
THE WANDERER

I am a wanderer and mountain climber (he said to his heart). I do not like the plains, and it seems I cannot sit still for long.

And whatever may yet come to me as fate and experience -- a wandering and a mountain climbing will be in it: in the final analysis one experiences only oneself.¹

Never forget that Nietzsche was first a philologist, a man of words, root words manifesting differently in various Indo-european languages. Words actively transformed by the action of time. Thus, he knew time intimately by its traces. So that going to the roots of things and seeing beyond surface variation was part of his training from the first. He already had an arduous discipline in holding many conflicting pieces of evidence in a single gaze, attempting to make sense of them. The Dionysian ability to live with conflict and to affirm diversity arose out of a disciplined study. Hegel posited the possibility of such

1. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page 173

absolute or speculative reason, but it was Nietzsche who realized that possibility and demonstrated it in a practical way.

Turning in disgust from one of the biggest intellectual puzzles that ever confronted man, he realized that the Indo-europeans would never truly know their origins. Then he realized that they did not even know what was right in front of them. One of the reasons for this was the inability of modern thinkers to cope with diversity and accept disorder long enough to see the underlying patterns in things. This turning of attention from the irrevocably lost origin to the immediately present, recognizing that they were the same, was the motive power that lay behind Nietzsche's rethinking of the Western tradition.

If we are to follow him and attempt to understand the traces of his actions of historical criticism, we must also realize this intrinsic relation between the utterly lost origin and what is immediately, continuously and oppressively present. Also, we must be able to stand the apparent contradictions long enough to recognize the underlying coherence of the phenomena. Nietzsche was the first phenomenologist. For him the phenomena were words mutilated by time and comprehended in the context of the psychology of style. Our ability to have

many styles is synonymous with our own multifaceted existence that mirrors the multifaceted existence of words. Our dialogue with Nietzsche must be a confrontation of our myriad styles with his myriad of styles of speaking within which the awesome phenomenon of words becomes exposed.

My sickness also gave me the right to change all my habits completely. It permitted, it commanded me to forget; it bestowed on me the necessity of lying still, of leisure, of waiting and being patient. -- But that means, of thinking. -- My eyes alone put an end to all bookwormishness -- in brief, philology: I was delivered from the "book"; for years I did not read a thing -- the greatest benefit I ever conferred on myself. -- That nethermost self which had, as it were, been buried and grown silent under the continual pressure of having to listen to other selves (and that is after all what reading means) awakened slowly, shyly, dubiously -- but eventually it spoke again.²

Together let us begin a journey towards that place where the currents of thought run deep, following the footsteps of Zarathustra as he confronts the innermost wellsprings of thought. In Nietzsche's book a clear strand of thought is brought out into the open for the first time which is

2. Nietzsche TWILIGHT OF THE IDOLS p288

well worth full consideration in all of its aspects. We both (my fictional reader and I) can easily travel over the well known byways of analytical reason which systematizes everything. These lead out toward the less frequented country paths traveled by a few philosophers, such as Heidegger, which give access to forgotten trails. There we are finally forced to think for ourselves. Once the indication has been given, we must follow it ourselves and ultimately think our own thoughts and reflect on what is given to us as significant. Moving away from the epicenter of our total enslavement, we soon find ourselves in the trackless wilderness beyond the reach of our traditional trainers and handlers where we must be resourceful and create our own lines of investigation.

So this story may be said to begin at a point like that where THX1138 emerges for the first time from the CAVE to see the rising sun and hear the singing birds. In this George Lucas film³ the escape from Plato's simile of the cave is realized. However, there is always the fear that this final escape from the underworld is perhaps instead like that of the protagonist in Terry Gilliam's film BRAZIL⁴ where the escape is only illusory. We are driven to wonder which kind of ultimate escape may be realized. But this is probably not of as much concern to you as whether you can make good your own escape

3. Warner Brothers 1971

4. Embassy International Pictures 1985

from the clutches of the darkness endemic in our times. The Black Plague was a visible death which swept the European continent as well as the Muslim states of the Middle East and North Africa. Now an invisible plague has gripped all the known world, and there is, like then, no one who knows the cure. In the end you must judge the authenticity of the deprogramming proposed here and decide whether it is indeed a cure for the bleakest plague: High Tech Holocaust⁵. But in the meantime let us travel together for a short way in the footsteps of our teacher attempting to explore what was left unsaid in his teaching and hope for some glimpses of the deep meaning that sometimes unexpectedly bubble up from the bedrock of existence.

The time has passed when accidents could befall me; and what could still come to me that was not already my own.

It is returning, at last it is coming home to me -- my own Self and those parts of it that have been abroad and scattered among all things and accidents. "I know one thing more: I stand now before my last summit and before the deed that has been deferred the longest. Alas, I have to climb my most difficult path! Alas, I have started upon my loneliest wandering!"⁶

5. Also now a book by James Bellini Sierra Club Books 1989

6. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA p173

Nietzsche has expressed very well this spirit of exploration among the unknown reaches of what might ultimately be understood by us. But to follow his lead ourselves, we must drop many of our closest held preconceptions. Nietzsche has demonstrated in his work just how radical this transvaluation of our values needs to be. It is because bracketing our ordinary assumptions is so difficult that the wanderer usually ends up making his ultimate journey alone. That journey must go beyond bracketing to the transformation of our assumptions and preconceptions even to the transduction of our preontological understanding. This loneliness may force the wanderer to face himself at the brink of thought. This is, of course, the most difficult of all things to do. So easy it is to slip back from that brink and to pretend to turn thought back on itself. Yet, it is only by reflecting at the line where thought ceases, adhering to that line, and attempting to come to terms with oneself that it is possible to gain that magnificent hidden vista that lies deep within the self. Heidegger tells us that what is “most thought provoking” is that we are not yet thinking. Learning to think deeply, as deeply as is possible for us, is a difficult task -- a task made more difficult without a teacher. Yet where would we find a teacher? They must be extremely rare. They are those like Nietzsche and Heidegger for whom the search for a better and fuller understanding never ceases. It is those who risk being

very wrong in order to approach near and catch a glimpse of the terrible truth.

Heidegger points out that “thinking” is etymologically related to ‘thanking’. This may be his most profound insight.

‘What is called thinking?’ At the end we return to the question we asked at first when we found out what our word thinking originally means. ‘Thanc’ means memory, thinking that recalls, thanks.⁷

Thanking is thoughtfulness. Thought is a recollection in the face of what is “most thought provoking.” Zarathustra stands at the “crossroads of his life” before what is to him his most thought-provoking and profound thought. His scattered self is recollected as he approaches that summit. To each of us there is a certain zone that is for us the most thought-provoking matter in our lives. It lies beyond the arena of our superficial interests. It is not approached often nor lightly. That zone which is for us the most thought-provoking and profound invariably leads us to look deeply into ones self. We shy away from that so that the most thought-provoking always appears as what we have not yet realized, let alone thought out. We are gladly distracted by our myriads of interests. Yet suddenly it is clear that

7. Heidegger WHAT IS CALLED THINKING p244

thinking deeply and thanking with all your heart are one deed. It is truly the deed we defer the longest because it is difficult to express profound thanks. Recalling all the insights we have been given, it is hard to express our gratitude. This is especially true when we don't really know to whom our thanks should be directed.

As we attempt to follow the trail of Nietzsche's alter ego, consider the question, or zone, or matter that is most thought provoking and profound for you. You will probably say that what it is has been forgotten or never known. By focusing⁸ on the traces left as sensations, you will get an inkling of that matter which is most profound to you. That indication is enough to show the significance of Zarathustra's (Nietzsche's mask) approach toward that primal zone in himself.

This is psychoanalysis, not philosophy! That thought rings in the air waiting to be voiced. Yet Jung taught us that by seeking what is most individual and personal in us, our dreams, we suddenly discover in those dreams universal themes and images which betoken the universal mythical dramas of our ancestors. Approaching what is most thought provoking causes the images to coalesce around a primal scene⁹ that by transforming seeks resolution. Jung saw this as the alchemical process of

8. See FOCUSING by E.T. Gendlin (Bantam Books 1982)

9. See PRIMAL SCENES by Ned Lukacher (Cornell U.P. 1989)

making whole again the soul. It is only by pushing to the brink of the most thought-provoking and profound matter for each of us that we can approach that which is utterly profound for us all. So that in some sense the schizoanalysis¹⁰ of ourselves is the only real avenue toward philosophy. Yet these words, “psychoanalysis” and “philosophy” serve as hindrances on our path. They are overloaded with conflicting meanings and rendered useless by myriad interpretations. Even by reversing them and calling for a psychoanalysis of the western philosophical tradition (Heidegger calls its psychosis the continual forgetting of Being) or a philosophical analysis of the foundations of the self (Husserl named this phenomenology): we still miss the mark.

The history of Western philosophy is rejected. It is a continual dialectic of opinions. At least the Buddhists, unfortunately, misunderstood by Nietzsche and associated in his mind with the Christians, had to have had the requisite spiritual experiences before being allowed to speak. Western philosophy has no such quality control. The ignorant speaking to the ignorant about their ignorance. Yet it is clear that even illusion (maya) is an aspect of reality. Thus, within the cyclone of dialectically related positions and counter positions there is a certain position that has never been achieved. It is a

10. See ANTI-OEDIPUS Deleuze & Guattari (U. of Minnesota P. 1983)

position that has never been thought. It is a position that is indeed unthinkable. It is the position indicated by the oblique remarks, so like Zen Buddhist koans, of the gnostic Jesus:

1. Jesus says: "Let him who seeks, seek until he finds: when he finds he will be astonished; and when he is astonished he will wonder, and will reign over the universe!"

2. Jesus says: "If those who seek to attract you say to you: 'See, the Kingdom is in heaven!' then the birds of heaven will be there before you. If they say to you: 'It is in the sea!' then the fish will be there before you. But the kingdom is within you and it is outside of you!"

27. Jesus saw some children who were taking the breast: he said to his disciples: " These little ones who suck are like those who enter the Kingdom." They said to him: "If we are little, shall we enter the kingdom?" Jesus says to them: When you make the two <become> one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the upper like the lower! And if you make the male and the female one, so that the male is no longer male and the female is no longer female, and when you put eyes in the place of an eye, and a hand in the place of a hand, and a foot

in the place of a foot, and an image in the place of an image, then you will enter [the Kingdom!"]

110. Jesus says: "When you make the two one, you will become the sons of Man and if you say: 'Mountain, move!' it will move."

98. "He who seeks shall find, [and to whomever wishes to enter (?)] it will be opened."¹¹

Nietzsche, self-proclaimed anti-christ, sensed the indicated elusive position and pursued it. He caught glimpses of it which he called his ultimate thoughts. Yet he was not ignorant enough to think that these glimpses were that sublime standpoint itself. It is only because of Nietzsche's "proto-buddhism" that he could catch these glimpses. Proto-buddhism here means his understanding of the essence of Buddhism in spite of his misunderstanding of historical Buddhism as he saw it in the first mistranslations. Yet he had not had the spiritual training which would allow him to speak with authority. Thus, his statements were, for all their rhetorical certainty, merely indicators. Indications of signs that reached out from within the nihilistic worldview toward what the gnostic Jesus, the true prophet instead of the fictional prophet of doom, saw with certainty.

11. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS in J. Doresse THE SECRET BOOKS OF THE EGYPTIAN Gnostics

Nietzsche knew that finding the center of the Western scientific and philosophical tradition was his own search for himself. When his intellect was released by the miasma as it attacked his body, he would continue his search for that center. This zone could not be reached by psychology, or philology, or philosophy. The mythic center of himself at the center of the vortex of history: the *impossible moment*. This zone could only be reached by delivering himself to the training ground and letting go. He was overcome by his sickness before he realized how to pull off that vanishing act through which he would have become a Buddhist in truth.

Both psychoanalysis and philosophy seek closure. They seek to come to a final assessment of the self and its standing. Our goal is not a final assessment. Thus, the question of what is ultimately the most thought provoking for everyone is seen as an ideal and thus an illusion experienced by no one. As Nietzsche says, "In the final analysis one experiences only oneself." So the place of the thought-provoking matter is a variable (a cipher) to be filled in by each of us. What is of concern is how that crucial matter is approached and the seemingly universal responses elicited by it is our process of dealing with it in our own lives. How we deal with what is crucial in our lives is in some fundamental way how we know ourselves and ultimately all other selves. Our

response to the discoveries along the way is conditioned by our standing with respect to them. Who we think we are preconditions our response, and via our response our knowledge of ourselves changes. As knowledge of ourselves changes, our stance changes and we respond differently. Thus, closure for even an individual, except as an autopoietic unity, is not possible. Yet it is necessary to deal with a specific thought as an example. Each of our thoughts are concrete, and nothing manifests as generalities except the empty illusions of our ideals. Thus, we will deal with one man's masked encounter with the most thought provoking and the concreteness of his vision. In that we will see the glimpse of the center of the western tradition afforded one man who sought it relentlessly. But remember, we are continually one step ahead of ourselves.

Our true experiences are not garrulous. They could not communicate themselves if they wanted to: they lack words. We have already grown beyond whatever we have words for.¹²

Acknowledging this situation of non-closure, or rather the open ended horizon that exists in us, we are ready to consider the steepest path open to us among all possible ascents.

12. TWILIGHT OF THE IDOLS #26 p82 Nietzsche

How does one identify the steepest path?

To begin let us distinguish, as Heidegger taught us to do, what is merely interesting from the thought provoking. The interesting engages us momentarily until our attention is drawn to some other matter of interest. What is interesting is in dialectical opposition to the boring. These are nihilistic opposites which embody the entrapment of the inauthentic “Dasein” in the They (das Man).¹³ Idle talk and emotional rhetoric are the same in that they lead us on from one matter to the next without allowing us to confront authentically our situation. The thought-provoking on the other hand draws us out of our lostness in the They and forces us to think about our situation in an authentic manner. In our world there are many occasions which are inherently thought-provoking. We live in an age of impending disaster: ecological disaster, social disaster, economic disaster, technical disaster, nuclear disaster. So many deeply thought-provoking matters exist, and we stand before them not knowing what to do -- at a loss. Moving out of the nihilisticly opposite responses to these disasters to confront the situation they embody, authentically provokes deep thought and necessitates a fundamental reconsideration of our position with respect to these disasters. Complacency and concern for the deeds of

13. See BEING & TIME by M. Heidegger

others, abhorred or ignored, mask our lack of consideration for our own place as bystanders watching the scene of destruction and imminent disaster. The thought provoking forces us to consider our own place in the drama, our ecological self, and the meaning of our actions or lack of actions.¹⁴ When we are forced to consider our own position, it is then that we emerge from our lostness in the They and confront ourselves authentically. How are my actions or lack of actions contributing to the disaster? This question may only flash up before us as we are caught up in the action of the unfolding drama when the site of that unfolding envelopes us. When we are caught up in the disaster as perpetrators, victims, or rescuers, we are driven to action and momentarily sense the prior involvement when we were yet only bystanders.

But how do we distinguish the “most thought provoking”. The kinds of disasters are a myriad of sordid affairs which we first attempt to paper over and ignore. When we cannot ignore them, we are led into the arena of nihilistic futile discourse concerning what to do about a particular state of affairs. We are quickly drawn into action, which never turns out as intended, so that ultimately we see, to our horror, the disaster deepens. Our attempts to do good, in retrospect, are recognized as

14. See Bill Devall *SIMPLE IN MEANS, RICH IN ENDS: Practicing Deep Ecology* (Gibbs-Smith Publisher / Peregrine Smith Books: Salt Lake City, 1988)

an ignorant perpetration of greater corruption in the guise of setting things straight. This kind of situation from Greek times has been labeled tragic.

The most thought provoking is always where thought once provoked is stopped. For instance, in spite of all the disasters, we do not identify ourselves as the “destroyers”.

How I had thus found the concept of the "tragic" and at long last knowledge of the psychology of tragedy, I have explained most recently in *Twilight of the Idols*, p139;

"Saying Yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems; the will to life rejoicing over its own inexhaustibility even in the very sacrifice of its highest types -- that is what I call Dionysian, that is what I understood as the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet. Not in order to get rid of terror and pity, not in order to purge oneself of a dangerous affect by its vehement discharge -- Aristotle misunderstood in that way -- but in order to be oneself the eternal joy of becoming, beyond all terror and pity -- that joy which includes joy in destroying."

In this sense I have the right to understand myself as the first “tragic philosopher” -- that is, the most extreme opposite and antipodal of the pessimistic

philosopher. Before me this transposition of the Dionysian into a philosophical pathos did not exist: “tragic wisdom” was lacking; I have looked in vain for signs of it even among the “great” Greeks in philosophy, those of the two centuries before Socrates. I retained some doubt in the case of Heraclitus, in whose proximity I feel altogether warmer and better than anywhere else. The affirmation of passing away and destroying, which is a decisive feature of a Dionysian philosophy; saying Yes to opposition and war; “becoming,” along with the radical repudiation of the very concept of “being” -- all this is clearly more closely related to me than anything else thought to date. The doctrine of “eternal recurrence,” that is, the unconditional and infinitely repeated circular course of all things -- this doctrine of Zarathustra “might” in the end have been taught already by Heraclitus. At least the Stoa has traces of it, and the Stoics inherited almost all their principle notions from Heraclitus.¹⁵

Our thought invariably stops before it gets to this point. Our illusions about ourselves will not allow this fundamental identification. Yet, when thought is stopped, we enter the realm of reflection. True reflection, not the

15. Nietzsche ECCE HOMO p. 273

pseudo-reflection of the Western tradition when we think about thinking which is a kind of de-flection of thought that generates paradoxes. From thoughtfulness we turn to mindfulness, a kind of non-action different from any lack of action described best by the Taoist Lao Tzu. From all the myriad disasters we turn to consider disaster itself and realize that it is us who are the destroyers. We wreak the disaster. This realization gives us pause.

When thought pauses at that unthinkable notion, we witness a scene pregnant with meaning that is inexpressible. There is so much to say about this scene in which we recognize ourselves for the first time as the source of destruction. We realize that we are destroying ourselves. Extinction is written upon our species. We extinguish all others, and in that we become more and more hollow until it is ourselves that has been extinguished. This scene causes us to be speechless by its sheer profundity.

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralyzed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other
Kingdom Remember us -- if at all -- not as lost
Violent souls, but only as the hollow men
The stuffed men.¹⁶

In it we witness an aspect of ourselves that is a terrible truth. It is precisely that kind of truth which is most thought provoking. The most thought provoking is what we hide from ourselves by refusing to think about it. It is a glimpse of the Real, that we hide from ourselves, attempting to cling to our illusions about ourselves. When we witness inadvertently the glimpse of the Real we are taken aback. We retreat. Yet in the instant of the glimpse there is reflection where thought has stopped, confronted by a truth that strikes to the very heart of the matter. What is most thought provoking appears when provoked thought stops dead in its tracks. In that instant we are mindful of the portents without avoiding or twisting away from the recognition. We have not yet begun to retreat and cover over the profundity of what was seen concerning ourselves. The most thought provoking is what causes us to reflect on the things within ourselves and on the horizon.

For each of us what stops provoked thought may be different. The thought of “ourselves as destroyers” is but a relevant and poignant example. There is no way to

16. T. S. Eliot Collected Poems The Hollow Men.

legislate that this be what is most thought provoking for a given person. Yet this example of what might be most thought provoking if not reified and idealized into a universal experience where by it would lose all meaning and significance, will prove useful. This is because of the magnitude of the destruction and the horror of the disasters that are confronting us more and more with greater and greater intensity. The intensity of disasters, whether ecological, economic, social, or technological are thought provoking for many of us.¹⁷ In our attempt to understand what is happening globally we are drawn back into the history of the Western philosophical and scientific tradition. Within the example of what is thought provoking we might seek an exemplar of the illness within our tradition. For instance, we might choose one man, say Nietzsche, as representing the culmination of the symptoms of disease. Further we might select the fictional representation by Nietzsche, that pivotal and canonized thinker, as representing the distillation of the essence of our own deep sickness. By this series of signifiers we retreat from the fundamental realization of our own will to power that makes us destroyers. For the sake of argument let us begin with Zarathustra as Jung did before us.¹⁸ Let us ask whether it is possible to reconstruct the “primal scene,” as Freud called it, which precipitated the psychosis. For when we

17. See Jeremy Rifkin *DECLARATION OF A HERETIC* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1985)

18. *NIETZSCHE'S ZARATHUSTRA* by C.G. JUNG (Princeton U.P. 1988)

consider deeply, each of us must embody this strange sickness which is like a deep rooted miasma. This sickness has been named “technosis,” “nihilism,” “meaninglessness of existence,” “angst,” “nausea,” and “progress.” In Nietzsche's fall toward madness he may have produced an image of the primal scene that confronts each thinker driven to thought within the Western scientific and philosophical tradition. We need to frame our thoughts that are directed at what is most thought provoking by a clear image. Therefore, we borrow the image of Zarathustra the wanderer. Perhaps by this image we might be able to recollect our own deepest illness which is the sickness of our tradition that we embody so completely. It lives, continuously asserting itself deep within each of our cells, and overflows into each of our actions beyond our control and understanding.

But a man of my sort does not avoid such an hour.
The hour that says to him “only now do you tread
your path of greatness! Summit and abyss -- they
are united in one.”¹⁹

The primal scene is the lost origin which gathers up all the significance of the psychosis and informs each symptom with its power. The dreams and actions which exemplify the sickness all refer back directly to the

19. Nietzsche THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSA page 123

primal scene. The primal scene at once covers over and reflects what has been witnessed. Thus, the primal scene repeats what is most thought provoking and by its spell fixes us and prevents our thinking about the most thought provoking. It is a powerfully charged vision which we cannot recollect. Thus, we do not know what we have to thank for our predicament. We can never quite remember it. Yet we are always haunted by the primal scene. Nietzsche, on his way toward what he thought was his highest thought (i.e.. Eternal Recurrence of the Same), inadvertently leads us directly to a vision of the primal scene wherein the thought provoking stops at what is most thought provoking. The content of Nietzsche's thought is directly related to our example. The will to power of the destroyers is transformed into the realization of Eternal Recurrence. Yet deeper than this important content is the recognition of the universal process by which the content is transformed when the thought provoking is turned into the most thought provoking. We can all learn from this whether or not destruction is what provokes our own thought. In all witnessing there is a gathering in which all the scenes exemplify the process of transformation from provoked thought to witnessing.

Nietzsche leads us most directly to that vision of the primal scene for the Western tradition in which the summit, our highest most thought-provoking realization

is recognized to be one with the Abyss. Here in simple graphic terms is a crucial statement of our ultimate predicament. Whatever we take our ultimate and deepest thought to be, we discover almost simultaneously with its realization that it is groundless. Whatever we take as a foundation, we soon discover that it is not ultimate or sure and that it floats as if it were in the abyss of forgetfulness and oblivion. Ultimately we realize that our foundation is not just floating in the abyss like a raft, but is composed completely of the abyss itself. There is no handhold to save us from our fallenness. Whatever handhold we project vanishes as we lay hold of it. We suddenly realize that our ultimate thought which would give us a firm grip on what is real, is nothing other than another aspect of our fallenness in the abyss of oblivion. So our project of laying the foundation of the world must seek a deeper more ultimate thought again and again without end.

Our attempt to reach for the ultimate thought and to lay solid eternal foundations is an expression of our will to power. That will to wrest certainty from existence may be seen as the root of our destructive nature. We destroy in order to create according to our own will a new world. This is called creative nihilism -- the negation that precedes affirmation within the principle of hope. Ernst Bloch has shown us the foundations of this principle.²⁰

We see ourselves as creators, and our destructiveness is only a necessary by-product of that creative activity. The one who can control the destructive energy in himself in order to create appears as a superman. The superman uses the destructive nature of will to power in a positive way. He exhibits courage.

For courage is the best destroyer -- courage that attacks: for in every attack there is a triumphant shout.²¹

Nietzsche recognizes man's nature as destroyer and revels in it because he recognizes in destruction the possibility of creativity when the destructive energy is controlled. But controlled by who? Not by subjectivity. This is precisely the type of control which is not meant. Our daimon? Rollo May defines the Daimonic as “any natural function that has the power to take over the whole person.”

Sex and eros, anger and rage, and the craving for power are examples. The daimonic can be either creative or destructive, and is normally both. When its power goes awry, and one element usurps control over the total personality, we have “daimon possession,” the traditional name through history for psychosis. The daimonic is

20. See THE PRINCIPLE OF HOPE

21. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page 177

obviously not an entity but refers to a fundamental, archetypal function of human existence -- and existential reality in modern man and, so far as we know, in all men.

The daimonic is the urge in every being to affirm itself, assert itself, perpetuate and increase itself. The daimonic becomes evil when it usurps the total self without regard to the integration of that self, or to the unique forms and desires of others and their need for integration. It then appears as excessive aggression, hostility, cruelty -- the things about ourselves which horrify us most, and which we repress whenever we can or more likely project on others. But these are the reverse side of the same assertion which empowers our creativity. All life is a flux between these two aspects of the daimonic. We can repress the daimonic, but we cannot avoid the toll of apathy and the tendency toward later explosion which such repression brings in its wake.

The concept of "daimon" -- the origin of our modern concept -- included the creativity of the poet and the artist as well as that of the ethical and religious leader, and is the contagious power which the lover has. Plato argued that ecstasy, a "divine madness," seizes the creative person.

This is an early form of the puzzling and never solved problem of the genius and madman.²²

For Nietzsche, his ultimate thought was the bridge which crossed from his period of highest genius into madness. He crossed from creativity and productivity to total apathy and insanity. His daimon deserted him. It is the daimon that stands in control of the destructiveness that appears in the Aryan race as it has appeared in many other races of men. Yet the destructiveness of the Aryans seems to know no bounds and thus is a cause for deep universal concern. What is it that our daimon drives us on to do? For an Aryan who accepts his own inherent destructiveness written in the history of the Indo-european peoples will to dominate and destroy, this is the most thought-provoking question. Utter destruction of the earth hangs in the balance. So the example of the most thought-provoking matter given earlier was for Nietzsche the ultimate thought. By relentlessly pursuing this thought, Nietzsche sees it transform into the vision of Eternal Recurrence.

You are treading your path of greatness: how it must call up your courage that there is no longer a path behind you!

You are treading your path of greatness: no one shall steal after you here! Your foot itself has

22. Rollo May LOVE AND WILL p121 -122

extinguished the path behind you, and above the path stands written Impossibility.

And when all footholds disappear, you must know how to climb upon your own head. How could you climb upward otherwise.

Upon your own head and beyond your own heart. Now the gentlest part of you must become hardest.²³

The primal scene for the Western tradition of philosophy and science is the confrontation of its own groundlessness. Within the western tradition we attempt to assure ourselves by calling the path we tread “progress.” Yet when we look back at history, we see the tracks evaporating behind us almost as they are created. Our creativity by which we justify the destruction we leave in a trail behind us does not endure. As pathfinders we are impossible to follow. There is no solid footing for us to base the formal and structural systemizations of the world. When we are honest, it is clear that the only true ground is groundlessness. We find ourselves as already “fallen” into the world, and there are no firm handholds or foot grips to slow our descent toward oblivion. In fact, our very tread is upon the face of oblivion. We are enveloped by oblivion and are lost, lost, completely lost.

23. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA p174

With no terrain to support ascent we can only climb further by climbing upon ourselves. Henry calls this vision of the self-grounding of transcendence, “ontological monism.”²⁴ This is the image of thought thinking itself. The summit and the abyss of oblivion are one, and we swim in oblivion serving as our own foundation. It is only our will to power that can sustain our continuing to climb. Ultimately we must tread upon ourselves. When all else is extinguished, we turn upon ourselves our destructiveness. We will assert that overcoming until we reach the limit marked *impossible*. It is only by carrying our destructiveness to the ultimate limit that we encounter the absolute limits by which the truth may be finally known. At that limit thought stops.

He who has always been very indulgent with himself sickens at last through his own indulgence. All praise to what makes hard! I do not praise the land where butter and honey flow!

In order to see much one must learn to look away from oneself -- every mountain climber needs this hardness.²⁵

Thought reaches its ultimate limit and is stopped. What Zarathustra witnesses is his total inundation by oblivion. Pushing higher the depth of that overwhelming lostness is

24. See THE ESSENCE OF MANIFESTATION by Michael Henry

25. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page 174

greater until the limit of Impossibility is reached where thought stops and reflection on the oblivion begins. Oblivion, the true child of man's destruction, is transformed at that moment into the vision of Eternal Recurrence of the Same. This does not only mean the circularity of time, but means, as well, that in every moment the same event is occurring. For us, as Aryans, that is our destructiveness, cum creativity, and everything else participates in that event. Even the oblivion is part of the event by which "all things are bound fast together." The oblivion is merely the background of the gestalt for which everything recollected is a figure. In the dynamism of the gestalt the same thing is continually occurring. There is a continuous indication in order to point ever again at the Same. Within showing and hiding of the gestalt of oblivion and recollection there is the witnessing of that continuous indication of the Real. Our destructiveness when merged with oblivion becomes just another momentary part of the gestalt indicating the Eternal through the recurrence of the Same truth. Looking away from ourselves we see the whole process of which our destructive nature is just a small part.

We cannot reach the ultimate limits of ourselves unless we strain to surpass all barriers in search for the grounds which are certain. Nietzsche admitted to himself the destructiveness within him and within his people, the

Indo-european (Aryan) races. He named that destructive energy will-to-power and reveled in it.

You want a formula for such a destiny “become man?” That is to be found in my Zarathustra:

"And whoever wants to be a creator in good and evil, must first be an annihilator and break values. Thus the highest evil belongs to the greatest goodness: but this is -- being creative."

I am by far the most terrible human being that has existed so far; this does not preclude the possibility that I shall be the most beneficial. I know the pleasure in destroying to a degree that accords with my powers to destroy -- in both respects I obey my Dionysian nature which does not know how to separate doing No from saying Yes. I am the first immoralist: that makes me the annihilator ‘par excellence’.²⁶

He realized that by channeling the destructiveness, creativity was possible. From great darkness comes flashes of brilliant flaming light. By stripping himself of his illusions about himself and his race, Nietzsche took that thought to the point where his thought stopped and he saw the vision of eternal recurrence. Each moment adrift in oblivion we restart the project of laying the

26. Nietzsche ECCE HOMO page 372

foundations of our world. Husserl gives an excellent example of this process of continually beginning again in his oeuvres. Husserl attempts to relay the foundations of science again and again. Each time there is deeper insight into the limitations that make the project ultimately fruitless. Science itself, ignoring the crisis²⁷ of its lack of solid foundations, strives after a theory to unite all the known forces into a single scheme.

This grand unified theory of all fundamental physics requires greater and greater velocities in accelerators, leading back closer and closer to the ultimate origin of the universe in a ball of fire. By looking away from oneself into the abyss and straining at the bonds of our finitude, we see clearly the nature of ourselves. We appear as fallen in the midst of the void with everything vanishing and evaporating around us, even ourselves. This is the primal scene which each thinker must ultimately confront as he attempts to think what is most thought provoking. The ultimate thought, no matter what its content, is the same as the abyss that swallows us up. In the case of Nietzsche, what was thought provoking was our destructive nature (as essential will to power), and his thought stopped with the vision of eternal recurrence of the same, the threshold of Buddhist thought. The destructiveness is the same as the oblivion

27. See KRISIS by E. Husserl

and constantly indicates the oblivion. Creativity and destructiveness are nihilistic opposites, dynamically indicating our being overwhelmed by oblivion. The advent of the overwhelming of oblivion is the same event eternally recurring in a new way in each moment.

Looking away from our futile attempts to recollect ourselves in the onslaught of oblivion, from our thrashing for a foothold or handhold to slow our falling, we see that the advent of oblivion is eternally recurring and is always the same in each *moment*. Glimpsing the larger picture we see that our destructiveness flows from our inability to accept oblivion and to realize that we are oblivion.

But he who, seeking enlightenment, is over eager with his eyes, how could he see more of a thing than its foreground.

You, however, O Zarathustra, have wanted to behold the (reason) ground of things and their background: so you must climb above yourself -- up and beyond, until you have even stars under you!

Yes to look down upon myself and even upon my stars: that alone would I call my summit, that has remained for me my ultimate summit.²⁸

28. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page ???

The primal scene of all thought is the ground of groundlessness. We see the face of the abyss beneath all our projects. We seek to hide from that vision and constantly relay our foundations or ignore them altogether. By seeking to hide from the face of the abyss we become one with oblivion. A few are provoked to thought and thus momentarily escape this double oblivion of inauthentic ignorance concerning our primal situation of fallenness. But when the most thought-provoking matter appears, thought is stopped in its tracks. There it witnesses the oblivion itself in the guise of our ultimate thought. The primal scene for all thought is condensed into an image for the particular thinker as the distillation of his concerns. This witnessing of the particularized image of the primal scene becomes the core of the teaching of that thinker. For Nietzsche, this core was the doctrine of eternal recurrence.

For Nietzsche, the image was the two infinite pathways meeting in the gate of the moment. Nietzsche appears before this gate bearing the dwarf of his bad conscience. The dwarf has stood upon his shoulders. It is the personification of his attempt to climb above himself in over eagerness for enlightenment. The last quotation is a parody of idealistic philosophy in the same vein as Aristophanes' parody of the hubris of the young Socrates in the Clouds. It is idealistic philosophy that posits the

transcendental ego and claims to be able to climb above the empirical ego. It attempts, in its hubris, to climb even to the place of the idealization of God beyond the stars. But this climb is really an attempt to escape facing the primal scene of oblivion overwhelming. Idealism attempts to establish a “headland above the world” where one is safe from the endemic destructiveness of man and the entropy of nature. Idealism seeks an ultimate safe foundation in transcendental ideas of self, world, and God. Kant limits our access to these ultimate ideas while preserving them. Heidegger finds in Kant the same failure of nerve to face oblivion in his treatment of the relation of the transcendental imagination to time. Kant reworks the Critique Of Pure Reason and turns away from these problems. The transcendental imagination and other seeds of speculative reason in Kant's thought are precisely where Hegel begins in his definition of the absolute reason. This is the ultimate imaginary position above the stars. The position which is identical with the realization that reason is the abyss, only defined theoretically. In the primal scene there is no ultimate summit because the summit is always realized to be one with the abyss. By a parody of the idealists, Nietzsche shows how we turn away from the overwhelming of oblivion to establish a summit regardless of what we have witnessed. We deny the vision that negates the ultimate thought and assert the highest ideal covering up the

realization of oblivion overcoming, finally, all our powers of recollection. The overcoming of oblivion occurs again and again in each successive moment eternally. And what is this but a shadow of what the Buddhists call the Tathagata Gharba. The Tathagata Gharba is the “Womb of Thussness Coming:” the ultimate reality of Buddhism. Denial of all ideals makes us realize that the summit above the world gained by the Hegelians, surpassing the Kantians, is nothing more than the summit of the mountain identified with the abyss. The rising above the summit was a trick, a sleight of hand, an illusion.

What alone can our teaching be? -- That no one gives a human being his qualities: not God, not society, not his parents or ancestors, not “he himself” (the nonsensical idea here last rejected was propounded, as “intelligible freedom,” by Kant, and perhaps also by Plato before him). “No one” is accountable for existing at all, for being constituted as he is, or for living in the circumstances and surroundings in which he lives. The fatality of his nature cannot be disentangled from the fatality of all that which has been and will be. He is “not” the result of a special design, a will, a purpose; he is “not” the subject of an attempt to attain to an “ideal man” or and “ideal of happiness” or an “ideal of morality” -- it is absurd to want to “hand over” his nature to some purpose

or other. “We” invented the concept “purpose”: in reality purpose is “lacking”. . . One is necessary, one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole, one “is” in 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!” -- That no one is any longer made accountable, that the kind of being manifested cannot be traced back to a “causa prima,” that the world is a unity neither as sensorium nor as “spirit,” “this alone is the great liberation” -- this alone is the “innocence” of becoming restored . . . The concept “God” has hitherto been the greatest “objection” to existence. . . . We deny God; in denying God, we deny accountability: only by doing “that” do we redeem the world. --²⁹

The dog howls, awakening us from the vision of the image of Nietzsche's ultimate thought. The dwarf of our bad conscience vanishes. The dog is the hound at the gate of Hades. The *moment* is the door to oblivion. When the dog howls, Zarathustra is prevented from entering the door to the underworld filled with ghosts. The image vanishes along with the dwarf and is replaced by a real dog and the shepherd with a snake in his mouth.

29. Nietzsche TWILIGHT OF THE IDOLS page 54

The snake is the source of the destructiveness in the Aryan man. We devour everything and so are devoured. By biting off the head of that snake and spitting it out, we will be freed from the deep sickness that infects us and drives us to destroy the world and ourselves. To the Shepherd, Zarathustra shouts, “Bite!”

Its head off! Bite! -- thus a voice cried from me
my horror, my hate, my disgust, my pity, all my
good and evil cried out of me with a single cry.³⁰

The shepherd bites off the head of the snake and is transformed because he is freed from the deep sickness of self destruction. The man who has been cured of self destruction laughs. He is the one who can flow with the overcoming of oblivion and enjoy the falling. For the shepherd the moment has become an eternity. The laughter is ecstasy in the free-fall through the clouds of forgetfulness. The shepherd is no longer human because he has become the abyss. He is lost in involuntary bliss and smiles with the smile of nirvana.

Thus spake Zarathustra to himself as he climbed,
consoling his heart with hard sayings: for his heart
was wounded as never before. And when he
arrived at the top of the mountain ridge, behold,
there lay the other sea spread out before him: and

30. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page 180

he stood and was silent. But the night at this height was cold and clear and bright with stars.³¹

Reflecting in silence with thought stilled, Zarathustra looks out onto the sea. The top of this mountain is the place where he sees the vision of the most solitary man related in the next section of Nietzsche's book. His silent reflection allows him to see that vision which is the vision of eternal recurrence. The vision and the primal scene of thought are fundamentally the same. In the primal scene of thought the summit of the mountain stands between the two sides of the mountain. Above the summit is written *impossible*. The sides of the mountain arise from the seas on either side of the Islands of Bliss. In the vision of eternal recurrence the gateway *moment* lies between the two paths of past and future corresponding to paths up and down the mountain. Each path is infinite which means its length is unknown like the depths of the seas. Thus, in Zarathustra's reflection, the primal scene of the groundlessness of thought, where the mountain summit is discovered to be one with the abyss, is found to be one with the vision of the relation of the moment to past and future. The eternity of the past and future paths is exactly what confers upon them the necessity of eternal recurrence. The gate of the *moment* and the summit of the mountain that reaches to the

31. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page ???

heights of *impossibility* are the same.

The identification of the mountain summit and the gate of the moment which shows us that primal scene and vision are the same allows us to see the deep image of the *impossible moment*. Nietzsche could not pass through the gate of the moment before it disappeared. He could not, as the idealists pretend to do, walk upon himself and climb above himself. Thus, both the limit beyond the summit of the mountain and the knife edge of the present passing away are fundamental limits which are somehow the same. The will to power of self surpassing, demonstrated in the climb to the summit and the eternal recurrence that claims the moment each in their own way signify the limits of man. These limits coalesce in the teaching of the *impossible moment* that lies beyond Nietzsche's explicit writings. The *impossible moment* takes us to the inner core of Nietzsche's own thought at the level of his own understanding. It is Nietzsche's true experience for which he lacked words. But by creating these two internally coherent images of his path to the ultimate thought and the path of thought itself, he gives us the key. This is an image that we may retrieve from the sea of oblivion that is Nietzsche himself. It is the image that speaks to the very heart of our current situation in the deepest possible way. The gnostic Jesus had words for what was beyond Nietzsche's amazing

ability with words.

84. Jesus said, " When you see your likeness, you rejoice. But when you see your images which came into being before you, and which neither die nor become manifest, how much you will have to bear!"

83. Jesus said, "The images are manifest to man, but the light in them remains concealed in the image of the light of the father. He will become manifest, but his image will remain concealed by his light."³²

What is necessary is the journey from the heights of the most thought-provoking thought down to the seas. It is an allegorical journey which attempts to take us out of the primal scene of thought into the realm of witnessing and attempt in some small way to cure the deep sickness. We each stand bitten by the terrible snake of self destruction. And whether a cure is possible is yet unknown. But we may peel away the layers of our deep and complex illness. For Zarathustra makes the ultimate transition from his thoughts to beholding the sea, as if for the first time from the mountain summit. The vision of the sea will take on a great significance in this study and will become a metaphor for our awe. Beholding the sea we seek the primordial scene of mindfulness to counter the

32. James M. Robinson (editor) THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY pages 124-138

primal scene we have beheld of thoughtfulness. The sea embodies reflection as opposed to the movement of thought. Reflection is contemplation where thought stops, and we witness or behold rather than weigh and think out alternatives. The pathway toward the understanding of the movement from thoughtfulness to mindfulness is the journey down the mountain that Zarathustra is about to make.

I know my fate (he said at last with sadness). Well then! I am ready. My last solitude has just begun.

Ah, this sorrowful, black sea beneath me! Ah, this brooding reluctance! Ah this destiny and sea! Now I have to “go down” to you!

I stand before my highest mountain and my longest wandering; therefore, I must descend deeper than I have ever descended.

-- deeper into pain than I have descended, down to its blackest stream! So my destiny will have it. Well then! I am ready.³³

Here Nietzsche identifies the sea with oblivion itself and recognizes the truth that the bright flash of creativity must pay its due to the darkness of oblivion from which it glimmered briefly. Nietzsche resigns himself to that oblivion and begins his journey downward. From the

33. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page ???

point of view of the primal scene of thought oblivion -- total lostness -- is nothing but the abyss. The abyss is identified with the sea. Being lost at sea is the ultimate kind of lostness. Never returning, the seafarer is the most lost of all souls, deprived even of a place of death.

Traveling toward the sea Zarathustra sees only the embodiment of oblivion. Yet there is a secret in the sea which cannot be appreciated by thought alone. Only reflection can appreciate that secret. The togetherness of thoughtfulness and mindfulness appears from their arising together. Each alone is flawed. In our culture the mountain climbers who pursue their trains of thought have forgotten this necessary togetherness. Where do you find those who reflect in our culture? We think and think without reflecting even for a moment, and are then surprised that our thoughts have gone astray. We are astounded that our acts are not thoughtful and continually betray empty words. Only through reflection can words and actions become unified. Ours is an unexpectedly totalitarian culture where we are not allowed the space or time necessary for reflection. The rush to production without thought of needs and ecological limitation brooks no pauses for meditation on the consequences. Our cities are frenetic hives of incessant activity without the slightest free space for prayer. Zarathustra remembers the unity of the mountains and the sea, the togetherness of

thoughtfulness and mindfulness.

Whence arise the highest mountains? I once asked. Then I learned that they arise from the sea.

This testimony is written into their stones and into the sides of their summits. The highest must arise to its height from the deepest.

Thus spoke Zarathustra on the mountain summit, where it was cold; when he drew near to the sea, however, and at length stood alone beneath the cliffs, he had grown weary on the way and more yearning than he was before.³⁴

We must look into the nature of the mountain that thought incessantly scales. We must explore the nature of its arising from the sea. For to understand how these opposites work together is to fundamentally transform our relationship to existence. The mountain slopes are broken by the incessant churning of the sea. The shattered mountain rises high, but over eons is broken down and returns to the sea. By looking deeply into the nature of these, we confront a deeper more primal metaphor that touches on our innermost possibility of transformation.

Everything is still asleep (he said); even the sea is asleep. Its eye looks at me drowsily and strangely.

34. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page 175

But it breathes warmly; I feel it. And I feel, too,
that it is dreaming. Dreaming, it writhes upon a
hard pillow.

Listen! Listen! How it groans with wicked
memories! Or with wicked expectations?

Ah, I am sad with you, dark monster, and angry
even with myself for your sake.

Alas, that my hand has insufficient strength! In
truth, I should dearly like to release you from your
bad dreams!³⁵

We are destroyers, and our hiding place is oblivion.
Murdering each other along with the animal and plant
kingdom while incessantly dredging up the earth, we
believe our acts will quickly fade from memory and be
forgotten. Whether the secret crime against humanity or
nature or the scandalous and openly acclaimed “lawful”
felony, it is oblivion that is our last refuge. Oblivion
holds the lost memories of all our crimes and misdeeds.
Zarathustra sees this in the sea when he inspects it at
close quarters. Our destructiveness has an unwilling
accomplice. We assure ourselves that when the act is
forgotten, it has vanished. Yet somehow we know that
even if we have no bad dreams, there are still the
nightmares of oblivion that must be dealt with. What if it

35. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page 175

is not true that we are free from what is forgotten? What if the extinct birds and victims of genocide might arise again to point at their destroyers and those who stood by in silence at their execution? What if the earth itself could speak and accuse its violators? What if our own bodies could speak against us? This is the ultimate horror of the destroyers. If the sea of oblivion awoke from its bad dreams and spewed forth its memories demanding justice, could we bear that? Listen again to the words of the true prophet, the gnostic Jesus:

5. Jesus said, "Recognize what is in your sight, and that which is hidden from you will become plain to you. For there is nothing hidden which will not become manifest.

6. His disciples questioned him and said to him, "Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray? Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe?"

Jesus said, "Do not tell lies, and do not do what you hate, for all things are in the sight of heaven. For nothing hidden will not become manifest, and nothing covered will remain without being uncovered.

109. Jesus said, "He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him."

10. Jesus said, "I have cast fire upon the world,
and see, I am guarding until it blazes."³⁶

Our determined destructiveness is based on the implicit assumption that we are totally free from what is forgotten. If this one assumption is wrong, then we are doomed. For could we bear the terrible retribution of the balance being restored which we have thrown so far out of kilter? Yet is it not strange that we make this fundamental assumption as a basis for our actions when the primal scene of thought reveals our sameness with oblivion. We are oblivion eternally recurring in each moment reasserting itself. And if we are indeed oblivion, how can we ultimately hope to protect ourselves from the ghosts and thieves that hide in the seas of Hades.

And as Zarathustra thus spoke, he laughed at himself with melancholy and bitterness. "What, Zarathustra!" he said, "do you want to sing consolation even to the sea?"

"Ah, you fond fool!, Zarathustra, too eager to trust! But that is what you have been. You have always approached trustfully all that is fearful.

You have always wanted to caress every monster.
A touch of warm breath, a little soft fur on its paw

36. James M. Robinson (editor) THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY pages 124-138

-- and at once you have been ready to love and entice it.”

“Love” is the danger for the most solitary man, love of anything if only it is alive! Indeed, my foolishness and modesty in love is laughable.³⁷

When it was thought all the monsters were vanquished in the myths of long dead or conquered peoples, we suddenly discover that there is yet one monster that has been forgotten. Unthought of, that monster, the sea of oblivion, awaits us. We are falling toward the gate of Hades marked the *moment* and are wondering whether our assumptions are completely correct. If they are not correct, what will become of us? Perhaps, just in case we souls make our peace with the sea that has already swallowed us, that peace will cause us to discover the sea transformed. In that transformation there is a possibility that an inhuman laughter will be heard. The laughter of oblivion issuing from our lips.

Thus spoke Zarathustra and laughed again, but then thought of the friends he had left, and he was angry with himself because of his thoughts, as if he had injured his friends with them. And forthwith the laughing man wept -- for anger and longing did Zarathustra weep bitterly.³⁸

37. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page ????

38. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page 176

We will be concerned with the meaning of this transformation between laughter and weeping and the significance of the metaphorical movement from the mountains to the sea. Nowhere does Zarathustra discuss the nature of the mountain which thought traverses. We shall interpret that mountain as “Being”. All thought is supported by the ontological difference between beings (thoughts) and Being. Our investigation shall begin by considering the fragmentation in recent philosophical history of Conceptual Being into different kinds. Being supports all thought. Striving for the purity of the ontological aspect of our thought gives slope to the terrain of our universe of discourse. The summit of our thought is defined by those thoughts that give us the greatest insight into our preontological understanding of Being and rises toward the summit where that preontological understanding is rendered explicit. The difference is between the ontic and the ontological understanding, or the difference between beings and Being, is seen in the difference between all the entities encountered on the path up the mountain of Being and the supporting mountain itself. The mountain of Being is a primordial image encountered by our thought. Normally it is only recognized implicitly. In our journey in pursuit of the most thought provoking “idea,” we forget continually what makes the landscape possible. We are only concerned with sorting through the encountered

entities especially those strange entities, that seem to project the coherence of the landscape itself.

Remembering “the forgetfulness Being” (the identity of the mountain with oblivion or groundlessness) which has preoccupied recent thinkers is only the first step toward rediscovering an even deeper secret of existence. We have not just forgotten the mountain of Being, but the sea from which it arises. Since we are thinkers who have forgotten how to reflect, we have lost the deep root of togetherness of thoughtfulness and mindfulness. We are stranded on the mountain of Being without experience of the sea of reflection. We see the geologic traces of the sea upon the mountain telling of its origin, yet we do not know how to reclaim that origin. We do not know even where to begin to relearn how to reflect. If those who think deeply are rare, then those who stop their thoughts to reflect are even more rare.

23. Jesus said: I shall choose you, one out of a thousand, and two out of ten thousand, and they shall stand as a single one.”³⁹

“As rare as a few white hairs on a black bull,⁴⁰” those who witness are as rare as those who thank. Recalling Heidegger’s etymological insight into the word thinking. The realization of the togetherness of

39. James M. Robinson (editor) THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY pages 124-138

40. Hadith.

witnessing and thanking cannot be achieved unless one is able to both think and reflect. Thus, beyond the forgetfulness of Being, which is the foundation of thought, there is an even more primordial forgetfulness of the foundations of reflection, the foundations of reflection in the sea from which the mountains originally sprang. In order to rediscover what that sea is, we must be prepared to go down to the sea as Nietzsche's Zarathustra has done and to take the voyage upon its waters. We must learn to know the sea as the seafarers to whom Nietzsche addresses his vision and riddle know it. Let us take this voyage together, and by the grace of God perhaps we will come to know the forgotten nature of the sea as intimately as we know the forgotten nature of Being.

To you, the bold venturers and adventurers and whoever has embarked with cunning sails upon dreadful seas,

to you who are intoxicated by riddles, who take pleasure in twilight, whose soul is lured with flutes to every treacherous abyss --

for you who do not desire to feel for a rope with cowardly hand; and where you can "guess" you hate to calculate⁴¹ --

41. Hadith: "Muslims are not a people who calculate".

to you alone do I tell this riddle that I “saw” -- the vision of the most solitary man.⁴²

8. And he (Jesus) said, "The man is like the wise fisherman who cast his net into the sea and drew it up from the sea full of small fish. Among them the wise fisherman found a fine large fish. He threw all the small fish back into the sea and chose the large fish without difficulty. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."⁴³

We have found a large fish in the thought of Nietzsche which has been named the *impossible moment*. It flows from the unification of the primal scene of the will to power of overcoming thought and the vision of eternal recurrence. The *impossible moment* stands for the hidden interface between the scene of will to power and the vision of eternal recurrence. This interface teaches us to focus on the knife edge of becoming which is impossible to grasp. We are always caught in an illusory specious present where our grasp is never fine enough to grasp the instant. Nietzsche, to whom becoming was the ultimate category, could not grasp this moment. He calls Buddhism decadent even as he lauds it over Christianity in The Antichrist. Yet the *impossible moment* speaks to us of the emptiness of the moment which cannot be grasped. It is the same signifier as JESUS, the Redeemer,

42. Nietzsche THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA page 176

43. James M. Robinson (editor) THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY pages 124-138

the only Christian.

I fail to see against what the revolt was directed whose originator Jesus is understood or “misunderstood” to be if it was not a revolt against the Jewish Church -- “Church” taken in precisely the sense in which we take the word today. It was a revolt against “the good and the just,” against “saints of Israel,” against the social hierarchy -- not against a corruption of these but against caste, privilege, the order, the social form; it was disbelief in “higher men,” a No uttered towards everything that was priest and theologian. But the hierarchy which was thus called in question, even only momentarily, was the pile of work upon which the Jewish nation continued to exist at all in the midst of the “waters” -- the laboriously-achieved last possibility of remaining in being, the residuum of its separate political existence; an attack on this was an attack on the profoundest national instinct, on the toughest national will to life which has ever existed on earth. This holy anarchist who roused up the lowly, the outcasts and “sinners,” the Chandala within Judaism to oppose the ruling order -- in language which, if the Gospels are to be trusted, would even today lead to Siberia -- was a political criminal, in so far as political criminals were possible in an absurdly unpolitical society.⁴⁴

To Nietzsche Jesus was a signifier of the transition from the Jewish church to the Christian church, an *impossible moment* of revolt squelched by the power structures of Rome and the Jewish colonial state acting together. This point of transformation caused the movement from the will to life of the Jews, whose will to power translated to become resentment, into the sickness of Christianity as developed by Paul. At this point the nemesis of Judaism is born out of it as a transmutation of Judaism itself. Usurping its books and appropriating its heritage, Christianity arises from nothing to become the dominant religion of Rome. In this transformation the eternal recurrence of the same occurs as Christianity, step by step is turned into the worship of ancient pagan gods such as Mithra and Sumarian Inanna, the heavenly mother Inanna who journeyed to the underworld to hang upon a stake. In a paternalistic Aryan culture the son must be sacrificed instead of the mother, just as Odin hangs upon the cross as a sacrifice from himself to himself. In Mithrism the sacrament in alignment with Indo-european tradition is the slaughter of the cosmoc bull -- eating its flesh and drinking is blood. Thus, as we focus in upon the moment of transformation closer, and closer we find that we cannot grasp it.

-- To resume, I shall now relate the real history of Christianity. -- The word "Christianity" is already

44. Nietzsche THE ANTICHRIST page 140

a misunderstanding -- in reality there has been only one Christian, and he died on the Cross. The “Evangel” died on the Cross. What was called “Evangel” from this moment onwards was already the opposite of what he had lived: “bad tidings,” a dysangel.⁴⁵

The “kingdom of Heaven” is a condition of the heart -- not something that comes “upon the earth” or “after death.” The entire concept of natural death is lacking in the Gospel; death is not a bridge, not a transition, it is lacking because it belongs to quite another world, a merely apparent world useful only of the purpose of symbolism. The “hour of death” is not a Christian concept -- the “hour,” time, physical life and its crises, simply do not exist for the teacher of the “glad tidings.” . . . The “kingdom of God” is not something one waits for; it has no yesterday or tomorrow, it does not come “in a thousand years” -- it is an experience within a heart; it is everywhere, it is nowhere...⁴⁶

Nietzsche singles out the clear message of Jesus which occurs at the *impossible moment* of the transition from the Judaic church to the Christian church. This *impossible moment* that is everywhere and nowhere, with

45. Nietzsche THE ANTI-CHRIST page 151

46. Nietzsche THE ANTI-CHRIST page 147

no past and no future, is identified with the kingdom of God that is here if we could but see. All time is rolled up into this moment. It is the source of time that is impossible to grasp. It is the anarchist Christianity which is heresy. The Manu heresy was that Jesus did not die upon the cross. The anti-"christ" is in the end Jesus himself. He is the heretic that claims to be only a prophet. Who claims the event of the crucifixion is a lie. This image of Jesus is the signifier of the *impossible moment* at which will to power is transformed into recurrence of the same because of a lack of nerve, an inability to enter into the kingdom of heaven which is right here in the moment. It is the truth of the moment.

Come, therefore, let us go on with the completion of the will of the incorruptible Father. For behold, those who will bring them judgement are coming, and they will put them to shame. But me they cannot touch. And you, O Peter, shall stand in their midst. Do not be afraid because of your cowardice. 81 Their minds shall be closed for the invisible one has opposed them.

When he had said those things, I saw him seemingly being seized by them. And I said, "What do I see, O Lord, that it is you yourself whom they take, and that you are grasping me? Or who is this one, glad and laughing on the tree?

And is it another one whose feet and hands they are striking?”

The Savior said to me, “He whom you saw on the three (sic, tree), glad and laughing, this is the living Jesus. But this one into whose hand and feet they drive the nails is his fleshy part, which is the substitute being put to shame, the one who came into being in his likeness. But look at him and me.

But I, when I had looked, said, “Lord, no one is looking at you. Let us flee this place.”

But he said to me, “I have told you, “Leave the blind alone!” And you, see how they do not know what they are saying. 82 For the son of their glory instead of my servant they have put to shame.”

And I saw someone about to approach us resembling him, even him who was laughing on the tree. And he was <filled> with a Holy Spirit, and he is the Savior. And there was a great ineffable light around them, and the multitude of ineffable and invisible angels blessing them. And when I looked at him, the one who gives praise was revealed.

And he said to me, “Be strong, for you are the one to whom these mysteries have been given, to know them through revelation, that he whom they crucified is the fist-born, and the home of demons,

and the stony vessel (?) in which they dwell, of Elohim, of the cross which is under the Law. But he who stands near him is the living Savior, the first in him whom they seized and released who stands joyfully looking at those who did him violence, while they are divided among themselves. 83 Therefore he laughs at their lack of perception, knowing that they are born blind. So then the one susceptible to suffering shall come, since the body is the substitute. But what they released was my incorporeal body. But I am the intellectual Spirit filled with radiant light. He whom you saw coming to me is our intellectual Pleorma, which unites the perfect light with my Holy Spirit.

“These things, then, which you saw you shall present to those of another race who are not of this age. For there will be no honor in any man who is not immortal, but only (in) those who were chosen from immortal substance, which has shown that it is able to contain him who gives his abundance. Therefore I said, “Every one (Mt 25:29). But he who does not have, that is, the man of this place, who is completely dead, who is removed from the planting of the creation of what is begotten, 84 whom, if one of the immortal essence appears they think that they possess him -- it will be taken from him and be added to the one who is. You,

therefore, be courageous and do not fear at all. For I shall be with you in order that none of your enemies may prevail over you. Peace be to you. Be strong!”

When he (Jesus) had said these things, he (Peter) came to himself.⁴⁷

Here is the description of Jesus laughing as his image is being destroyed. The image of the Crucifixion which did, yet did not, occur is a great Koan, an image of the *impossible moment*, in which the transformation from Judaism occurred. This interpretation is supported by certain verses in the Quran. It is the Docetist heresy rigorously stamped out by the Catholic church. Some say it was Judas Iscariot that took the place of Jesus on the cross. However, this cannot be true as it would imply a deception.

I have thus suffered nothing of that which they will say about me; but also that suffering which I showed to you and the others in my dance, I will have it called a mystery . . . You hear that I have suffered -- and yet I have not suffered --, that I have not suffered -- and yet I have suffered --, that I was pierced -- and yet I have not been struck --, that blood flowed from me -- and yet I have not been struck, that blood flowed from me -- and yet

47. See James M. Robinson, *Naghamdi Library: Apocalypse of Peter*, pages 376-378 (Harper & Row 1988)

did not flow --, in brief that I have not had what those men say of me . . .⁴⁸

This counter tradition produces a region of undecidability for us who are so far away from the events. It is a crucial episode around which the whole of the western tradition has coalesced. But like the sacrifice of Odin to himself from which he arose after gaining the runes, or like the sacrifice of Purusa or Prajnapati, we see that a sacrifice is needed within the logic of our tradition. Working out that inner logic which thrives on destruction will be the major focus of this series of essays. Nietzsche has his own take on this mysterious sacrifice:

One sees what came to an end with the death on the Cross: a new, absolutely primary beginning to a Buddhist peace movement, to an actual and not merely promised happiness on earth. For this remains -- I have already emphasized it -- the basic distinction between the two decadence religions: Buddhism makes no promises but keeps them; Christianity makes a thousand promises but keeps none. On the heels of the glad tidings came the worst of all: those of Paul. In Paul was embodied the antithetical type to the bringer of glad tidings, the genius of hatred, of the vision of hatred, of the inexorable logic of hatred. What did

48. See Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis* pages 169-170 (Harper & Row, 1987)

this dysangelist not sacrificed to his hatred! The redeemer above all: he nailed him to his Cross.

It is no accident that Paul the usurper came from Tarsus, the center of Mithrism. In Mithrism it is clear that a sacrifice was the center of worship. In the case of Mithrism it was the sacrifice by Mithra of the cosmic bull in a cave. The sacrament of the blood and the flesh came from Mithrism. Over time what we call Christianity was forged from the remnants of Mithrism and Messianic Judaism.⁴⁹ This unholy combination was finalized by Constantine who could not distinguish between the two competing cults. It has almost nothing to do with the teachings of the prophet, Jesus, which were suppressed. Eventually the heresy of trinitarianism became dominant and ruthlessly wiped out all the adherents of unitarian doctrines.⁵⁰ Through the recently unearthed gospel of Thomas we can get a glimpse of the suppressed teachings. This allows us to compare the true prophet to the fictitious prophet of doom, Zarathustra. In this comparison we see that the prophet of doom indicates the experience of the *impossible moment* which the gnostic prophet names. We, who have inherited this tradition and recoil from the virulent active nihilism of the mithraic element in Christianity while simultaneously being disgusted by the sickly sweet image of the “Christ” (who

49. MITHRA: The Fellow in the Cap by Esme Wynn Tyson

50. BLOOD ON THE CROSS by Ahmed Thompson (Murabitun Books)

applaud the shogun's wisdom for eradicating Christianity from Japan after being told that "first they send in their priests and then their armies") are driven straight into the arms of heresy. In those arms we see the fictitious prophet of doom or the repressed teaching of the gnostic Jesus as our alternatives to the active and passive nihilisms of the dominant aspects of western culture that prefers the double bind of mithraic christianity. From the prophet of doom we get indications of the *impossible moment* that cannot be spoken. We are led to admit our own destructiveness. From the Gnostic Jesus we get intimations of a true spiritual teaching that has been so ruthlessly suppressed that we cannot piece it together again.⁵¹ There are these sayings that are pregnant with meaning but have no context to make it possible to grasp that meaning practically. We long for some access to the original teachings of Jesus that have been suppressed by the very people that claimed to be his followers. But that suppression has been so complete that we are left with only a few indications. Likewise we hear the diagnosis of the prophets of doom, who know the disease, but offer no cure.

51. MESSIANIC LEGACY by Baigent, M; Leigh, R.; Lincoln, H. (Dell 1986)

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