comment peut-on ne pas être hédoniste?" in *L'Archipel des comètes: Journal hédoniste III* (Paris: Grasset, 2001), pp. 267-82 [p. 280]).

⁵⁰ Dorian Astor and Seloua Luste Boulbina (eds), *Friedrich Nietzsche: "La «faute», la «mauvaise conscience» et ce qui leur ressemble": Deuxième dissertation, extrait de "La Généalogie de la morale"* [folioplus: philosophie, 86] (Paris: Gallimard, 2006).